

The Black Power Movement

Rethinking the Civil Rights–Black Power Era

Edited by
Peniel E. Joseph

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BLACK FEMINISTS RESPOND TO BLACK POWER MASCULINISM

KIMBERLY SPRINGER

The Negro Problem. The Woman Question. Two phrases used to encompass the dilemmas progressive social movements historically grappled with as they attempted to deal with difference, or how to situate women and blacks within rubrics for social and economic revolution. For the old guard Left, Marx did not adequately deal with the race problem. How was the progressive Left to deal with African Americans, while completely ignoring the presence of African American radicals? Women were also left untheorized, although Engels broached the subject of the home as a reproductive sphere and women's unpaid domestic labor. Still, women were a question, a conundrum, often set aside with a dismissive, "Women? What about them?"

There are striking similarities between the denial of blacks' and women's basic human rights that were challenged in the Abolition, Suffrage, and Civil Rights Movements. A similar case can be made for the rise of the Women's Liberation Movement, which took many cues from Black Power's radicalism. But what of black women? What of those who were both a "Negro" problem and a "Woman" question? Are we to believe that black women, occupying both social positions, were, therefore, a problematic question? In short, as Deborah King observes, "We learn very little about black women from this analogy.

The experience of black women is apparently assumed, though never explicitly stated, to be synonymous with that of either black males or white females; and since the experiences of both are equivalent, a discussion of black women in particular is superfluous.¹

Polls taken during the 1970s to measure black women's attitudes toward feminism found that black women, in fact, were more likely to agree with feminist values than white women.² What made this possible, particularly during the Black Power era? Surely, more black women participated in Black Power organizations than in women's movement organizations? No one, to date, has completed a comparative analysis of these two movements' organizational numbers, particularly as they pertain to black women. However, lacking concrete demographics, defining black feminism as antithetical to black nationalism denies the possibility that black women are equally, if not more, in tune with feminist principles than white women. Moreover, media depictions of women's movement rallies, in particular as relayed by television and photographs of the era, show predominantly white women marching, protesting, and struggling for equality. Finally, there was—and remains—the issue of some black women's aversion to the label "feminist." Though not universal among black women, nor confined by race, feminism as a label or identity often undermined black women's "true blackness" if they dared claim it.

Yet, black women did form feminist organizations, join predominantly white feminists' movement groups, and espouse feminist ideals within black nationalist organizations.³ Therefore, this essay concerns black feminists' influence on the Black Power Movement through the literary arts and social movements.

Komozi Woodard outlines five phases in the process of black nationality formation in the United States: slavery; pre-Civil War; the Jim Crow era; the Great Migration from the rural South to the industrialized North; and the black migration between 1940 and 1970.³ Black women had an often-unrecognized voice in each phase. Sojourner Truth and Francis Ellen Watkins Harper spoke to slavery's immorality, as well as black women's contradictory gender roles in the institution. Nineteenth-century literary figures and abolitionists, such as Harriet Jacobs, passionately advocated for the black community's

freedom. Anna Julia Cooper addressed the need for black education and full citizenship after Reconstruction's failure. Woodard notes the prevalence of colonial uprisings after World War I and the rise of Garveyism globally, so it would be remiss not to acknowledge the contributions of women, such as Amy Jacques Garvey and Claudia Jones, in articulating black identity's revolutionary potential, whether domestically or abroad.⁴ In each period, black women mobilized, giving voice to race *and* gender concerns, even if they prioritized one over the other depending on the pertinent issue.⁵ If we take the years between 1965 and 1975 as working dates for the Black Power Movement, black women's assertions of feminist consciousness, through their writings and organizations, fit squarely within the period.⁶

It would be presumptuous to assume that black women's physical attendance in a movement or organization is proof of black feminist political presence.⁷ Instead, I define a black feminist presence as *a vocal, explicit avocation of both race- and gender-related issues*. These issues can be seen on personal, organizational, and societal levels, ranging from black women's untapped leadership skills to sexism as it impacts individual black women and the entire black community.

