Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis or dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis or dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature: _____ _____

Date

A Peculiar Sense: A Black Feminist Genealogy of Soul

By

Taryn D. Jordan
Doctor of Philosophy

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Lynne Huffer, Ph.D.
Advisor

James Ford III, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Valérie Loichot, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Falguni Sheth, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

Date

A PECULIAR SENSE:
A BLACK FEMINIST GENEALOGY OF SOUL

By
Taryn D. Jordan
MA, Georgia State University, 2014
BA, Northern Arizona University, 2007

Advisor: Lynne Huffer, PhD

A abstract submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
2020

Abstract

A Peculiar Sense: A Black Feminist Genealogy of Soul
By Taryn D. Jordan

My dissertation is a genealogy of how black folks use soul to endure an anti-black world. Through archival research on soul food and soulful home aesthetics, I address the persistent question posed by W.E.B. Du Bois "How does it feel to be a problem?" Specifically, I explore how black women's labor has been central to black endurance. Working with the kind of large historical archive required by genealogical analysis, I analyze black women's tactics of collective survival from Columbus's encounter with West Africans in 1482 to the emergence of Black Lives Matter in the present. This project argues that black women have historically used soul [another word for collective black feeling] to produce an alternative ethics of endurance based in domestic practices. My research brings together the interdisciplinary fields of black feminist studies and critical black studies, which curiously have developed separately. I do this by insisting that black women's domestic labor contributes to the black radical tradition (e.g. Angela Davis, Combahee River Collective, Cedric Robinson). Ultimately, I contend that the domestic production of soul--another word for emotion or feeling--is foundational to black survival. My tracing of soul shows that black women create objects of domesticity to counter the intensification of anti-black violence on a collective level.

A PECULIAR SENSE:
A BLACK FEMINIST GENEALOGY OF SOUL

By
Taryn D. Jordan
MA, Georgia State University, 2014
BA, Northern Arizona University, 2007

Advisor: Lynne Huffer, PhD

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
2020

Acknowledgements

There are too many names known and unknown on both sides of the veil living and dead who I will spend my lifetime thanking for their many investments, interventions, and attention to me as a scholar. Thank you to my advisor Professor Lynne Huffer for her tireless efforts to keep me writing when I no longer wanted to go on. Thank you to the members of my committee: Professors James Ford III, Valérie Loichot, and Falguni Sheth for their encouragement and cheering toward the finish line. Thank you to my cohort, faculty, staff, and students in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies for their support.

Thank you to my colleagues in the Black Studies Collective (BSC), who are the condition of possibility for me to endure academia. BSC encouraged academic modes of collectivity that annotate, subtend, and arrange my writing, thinking, and feeling. Specifically thank you to Haylee Harrell for reading and commenting on nearly every draft of my dissertation. Thank you to Mukasa Mubirumusoke for being the Afro pessimist foil to my black optimist tendencies. Thank you to Danielle Wiggins for being my on-call-historian. Jasmine Syedullah and David Goldberg round out my Black Prophetic Technologies Crew; I am endlessly inspired by your innovative scholarship; thank you for taking serious the importance of analog technology in a digital world. Collectively, black studies folks provided much-needed friendship and comedic relief in times of duress.

Thank you to my comrades inside and out of the academy for their support and encouragement. Thank you Joel Olson for showing up to my college graduation party at Red Lobster in 2005 and making an impromptu speech in front of my whole family about my intellectual ability and potential. Joel's influence on my life and scholarship is boundless, thank you comrade for your support on both sides of the veil. Thank you Justine Johnson for being a

tireless editor of my writing. Thank you Katie Fahrenbruch, Luis Fernandez, George Ciccariello-Maher, and Andrea Miller, for your tireless support and advice.