Some adamant proponents of the Black Power Movement might maintain that it is ahistorical to impose a gender framework on black men and black organizations active during the 1960s and 1970s.⁷ After all, people do evolve and there are black men from the Black Power era who might contest, offer revisionist narratives, or repudiate sexist abuses in the movement.⁸ However, it is useful for contemporary scholars to question the reach of the concept "The Black Man," as articulated during the Black Power Movement.⁹

★ Given the racist abuses black men experienced at the hands of white supremacy, it is not surprising that black liberation struggles have been, and continue to be defined, with a discourse that equates black freedom with a reassertion of black patriarchy.¹⁰ Still, a conversation about gender and sexism in the black liberation movement is crucial to understanding black nationalism's past and planning for its future. It is also imperative that we complicate the category *gender* in examining the Black Power era. This complication is not about "male-bashing" or how black men have done black women wrong. Instead, examining gender includes black masculinity's construction

at the time and expectations of black women—both of which were informed by black feminist ideology. Such an approach is complementary and offers a more holistic picture of black struggle.

Black women were major participants within social movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, some black women also opted to develop black feminism as a dynamic theory and practice that promoted black liberation. For black feminists, Black Power's chief flaw was sexism. Similarly, they questioned the efficacy of racism in a women's movement purporting to speak for *all* women. Black women asserted a gender/race analysis, whether they adopted the feminist label or not, in mixed-sex black nationalist organizations and in single-sex black feminist organizations. To paraphrase the Combahee River Collective, a prominent black feminist organization of the era, black women struggled with black men around issues of sexism and with white women around issues of racism. In neither case did black women surrender.

Black feminists' response, then and now, is more than a litany of sexist incidents. Black women had a range of responses to gender discrimination during the Black Power era and black feminism is but one of them. This unique political viewpoint is demonstrated in formal black feminist organizations, but also in black feminist literary and theoretical voices of the time. For the rest of this chapter, I want to, first, define what feminism meant for black women in the 1970s. I then take a look at the works of Toni Cade Bambara, Ntozake Shange, and Michele Wallace as example of defining, if controversial, moments in coming to a public discussion of gender discrimination within black communities. I conclude with a brief discussion of black feminist organizations' development parallel to Black Power and women's movement organizations in the late 1960s and 1970s. Overall, a black woman-centered perspective in social movement organizations and the arts challenged a strictly masculine picture of black revolutionary struggle.

What's in a Name? ¹⁰

What is feminism? Mainstream feminists consistently engage in such debates and black feminists are no different, only their question

makes race a priority. On one level, there is the issue of whether black women should call themselves feminists at all. Many in the civil rights and black nationalist movements feared that feminism, derided as a "white woman's thing," was divisive to the struggle for black liberation. Joined with that fear was the concern that if black women engaged in the women's movement or with feminist ideology, their energies would be diverted from the "real" struggle. The idea that black women could only focus on one issue or struggle at a time is considered a "monist" approach to politics.

King describes monist politics as the tendency to focus narrowly on one issue to the detriment of a plurality of issues that could broaden a political agenda. More specifically, monism prioritizes one form of discrimination over others.¹¹ Thus, Fidel Castro and his compatriots could claim that with the elimination of capitalism Cuba ended all forms of discrimination, including classism, racism, and sexism. Although capitalism fell in 1959, doubt remains as to whether contemporary Afro-Cuban women (as both Afro-Cubans and women) experienced significant improvements in their social and economic lives. While much freer in many respects than African American women, Afro-Cuban women's postrevolutionary experiences offer a compelling demonstration of monism's limits.

The definition of black feminism is varied, but there seem to be a few common tenets applicable to defining what black women during the Black Power era meant by black feminism. Beverly Guy-Sheftall offers the following premises:

- Black women experience a special kind of oppression and suffering in this country which is racist, sexist, and classist because of their dual racial and gender identity and their limited access to economic resources.
- This "triple jeopardy" has meant that the problems, concerns, and needs of black women are different in many ways from those of both white women and black men.
- Black women must struggle for black liberation and gender equality simultaneously.

- There is no inherent contradiction in the struggle to eradicate sexism and racism as well as the other "isms," which plague the human community, such as classism and heterosexism.
- Black women's commitment to the liberation of blacks and women is profoundly rooted in their lived experience.¹²

This assessment, although formulated in the 1990s, encapsulates contemporary black feminism as influenced by the Black Power/Women's Movement era.

Black feminists used a range of definitions to speak to a wide array of experiences. The Third World Women's Alliance (TWWWA), for example, echoed many of the contours Guy-Sheftall delineates. The TWWWA evolved from first the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's (SNCC) Black Women's Caucus and, later the Black Women's Liberation Committee.¹³ Both earlier formations sought to explore issues distinct to black women and how the frameworks of the civil rights, Black Power, and women's movements applied to their situation. How, for instance, might black women reframe the women's movement's demands for "Safe & Legal Abortion" to take into account black women's experiences with the denial of reproductive rights and coerced sterilization?¹⁴ How did a black feminist analysis respond to some black nationalist rhetoric equating abortion with genocide? How could the civil rights movement's freedom framework apply to black women's experiences as behind-the-scenes leadership, which found them relegated to the background because they were neither male nor clergy?

The TWWWA suggested coalescing seemingly disparate movement agendas through Third World, socialist, and feminist struggle. The organization's goals included: creating sisterhood through Third World solidarity; promoting Third World unity around economic, social, educational, and political issues; collecting, interpreting, and disseminating information about the Third World; establishing solid relationships with Third World men based on "human love and respect"; and training Third World women for leadership in the revolutionary struggle.¹⁵ The TWWWA's black feminism, as reflected in their newspaper *Triple Jeopardy*, was a radical humanism that embraced issues that stressed race, class, and

gender matters. Also crucial was the willingness to include struggle with black men as integral to the TWWWA's goals and ideology.

The Black Power Movement, although varied by organization, attempted to redefine black women's role as childbearers for the revolution. Certain groups issued calls for black women to, figuratively and literally, walk behind black men. Contrary to popular myth, while black feminists certainly did not comply with these demands, neither did they cede the terms of the liberation movement to black masculinism.¹⁶ Black feminists, such as those in the TWWWA and Combahee, pushed male Black Power activists to recognize the strength of black and Third World women.¹⁷ Contrary to sociologists (e.g., E. Franklin Frazier, Daniel Patrick Moynihan), who attempted to create a competition between black men and black women by reinforcing separate spheres ideology, organizations such as the Chicago-based National Alliance of Black Feminists (NABF) clearly defined black feminism as, "... the belief that women have the *right* to full social, political, and economic equality."¹⁷

During the Black Power era, black women encountered stumbling blocks in defining black feminism. In addition to black women's relationships to black men, black women also longed for a feminism that would address their relationships to one another. When white feminists used the word "sisterhood," it set off warning bells for black feminists whose collective historical memory included the plantation mistress/slave relationship, the racism of some nineteenth-century suffragists, and contemporary workplace manipulations that mirrored anything but sisterhood. These relationships, based on economic exploitation, forestalled a sisterly allegiance between white and black women, although there were women who worked together effectively to struggle for abolition, enfranchisement, workers' rights, and civil rights.

Given the contentiousness black women faced in attempting to work with white women, many black women, particularly within the feminist movement, assumed sisterhood among women of the same race would be inevitable. Yet, contemporary black feminists only had to look back to the struggles over leadership in the club women's movement for a reminder that black women, too, needed to deal with difference.¹⁸ Class was a persistent marker of difference with the potential to disrupt black feminist notions of sisterhood. With the

Rise of the contemporary lesbian and gay movement, black women also had to figure out how sexual orientation fit into their concepts of a black feminist sisterhood. Struggles over class manifested in debates over, for example, the best way to spread black feminism's message. Would women lacking the time to commit to activism and having varied education levels, be more likely to pick up a free newspaper, such as *Triple Jeopardy*, or an edited anthology, such as Barbara Smith's *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*?¹⁹ Were the assertiveness training workshops, held by the National Alliance of Black Feminists, merely mimicking bourgeois, white middle-class ideas about women's inability to communicate effectively with men? Did the agendas of the NABF and the San Francisco/Bay Area-based Black Women Organized for Action (BWOA) only speak to women's aspirations to climb the corporate ladder, resulting in the neglect of poor and working-class women's issues around welfare and accessible health care? From within black feminists came contests over leadership and direction of organizations rooted in concerns about how black feminism would address class as an issue in black communities.