Thank you to my parents: Thomas Jordan Jr. and Dannie Jordan for the gift of soul. Thank you again Momma and Daddy for your tireless belief in me—even when I did not believe in myself—your love, support, and prayers are integral to my existence. Daddy transitioned to the other side of the veil in 2013. Regardless of this fact, Daddy's love resounds. Thank you to my siblings, Thomas Jordan V, Tonjua Jordan-Scott, and Tariq Jordan, for never letting me forget where I come from. Thank you to my Auntie Juana L. Jordan for being an example of black womanhood I aspire to achieve. Thank you to my babies—nieces and nephews—for letting me pass soul on to you: Aminah Randle, Nicole Scott, Mecole Scott, Tyra Jordan, Thomas Jamal Jordan, Harmony Johnson, Nadia Brown, Marcus Lovette Jr., and Amir Lovette. Thank you to my friends who have become family for listening to me ramble on about some idiosyncratic detail about affect, blackness, or soul for nearly a decade. Specifically thank you: Demetrius Warrick, Cortez Wright, Moya Bailey, and Vanessa Farraj for listening. Last, thank you to my partner Cecilia Sáenz Becerra for your constant support, belief, and care for me in this nearly ten-year process. Even more, thank you for bringing your sister Yvette Sáenz Becerra into my life. Thank you Yvette for letting me love you with food, jokes, and nerd lore. Ceci and I have weathered many storms together— thank you for everything—love always. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the ancestors for guiding this journey.

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Black Is a Soul: The Problem of Black Consciousness	28
Chapter 2 Soul: Food and Thought	73
Chapter 3 Black Eros in the Archive of Soul: What's Love Got to Do With It?	104
Coda Or Something Like Final Words On Endurance	139
References	143

Introduction

Since the death of Trayvon Martin on February 26, 2012, in Sanford, Florida, an intensification of state-sanctioned executions of blacks has politicized a new generation of black radicals. Trayvon is not the first black to be killed by a vigilante or the police, but his death and subsequent outrage about the acquittal of his killer, George Zimmerman, mark a reemergence of state-sanctioned spectacular black death in the present. Subsequently, black men, women, children, and trans folks have been killed gratuitously by police and vigilantes. In response to these deaths, millions have taken to the streets, shut down highways, and waged significant rebellions in Ferguson, Missouri; Baltimore, Maryland; and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to register their rage and frustration at the lack of justice for these killings. In spite of this long history of devastation, blacks produce soul to counter the intensification of anti-black violence on a collective level. Black soul emerges paradoxically, as a testament to black living. This dissertation emerges from that peculiar paradox of black death and black life and conceives of blacks' use of soul as a counter-archive of black living in an anti-black world. Ultimately, I record a history of these techniques of endurance that stand as a testament to black soul in the present.

Some months after Daddy died I was watching TV with my sister in my momma's living room when I encountered an illustration of black soul as collective affect: What W.E.B. Du Bois described as a black "peculiar sense" from a cinematic scene of everyday black life in the twenty-first century. The 2016 film *Almost Christmas*, starring Danny Glover (Walter) and Mo'Nique (Aunt May), follows a grieving patriarch, Walter, as he tries to recreate his deceased wife Grace's sweet potato pie (Talbert and Packer 2016). In the wake of Grace's death, the family is falling apart. My own Daddy had died six months before this moment. I was home in

Las Vegas taking care of my momma while she recovered from surgery. What struck me most about the film was the phrase my sister repeated while we watched. She said, "this is gonna be us, this is gonna be." *Almost Christmas* opens with a montage of the various events in Walter and Grace's life. Each event is framed by Grace's sweet potato pie. The pie is the material manifestation of the absent black feminine who offers shelter and respite from the sometimes difficult and joyful life Walter and Grace shared together. The loss of Grace requires a collective consumption of soul as a reminder that everything will be alright. Since Grace's death, relationships between family members are fraught. Sensing a rupture between family members brewing, Walter tries and fails, multiple times, to make Grace's sweet potato pie. As a result of these tensions, a fight breaks out between the grandchildren and their parents. Frustrated with them all, Walter goes to the garage to look for another sweet potato pie recipe online in the hopes of recreating Grace's. Walter's children send the smallest grandchild, Dee, on their behalf to apologize for the fight. Walter accepts her apology. Transitioning the conversation, Walter asks Dee about Christmas. What he gets in response to his question is a missing ingredient pivotal to Grace's sweet potato pie and all aspects of what I am calling black soul:

> Walter: So, are you all ready for Santa?
>
> Dee: Am I! I get to see all my presents, eat all the dessert I want, and not get in trouble, and Nana's sweet potato pie is my favorite.
>
> Walter: Mine too, I just hope my version doesn't disappoint everyone. So far it hasn't been going that good.
>
> Dee: Are you smiling when you make it? When Nana cooked she always smiled. You haven't smiled a lot Pop Pop. When I get sad I always think about all the things that make me happy. And then I smile. Maybe you should try it?
>
> Walter: Maybe I will.

Walter takes Dee's advice, and he realizes the missing ingredient to Grace's pie is soul in the form of laughter, love, and sweet exchange between lovers. The scene shifts, and Walter is back in the kitchen. Billie Holiday's "The Very Thought of You" plays while Walter begins to make the sweet potato pie. He peels the sweet potatoes and mashes them in the bowl. He looks at the recipe he found on the Internet, stops and asks the picture of Grace, "What do you think, love?" He pauses for a second, crumbles the recipe up, and then he smiles. His face shows a mixture of sadness, embarrassment, and genuine admiration for his wife. He proceeds to make the pie, naming all the spices that flavor the filling. He is nearly finished preparing the filling, but he stops to comment, "I can't remember how much milk you [Grace] put in this." He pauses, then chuckles to himself and says "yeah" as he pours milk into his bowl. Walter finishes making the filling. He places the piecrust into the pan and pours the filling while laughing and smiling. The scene ends with him placing the pie into the oven.

Both of these scenes show the importance of laugher, smiles, and the expression of love to the production of black soul. Grace's sweet potato pie is not merely a pie; it has the capacity to soften the blow of loss and grief on this family. The evidence of black soul's capacity to counter devastation is shown in the film's final scene. Walter and Aunt May are seated at the kitchen table reminiscing about their tumultuous Christmas day. Their conversation moves to Grace and their shared love and admiration for all that she shared with the two of them. The sweet potato pie is nestled between them. Aunt May realizes that, amidst all the drama of Christmas day, they didn't cut Walter's version of Grace's sweet potato pie. Aunt May immediately cuts into his pie, takes a bite, and pauses. Aunt May closes her eyes and lets out a heavy sigh. Without saying a word she stares at Walter intently while she passes him her slice of pie. Walter goes to take a bite; his hand shakes as he eats the pie. Walter makes eye contact with Aunt May, who smiles

and nods while holding back tears. Walter looks hopeful as he returns Aunt May's affirmation. The first words Walter utters are "I'll be damned," and he laughs. Aunt May and Walter start to playfully fight over the slice of pie. The Four Tops's "Ain't No Woman Like the One I Got" plays in the background. Walter yells to the rest of the family to come eat a slice of pie and join him and Aunt May in the warm embrace of Grace's sweet potato pie. The movie closes with the whole family laughing, smiling, and telling jokes to one another as they eat. From this final scene, we see how the pie stitches back together a family that has lost its way in the midst of tragedy. Even more importantly, the film provides a brief glimpse of the capacity of black soul to counter death and loss.

Comparably, for my family it was Daddy's 7up cake that caused my family much stress that first Christmas he was gone. In the three years since his passing I have tried my hand at making his 7up cake every year. During our first two Christmases without him, my family would smile and tell me the cake was just as good, but I knew something was off. Admittedly, each one of those cakes after Daddy's death was soaked in my tears. I made them alone in the kitchen with no one to talk to. No jokes or casual conversation to break up the monotony of whipping butter with sugar, cracking eggs, and pouring flour in the bowl. Daddy's 7up cake is my inheritance. I spent the majority of my life, from age seven up, watching, and then assisting Daddy make the cake. Then, everything changed: last Christmas morning my sister gave me a hug with tears in her eyes. Tonjua said, in her west coast black accent spoken at a rapid pace with emphasis on the beginning of every word: "Taryn! I told Conda [her wife] last night that your cake brought tears to my eyes." I was never more happy. What was missing for us was soul in the form of black sociality. This Christmas I began making the 7up cake with Harmony, my thirteen-year-old niece. I practiced a time-honored tradition of passing down recipes, jokes, and stories of how our

family migrated from the south to the southwest to my niece. Daddy's 7up cake and our family story of how we got over is now Harmony's inheritance and when I am gone she will make the cake and tell the story again and again. Oh, and I made a slight adjustment to the recipe. I'm sure Daddy doesn't mind.