Homophobia was also detrimental to black feminists' usage of sisterhood as an organizing principle. [✶]Still considered a psychological disorder by the American Psychological Association until 1973, black lesbians faced not only the medicalization of their desire through the label "homosexual," but they also faced social sanctions from their own communities. If they "kept it to themselves," black lesbians might be able to safely travel within and maintain their good standing among blacks. However, those who spoke out and asserted that acceptance of different sexual orientations was integral to black struggle encountered derision through name-calling and life on the political margins.

Black feminists were not immune to homophobic socialization and, thus, many organizations manifested behavior that ran counter to notions of sisterhood. For example, although at their first national conference the National Black Feminist Organization had a president, Margaret Sloan, who was a self-identified lesbian and led a workshop discussing lesbian issues, some attendees still felt free to voice their homophobia in open forums. Black feminists were surely right that being feminists, they would face lesbian-baiting from out-

side the organization, but giving in to that fear by attempting to exclude lesbian concerns and experiences could only retard progress black women could make regarding female sexual agency.

In short, it would be more accurate to speak of multiple definitions of black feminism. At its most basic, black feminism encompassed the liberation of black women from white supremacy and patriarchy—a radical humanism that could provide liberation. [✶]At its most complex, black feminism needed to, in addition to challenging racism and sexism, tackle poverty and patriarchy as it impacted *all* black women. A slight to one was a slight to all, but for black feminists to recognize this they would have to go through the growing pains that accompany the evolution of any revolutionary ideology.²⁰

Black Feminists' Literary Responses to Masculinism

Writers are at the forefront of social movements in articulating grievances and, ideally, suggesting fruitful paths for the future. Through poetry, plays, music, and prose, writers expounded upon the ideals of Black Power through the Black Arts Movement, which "celebrated the folk culture of blues people and preached black revolution."²¹ Interestingly, although they are mentioned as active during the time period, black feminist writers are often separated from the Black Arts Movement. This may be because, while they celebrated blackness, they also offered a critique of sexism within the movement and the community. Toni Cade Bambara, Ntozake Shange, and Michele Wallace, considered briefly here, each offer poignant examples of the personal and political difficulties in challenging gender discrimination and voicing a coherent black feminist position.

The black feminist premises discussed earlier capture many items on the 1970s black feminist agenda as proposed by women such as Toni Cade Bambara, editor of the groundbreaking anthology, *The Black Woman*. In her introduction, Bambara drew attention to Third World struggles, reclaiming black women's history, discussing sexuality, and "set[ting] the record straight on the matriarch and the evil Black bitch" and its relationship to black women's struggle.²²

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of

A number of the writers in the volume were active in both black and feminist organizations, demonstrating the intersections of theory and practice so crucial to black feminism's development. Barbara, Grace Lee Boggs, Audre Lorde, Ann Cook, Pat Robinson, Abbey Lincoln, and a host of other writers provided black feminism's first contemporary manifesto. *The Black Woman* offers compelling examples of the issues black feminists included on their agenda for a black liberation that would address race and gender, including interpersonal relationships, poverty, employment, and birth control.

Ntozake Shange's choreopoem for colored girls who've considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf (1975) inspired similar debate because of her portrayal of black men. Shange celebrated black women's survival in the face of physical and emotional abuse at the hands of black men. Represented by a range of colors, the women in Shange's choreopoem laughed, danced, cried, and sang their way through their experiences of racism and sexism. One woman described her experience of the stage presentation of Shange's choreopoem:

I managed to make it back to the city on Sunday to see *Colored Girls*. . . . Needless to say, it was magnificent. I felt as if I could've (and have been) any one of those women. I hope you can get them to come up to Boston. I also hope I can get a chance to see it again as well as a few of my friends whom I recommended it to. Some interesting things went on during the course of the play in terms of audience response. There was laughter (nervous and otherwise) during a segment on rape and throughout the play I noticed males laughing at the derisive (and quite accurate) statements the author made about men. I wonder if the laughter was nervous (unlikely, since most men don't find anything wrong with their attitudes toward women), detached (the "I don't treat my women that way" rationalization) or condescending (the self-righteous, macho response—which gets my vote). I would be interested to compare the responses of different types of audiences. . . .²³

For this woman, audience reaction demonstrated the long road the black community had yet to travel before taking sexism seriously. However, the aspects she found uplifting—the very celebration of survival and labeling of sexism—put black men on guard, particularly given the negative reflections of black men in the play.

Michele Wallace's *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, in the wake of the mildly controversial but critical success of Shange's play, caused a massive uproar in the black community. Wallace's central argument was that the black community was in serious jeopardy if black men continued to enact patriarchy in the form of black "macho" and black women maintained the self-sacrificing role of "superwoman." Reviewed widely in popular and academic periodicals, as well as featured on network television's *Phil Donahue Show*, Wallace ventured into treacherous territory in terms of the vitriol she experienced as a result of her publication.

In Marlon Riggs's documentary *Black Is, Black Ain't*, Wallace and others note the theoretical flaws with her work and the naiveté with which she, as a 28-year-old woman, decontextualized a particularly virulent expression of sexism through an autobiographical approach.²⁴ However, the problematic aspects of her book do not detract from the political trashing that turned personal. The backlash had a profound impact on Wallace and, as noted in black women's letters to the National Alliance of Black Feminists, served as an important catalyst for black women who saw sexism and the image of black women as superhuman as detrimental to the black body politic.²⁵ For women who were not intimidated, the dialogue around Wallace's book opened up channels for frank discussions of gender in black communities that were, before this point, considered private "family" matters.

There are other examples of black women writers who bravely tackled the black community's dirty laundry, making public patriarchal abuses. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982) are two notable examples that dealt with incest and physical violence that tore at the seams of black family life. Particularly notable about these works is the way in which black men were re-centered at the expense of trying to deal with very real issues of sexism and abuse within the black community. Not unlike today, when black women challenged sexism and abuses of patriarchal power during the Black Power era, they were met with a backlash chorus labeling them "man-haters."²⁶

The writers discussed earlier in this chapter never claimed that black men were evil. These writers did, however, demand

accountability for sexism as it occurred in black families, communities, and organizations that advocated liberation. A sophisticated vision of liberation would not only be focused on how to dismantle external systems of oppression, but also be concerned with ending injustice within black communities. Whether contributing to a black feminist framework or prying open the Pandora's box of gender, these writers stepped forward to insert a female voice into the Black Power discussion of the time.

Black Feminists' Organizational Response

Finding predominately white women's liberation groups unresponsive to issues of racism, and some black liberation organizations unresponsive to issues of sexism, black women formed their own organizations. Unlike historically single-sex organizations, black feminist organizations were not the female auxiliary or branch of male organizations. In doing so, they followed in the footsteps of several black women's groups active since the end of the Civil War in advocating for a simultaneous race and gender analysis toward black liberation.

For a moment, however, it is important to recognize that there were black women who articulated a black feminist perspective, or at least a gendered perspective, who chose to fight sexism within Black Power organizations. For example, black women waged battles against sexism within groups such as the Committee for a Unified Newark (CFUN). In 1971, women within the organization launched a Women's Division that took up the task of demanding organizational equality for women, particularly as related to attempts to impose, "... traditional African concepts of polygamy for the manipulative and vulgar purposes of American adultery and sexual exploitation."²⁷ These struggles against permissive interpretations of African-centered principles spiraled into a broader attack against male chauvinism at the local and national levels. The evolution of Black Women's United Front (BWUF), in addition to struggling for organizational equality, also tackled issues such as rape against female inmates and forming defense committees for women who fought back and often murdered their prison guard rapists.²⁸ Moreover, black

women, such as those working within the Black Panther Party, offered critical analysis around black women's culpability in perpetuating their own oppression, making consistent self-critique a necessary aspect of revolutionary consciousness.