Returning to the film, reading *Almost Christmas* with the history of the latest intensification of spectacular black death, a paradox emerges. Sweet potato pie in the film is symbolic of black soul—a form of affect that blacks produce in response to the historical conditions into which they are forced. Or, in my family story, soul is symbolized as 7up cake. Most often, the term "soul" operates as a prefix for music, food, and, more generally, to name various forms of black American culture. As such, soul signifies "black" absent a modifier. In the film, soul operates through the effects of positive emotions such as laughter and smiles mixed with the difficult feelings of grief and loss. While *Almost Christmas* presents a universal story of a family response to the death of their matriarch, the film's universality is challenged by a long history of spectacular black death.

The Color Line as the Problem of Modernity

This dissertation is a feminist genealogy of black affect as soul. Defined through the lens of black affect studies, I trace black soul through the domestic practices of the black feminine. The project begins with the color line as the problem of modernity. Drawing on W.E.B. Du Bois's naming of the color line as the problem of the twentieth century, I extend the problem of blackness beyond the historical and political emphasis on the middle passage, thereby expanding the historical, geographical, and conceptual limits of such a focus toward one of the many beginnings of modernity's emergence. My use of the term "blackness" draws on Fred Moten's (2003) conception of blackness as characterized by a phonic materiality born in Frederick

Douglass's Aunt Hester's scream, her shouts and shrieks recounted by Douglass in his autobiography and taken up by Saidiya Hartman (1997) and then Moten as a kind of primal scene for black critical studies. Blackness for Moten manifests as sound and, more importantly for my work, as feminine. In addition to Hartman, Moten (2016) draws his formulation from Nahum Chandler's (2013) conception of the paraontological distinction between black people and blackness. According to Chandler, black people have a privileged relationship to blackness and blackness circulates as its own condition.

This project unfolds from Moten (2003, 2016) and Chandler's (2013) formulation of black ontological distinction insofar as I historicize and materialize how black people use blackness. As I mentioned above, I also draw on Sylvia Wynter's (1995) historical reframing of blackness via Columbian exchange to challenge common conceptions of coloniality and the production of the "New World" that foreground a dyadic opposition between European colonizers and the colonized people of the Americas. Wynter constructs a "triadic model" for thinking about the early modern invention of race through an exchange that depended upon an epistemic shift following Portuguese contact with Africa at the end of the fifteenth century. Finally, while the Foucauldian frame for the invention of modernity at the end of the eighteenth century postdates Wynter's beginning of modernity by three hundred years, Foucault's genealogical method, his attention to epistemic shifts, his conception of the modern soul, and his complex affective engagement with the archive all deeply inform this dissertation. Taken together, these perspectives ground my project in a conception of blackness as the absent modifier of modernity's expansion.

There is no topic in the world more vast than soul. Rather than tracing conceptions of soul from the beginning of time to the present, this project begins with the specific conceptions

of soul we find in Du Bois (1994) and, less crucially, in Foucault (2011), to trace a particular genealogy of black soul as a resource for black endurance. Specifically, Du Bois asserts that the black is interdicted from self-consciousness since the black can only understand their soul in a reflection of another. Du Bois famously refers to this split of consciousness as a "double consciousness" that produces a "peculiar sense": "One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (1994, 3). The shadow of the color line places a veil over the dark world. From this veiled reflection, the black gains in return a "second sight" that produces an asymmetrical relation to the light world insofar as the black can see into the light world but inhabitants of the light world can only see humanity reflected back. Foucault, on the other hand, describes soul as the "the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body" (1995, 30). The soul Foucault genealogically traces is not borne of sin, as modern theology presents. Rather the soul he describes is borne out of methods of discipline that produce knowledge. During a period of penal leniency in the 1800s, the "great reformers" called for "more humanity" in punishment (Foucault 2011,17, 75). Their demand was met with a transition towards a mode of punishment that did not focus on the body but focused on the soul. Foucault defines soul as the "punishment that acts in depth on the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations" (2011, 16). Foucault conceives of "soul" produced through the workings of modern power emerging out of the convergence of penal code and scientific knowledge.