If many black women found their early political bearings in civil rights and Black Power organizations, they looked outside these groups to address sexism. Margaret Sloan, president of the National Black Feminist Organization, recalled the sexual division of labor she encountered as a young woman seeking to become active in the Chicago branch of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).²⁹ Combahee River Collective activist Barbara Smith doubted whether she could continue as an activist when Black Power advocates challenged her early antiwar involvement. Patriarchal attitudes were not new, but the virulence and prevalence in black nationalist rhetoric gave her pause.³⁰ *She spoke instead for visibility of women's work*

Francis Beal started a black women's consciousness-raising group within SNCC toward the end of that organization's existence that flowered into the TWWA. Highlighting the racial implications of gender issues such as coerced sterilization and self-image, the small group eventually reached out to, first, black working women and later Third World women, who were often also involved with nationalist struggles. Discussing the political strategy of the era, the historian Komozi Woodard notes:

The black nationalists of the 1960s viewed the members of liberation movements in the Third World not only as allies but as brothers and sisters in the struggle. Identifying with the battle for self-determination in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the politics of cultural nationalism proposed a strategy of black liberation involving struggles for regional autonomy in urban centers' in alliance with oppressed people of color in the United States, particularly Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans.³¹

regional
difficult

Fittingly, the TWWA on the East Coast incorporated the concerns of Puerto Rican and Palestinian nationalist women, while a later TWWA West Coast organization united with Asian and Chicana nationalist women. On both coasts, Black, Puerto Rican, Palestinian, Asian, Native American, and Chicana women found common ground in their assertions of multifaceted political radicalism.

around
Shelby

Conclusion

Neither archived organizational records nor interviews with black feminist activists yield any evidence of significant encounters or joint actions between black feminist and black nationalist organizations, though there were plenty of black feminists, such as attorney Flo Kennedy, active with Black Power groups. Although anecdotal, this lack of interaction at the organizational level speaks perhaps to both black nationalists' reticence to deal effectively with sexism and women who spoke about it, as well as black feminists' reluctance to directly confront black masculinism. Most often, black feminists recall tensions with black nationalist women who questioned their motives and dedication to black liberation struggles.

Despite limited direct organizational contact, black feminists added ideals of gender equality and antisexism to the social activist milieu of the Black Power era. They did so through literary contributions that are lasting documents of black feminist *and* nationalist revolutionary goals. Barbara's *The Black Woman*, Wallace's *Black Macho*, and Shange's *for colored girls* contested the rising masculinism of the Black Power era that sought to relegate women to the periphery of struggle and into a private sphere that black women, always workers, were never fully embedded in. The controversy generated by discussions of gender during the Black Power era, and the retrospectives emerging now, demonstrate the vital importance of black feminism's role in offering solutions to the Negro problem and answers to the Woman question.

THE THIRD WORLD WOMEN'S ALLIANCE

Black Feminist Radicalism and
Black Power Politics

STEPHEN WARD

One of the unifying and most important features of the emerging scholarship on Black Power is the recognition that the movement was multidimensional and involved a wide range of activities, organizations, and programs. Refuting popular interpretations of the Black Power era as a destructive, and often violent, deterioration of black political activity, this scholarship is beginning to document the vibrant political, cultural, and intellectual worlds that flourished under the banner of Black Power.¹ This work is also painting a richer and more redeeming picture of Black Power than is presented in some histories of the Civil Rights Movement, which have tended to cast Black Power as an unfortunate and misguided departure from civil rights struggles. By uncovering diverse expressions of Black Power politics, scholars are demonstrating how the period's "cultural and political formations," in the words of Komozi Woodard, "galvanized millions of black people in the broadest movement in African American history."² Although the historical study of Black Power is still in its early stages, and therefore has yet to fully stake out the broad interpretive and historiographical contours of the field,³ this body of recent work (to which the present volume is an important

80. Frances Beale, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female," (1970), 146-155; The Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," (1977), 232-240, both in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, ed., (New York: New Press, 1995); Toni Cade Bambara, ed., *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (New York: New American Library, 1970). Also see Nadasen, "Expanding the Boundaries of the Women's Movement," 271-301.
81. Marriott, interview by author, November 4, 2002. Marriott, nee Louise Siler, became a Democratic member of the Maryland House of Delegates for District 40 in Baltimore in 1991. See <http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/msa/mdmanual/06hse/html/msa12265.html> (Accessed July 15, 2005).
82. Marriott, interview by author, November 4, 2002. Reflecting back on her experience, Marriott argued that she probably did not stay longer with the BWR0, because of class politics and personalities clashes. She said she felt "beaten upon." Referring to the then BWR0 chair, Rudell Martin, who also grew up and at the time still lived in Cherry Hill, Marriott said: "I'm sure she did not identify with me like a sister in the struggle from Cherry Hill, because I wasn't. I'd been out of Cherry Hill. I had chosen a different path. I was not a welfare recipient. I was [a] college graduate working on a masters degree in social work.... So, anyway, I think, that class stuff probably came in. And she wasn't like Goldie and Geneva [Clark]." Marriott served as Clark's case worker and together they started an organization for welfare clients. Moreover, Marriott argued that unlike with Martin, she had an established relationship with Goldie Baker, whom she organized with at the grassroots.
83. Marriott, interview by author, November 4, 2002.
84. Ibid.
85. See note 80; Collier-Thomas and Franklin, *Sisters in the Struggle*; Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (New York: Quill, 1984), especially Part III; Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire*; Kimberly Springer, ed., *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), Chapter 7.
86. Quote in "Black Women's Liberation," in *Modern Black Nationalism*, 257. For examples of the "crimes against black humanity" referred to by Assata Shakur, see "To My People," *Modern Black Nationalism*, 269-272.
87. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 230, 224.
88. Samios, "Black Nun Hopes to Build an Oasis in the Ghetto," *Baltimore News American*, January 17, 1971.
89. Ibid. James H. Cone makes similar arguments regarding the relationship among Jesus Christ, Christianity, and Black Power. He writes that "the message of Black Power is the message of Christ himself." Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, 37.
90. Baker, interview by author, January 29, 1997.

91. Ibid.
92. McCarty, interview by author, June 21, 2003.
93. For instance, Goldie Baker argued that the Black Panthers and other Black Power groups had a right "to express themselves" and to not be persecuted. Referring to the systematic government-sponsored counterintelligence attacks on black radical groups such as the Black Panthers, Baker stated: "The white man destroyed them. They acted as persecutors, infiltrators.... They got Black Panthers still locked up in jail just like they had Mandela. In jail for years and years and years, because they said they were teaching hatred." Baker questioned why antiblack groups like the Ku Klux Klan could spread racist propaganda and act on their hatred with seeming impunity, while some groups like the Black Panthers faced attacks for conveying publicly the inescapable realities of historical white oppression. They "weren't lying." White people did serve as "slave masters. They were oppressors.... And you got some white people hate poor white people, poor white trash.... And they hate white people that is in friendship with black people. They call them nigger lovers." Baker, interview by author, January 29, 1997.
94. For instance, Cone also wrote: "Black Power is hope in the humanity of black people," Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*, 29.

Chapter 4

1. Deborah King, "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of Black Feminist Ideology," *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, ed. (New York: New Press, 1995), 295-296.
2. Janie Nelson, "Attitude-behavior Consistency among Black Feminist and Traditional Women" (Ph.D. diss., Kent State University, 1981). In addition to surveys conducted by Nelson, the often-cited Harris/Virginia Slims American Women Poll measured women's attitudes during peak years for the contemporary feminist movement: 1970, 1972, 1974, and 1980.
3. Komozi Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999).
4. See Marika Sherwood, *Claudia Jones: A Biography* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1999) and Ula Yvette Taylor, *The Veiled Garvey: The Life and Times of Amy Jacques Garvey* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
5. See Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999); White explains that although Black women may have appeared to favor race over gender, or gender over race, these prioritizations were strategic

and dependent on the urgency of the issue. Nevertheless, both race and gender were addressed.