Certainly, Du Bois's and Foucault's conceptions of soul differ. While this dissertation does not deal explicitly with Foucault conception of soul, I take into account how techniques of disciplinary power mark the black in my genealogy of black soul. Double consciousness is

predicated on disciplinary power insofar as the anti-black discourse surrounding black living during the early modern period, at the nadir of reconstruction, during the mid-twentieth century and in the present all rely on a presumption of black soul as dangerously different from European or white soul. These discourses of black inhumanity come from discourse of irrationalism by Arab traders in the early modern, racial science in the end of reconstruction, legal codes that dictated segregation in the sixties, and the presumption of black criminality in the present. Working through a lens of Foucault's disciplinary power, I am able to reframe Du Bois's notion of the color line as the problem of modernity insofar as black problemization repeats with a difference throughout modernity.

Building on these logics, this is the first project to develop Du Bois's (1994) "peculiar sense," a undertheorized aspect of double coconsciousness. I take a history of soul, conceived of as black collective feeling emerging from black discourse of living outside of the human through a black feminist lens. Specifically, I read Du Bois through the lens of the figure of the black feminine we find in Angela Davis's reading of Du Bois's *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil* in her 1972 article, "Reflections on a Black Women's Role in a Community of Slaves." This feminist intervention into Du Bois's conception of black soul genealogically records the resistant contours of the black soul: the double of black soul has a quality of refusal built into it that does not allow for an easy capture of the intimate details of black social life. Later, in *Darkwater*'s chapter 7, "The Damnation of Women," Du Bois writes of the importance of black women to the dark world of the veil: "All the way back in these dim distances it is mother and mother of mothers who seem to count, while fathers are shadowy memories" (1920, 168). Davis's attention to the negative freedom of black women in the context of black domesticity reframes Du Bois's

writing about soul. Du Bois's conception of soul as mother, read through the lens of Davis's attention to the negative freedom of black women, repositions blackness as domesticity.

Building off of this conceptual schema allows me to situate black soul in a history of the present conceived through the lens of the black feminine. The black feminine is at the heart of this inquiry which functions, at its core, as a history of the present. According to Angela Davis (1972), the myth of the black matriarch, made famous through the dissemination of the 1965 Moynihan Report and spread in black intellectual history by parts of the Black Power movement, places the problem of blackness at the feet of black women. Davis refutes these myths by arguing that the black woman's resistance and importance to the black community ensures the survival of her people through the social reproduction of the black slave quarters:

> There is a strange twist of affairs: in the infinite anguish of ministering to the needs of the men and children around her (who were not necessarily members of her immediate family), she was performing the only labor of the slave community which could not be directly and immediately claimed by the oppressor. (Davis 1972, 87)

Davis's reference to "a strange twist of affairs" refers to the black feminine's capacity to use the burdens of gender to her community's advantage. Even more, the black feminine's twofold role as a valued slave and sexual object allowed her to reproduce social relations not immediately graspable by the white slave master.

Returning to Du Bois, I show in the dissertation how, through the logic of modernity, the "image-making power" of the black feminine becomes the veil of the dark world. Her ability to use her gendered burdens as techniques of survival becomes, in this schema, the condition of possibility for the dark world's illegibility. Through double consciousness, the black feminine reflects the humanity of whites because her darkness is the invisible backdrop and condition of visibility of humanity-as-white. Davis calls the black feminine's strange relationship to gender

one of slavery's supreme ironies; black women were released from the chains of the feminine myth to be slaves (Davis 1972, 88). In this way, the black feminine plays with the logic of gender as foundational to modernity's expansion. Curiously, at the same time the black feminine's "strange twist of fate" renders black men accomplices in the reproduction of the slave's quarter. However, their historical resentment of this strange gender relation echoes into our historical present.

Analysis of *Feeling* Like a Problem

The question that annotates every line of this dissertation is W.E.B. Du Bois's often quoted question, one he refused to answer and seldom entertains, "How does it feel to be a problem?" (1994, 2). Building on Du Bois's often cited refrain, this dissertation contributes to the nascent field of black affect studies. Specifically, my engagement took the form of a genealogy of black soul to make an intervention into affect theory. In Du Boisian terms, affect theory, or what has come to be known as the affective turn, derives from the light world. The affective turn is hard to track, but is loosely defined as scholarship written since 1995 in both the humanities and the social sciences (Sedgwick and Frank 1995) on feelings, emotions, passions, sentiments, intensity, vibrations, skin prickling, techniques, functions, or vibes felt, sensed, or generating from a body. Here a body can be any animal (including human), some other being or object, space or time that is created through natural processes and/or produced through the intervention of another. This broad definition stems from three primary schools of thought within which the study of affect falls. The first is a Spinoza/Deleuze school of affect that thinks about the body in relation to the world. Affect, in their terms, is that which excites the body before the brain, giving the body a capacity to think. The second school of thought is Silvan Tomkins' realm of affect, which identifies nine affects in total that amplify drive. And the third is the queer

school of affect that very much resists definition but is most legible as the public feelings project, which seeks to think about feelings that persist through logics of capitalism, gender, white supremacy, and sexuality. From this examination of affect theory, many of these areas of study do not deal explicitly with the black. This dissertation contributes to a fourth strand of affect studies, black affect studies, by conceptualizing affect as the "peculiar sense" Du Bois links to double consciousness of black soul.

Black soul causes a problem for affect theory because affect theory lacks the analytic tools to think double consciousness as a "peculiar sense." One reason affect theory cannot think black soul is because affect theory tends to evade history. In this dissertation, I contest the presentism of affect theory by tracing a genealogy of black soul that goes back to the Columbian Exchange as described by Sylvia Wynter (1995) in her essay "1492: A New World View." Many of the present violent conditions of black life are framed by the afterlives of the attachment of blackness to the bodies of West Africans during the Columbian Exchange. By bracketing or even eliding this and other histories, affect studies operates in a transhistorical present that presumes a past without any interrogation of the historical, political, and cultural underpinnings of contemporary Spinozist/Deleuzian, psychological, or queer conceptions of affect. Subsequently, the presentism of affect theory obfuscates the violence of black becoming in the past to maintain limitations around knowledge about black affect in the present.

A corollary of affect theory's lack of history is its production of an unmarked universal subject of inquiry that both relies on and produces the unintelligibility of blackness as history's murmur. Many affect scholars rely upon an unmodified universal human of inquiry (Spinoza 1665; Tomkins 1962; Deleuze and Guattari 1993; Sedgwick and Frank 1995; Massumi 2002; Gregg and Siegworth 2010). The universality of this human both assumes and elides its

whiteness insofar as feminist and race studies argue that the universal subject circulates implicitly as white. Affect theory's reliance on a white universal cannot adequately speak to the analytic specificity of the black since it refuses to contend with the history of modernity that marks the black as inhuman other. While other studies of affect emerging from the queer public feelings project attempt to deal with the raced capacity of affect, it could be argued that they treat the black as an interlude in their larger project of focusing on a universal (queer) human (Cvetkovich 2003; Berlant 2011). Or in the case of the work of José Muñoz (2006) and Jasbir Puar (2007), these affect theorists analyze specific experiences of affect emerging from "feeling brown" (Muñoz) or a critique of homonationalism through the racialization of the terrorist (Puar). Both Muñoz's and Puar's work make considerable contributions to knowledge about racialized affects, but neither explicitly focuses their studies of race through the lens of anti-blackness. Even more, the histories both Muñoz's and Puar's work trace stem from a figuration of humanity, from which the black is excluded.

Even with the problems of history and the white universal human, my critiques of affect studies do not foreclose the use of affect for the study of black soul. What affect theory does add to this project is the conception that affect, feeling, and emotion are transindividual. Affect, emotion, and feeling are not fetishes that emerge from a singular self. Instead, they emanate from a collective experience and have a historical specificity (Ahmed 2004). This project centers those who inhabit the color line and are marked by the black feminine's "image-making power" that covers over the abyss of soul produced through black collectively. Affect's ability to circulate and mark others is the fundamental basis of my theory of black affect. As such, the transitive quality of affect produces the collective experience of black soul.