6. For fuller explications of Black Power periodization, ideology, culture, and organizations, see Scot Brown, *Fighting for US: Maulana Karenga, the US Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Peniel Joseph, "Black Liberation Without Apology: Reconceptualizing the Black Power Movement," *The Black Scholar* 31 (Fall/Winter 2001), 2–19; William Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965–1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
7. Safiya Buhkari-Alston, for instance, maintains that, "The error everyone seems to be making, supporters and detractors of the Black Panther Party alike, is separating the party from its time and roots and looking at it in a vacuum." Safiya Buhkari-Alston, "On the Question of Sexism Within the Black Panther Party," *Panther Sisters on Women's Liberation*, March 9, 1995, <http://www.anarco-nyc.net/anarchistpanther/otherwriting6.html>. Accessed February 16, 2005.
8. Buhkari-Alston, "On the Question of Sexism Within the Black Panther Party"; Cole and Guy-Sheftall offer a meaningful update to the thoughts and motivations of African American men active in the 1970s and their reflections on sexism and patriarchy during the Black Power era. Johnnetta Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftall, *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African-American Communities* (New York: One World/Ballantine Books, 2003).
9. For example, Marcus Garvey's question, "Where is the Black Man's government?" is assumed to be gender-neutral, but in the context of Garveyism, this query clearly relates to blacks who are male, not female.
10. I borrow this subtitle from Collins's excellent examination of the tensions between the terms "black feminist" and "womanist." Patricia Hill Collins, "What's in a name? Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond." *The Black Scholar* 26 (Spring 1996), 9–17.
11. King, "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness," 299.
12. Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire*, 2.
13. For increasingly sophisticated analyses of the TWWA, see Kristin Anderson-Bricker, "Triple Jeopardy: Black Women and the Growth of Feminist Consciousness in SNCC, 1965–1974," in *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, Kimberly Springer, ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1999) and Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003).
14. For broader explications of black women and reproductive issues, see Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Random House, 1983) and Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997).
15. Third World Women's Alliance, "History of the Organization and Ideological Platform," *Triple Jeopardy* 1 (September–October 1972), 8.
16. For the purposes of this chapter, I use masculinism to denote the tendency to universalize the black experience as the black male experience.

As I explain later, just as white women universalized the category "woman," some within the Black Power movement universalized the category "black," assuming that black meant all black people, when it, in fact, meant black men or the reassertion of black patriarchy.

17. National Alliance of Black Feminists, "Philosophy of NABF." *Alternative School Bulletin*. (Chicago, IL: The Black Feminist Press, n.d.).
18. White, *Too Heavy a Load*.
19. A partial collection of Smith's archives, located at the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn, NY, reflects the seeds of this anthology in minutes for a series of black feminist retreats sponsored by the Combahee River Collective; Barbara Smith, ed., *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (Albany, New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1983).
20. The evolution continues as black feminism faces stagnation and institutionalization within sites of higher learning. The most pressing question, in my opinion, is how to keep black feminism relevant to black communities-at-large. Many activists and scholars are doing this, particularly men such as Kevin Powell and Mark Anthony Neal, continuing the tradition of black male feminist positions in their analysis and writings on masculinity.
21. Woodard, *Nation Within a Nation*, xii–xiii.
22. Toni Cade Bambara, ed., *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (New York: The New American Library, 1970), 11.
23. Beverly and Barbara Smith, "I am not meant to be alone and without you who understand": Letters from Black Feminists, 1972–1978." *Conditions* 4 (1978), 64.
24. *Black Is, Black Ain't*, California Newsreel (Marlon, Riggs, 1995). For a personal account of the book's reception, see Michele Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman* (New York: Verso Books, 1990) and "Anger in Isolation: A Black Feminist's Search for Sisterhood" in *Words of Fire*.
25. Brenda Eichelberger Papers. "National Alliance of Black Feminists," Chicago Historical Society.
26. It is important to note also the unprecedented success of black women writers during this era and the possible impact of that success on gender relations in the black community. Black women were accused of being somehow more acceptable or "safer" than black men, playing into black nationalist rhetoric of black masculinity as dangerous and more of a revolutionary threat.
27. Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation*, 181–182.
28. *Ibid.*, 183–184; The Third World Women's Alliance, the Combahee River Collective, and the National Black Feminist Organization all engaged in similar campaigns.
29. Margaret Sloan, "Address given by Gloria Steinem and Margaret Sloan on Women," Carleton College Audio-Visual Department, March 5, 1973.
30. Barbara Smith, interview with author, July 15, 1998.
31. Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation*, 8.