Peculiar Sense as Black Affect

Given the history of black soul's violent production as divided, this dissertation contributes to black affect studies to address and respond to this history. I propose a reconceptualization of Du Bois's "peculiar sense" of double consciousness as black affect. I define peculiar sense by drawing on its multivalent definition of sense that refers to perception, sensation, and meaning. I conceive of peculiar sense as a mode of perception emerging from experiences of anti-blackness that produce strategies for enduring its violence. Black perception as peculiar sense can most easily be seen in histories of black endurance in the midst of anti-blackness, an endurance that emerges from black domesticity. I build on Angela Davis's (1972) provocative argument that black women's domestic work was the only form of labor the slave master could not immediately apprehend or have complete knowledge of by rereading Du Bois's double consciousness as a mode of consciousness externalized. The externalization of consciousness is produced through the black feminine's image-making power, a power that covers over the dark abyss of soul. I take a history of the black feminine "image-making power" by conceiving of the language of the black feminine as sensation whose vibratory expression tells a history of how blacks continue to endure. My historical tracing shows, from the early modern to the present, blacks' use of "peculiar sense" to make meaning by collecting bits, scraps, and fragments of black histories of living that render soul as a counter-archive. The counter-archive of soul is not easily apprehended through traditional historical research methods. Through genealogical research methods, this project offers peculiar sense as method for reading black history that takes into account the gaps, breaks, and absences that constitute black history.

Consequently, I argue that blacks have historically used soul, another word for collective black feeling, to produce a counter-archive of soul based in domestic practices. Drawing on this

black counter-archive, my genealogy shows how black folks use soul to endure an anti-black world. Through archival research on soul food and soulful home aesthetics, I address the persistent question posed by W.E.B. Du Bois: "How does it feel to be a problem?" (1995, 2). Working with the kind of large historical archive required by genealogical analysis, I analyze black feminine tactics of collective survival from Columbus's encounter with West Africans in 1482 to the emergence of Black Lives Matter in the present.

This genealogy of black soul thus contributes to affect studies by offering peculiar sense as a conceptual schema for understanding black living in spite of anti-blackness. Through genealogical methods, I write a history of soul that centers the repetition of black spectacular death avoided by other studies of racialized emotion. My archival research of historical and artistic accounts of soul, shown in black women's labor, contributes to a new subfield within studies of emotion and feeling: black affect studies. My intervention changes studies of emotion by arguing that black soul is a transindividual phenomenon produced through practices of living in a history of loss and devastation.

More concretely, portraying peculiar sense as a mode of perception expressed in the objects of black domesticity materializes affect by tracing a history of feeling, sensation, and vibration in traditional archives, art museums, my momma's kitchen, cookbooks, and poetry. In effect, this tracing materializes black affect and sidesteps affect theory's focus on the human that is historically ungrounded. In contrast, peculiar sense provides a different account of affect borne from a space of exclusion from the human. Blacks rely on peculiar sense as a technique of emotional endurance in response to living in the wake of a history of loss and devastation.

From this perspective, my archival work provides a contour, shape, or fuzzy outline of soul based on the black's exclusion from the human. Peculiar sense has a level of refusal built in:

the objects discussed in this dissertation resist my own will to know them fully and portray a singular truth in my account. Rather, I conceptualize peculiar sense as an *approximation* of the sensations, perceptions, and meanings of the object's "speech" based on my own experience with them. More succinctly, peculiar sense is not static. Peculiar sense is operationalized here as murmurs, sensations, and vibrations. As such, peculiar sense signals the presence of a constitutive excess that subtends black living. That excess emerges from the abyss of black soul, an abyss covered over by the black feminine image-making power.

The dissertation's secondary interventions are in the interdisciplinary fields of black feminist studies and critical black studies, which curiously have developed separately. I bring them together by insisting black domestic labor contributes to the black radical tradition (e.g., Davis 1972; Combahee River Collective 1986; Robinson 2000). Again, a crucial component of this study of black soul is my engagement with the black feminine as a textured space of collective experience produced in the abyssal break of black soul. As I mentioned above, I use Davis to reread Du Bois through the lens of the figure of the black feminine. Davis's feminist intervention into Du Bois's conception of black soul genealogically records the resistant contours of the black soul: the double of black soul has a quality of refusal built into it that does not allow for an easy capture of the intimate details of black social life. Davis grounds her claim about the negative freedom of black domesticity in Du Bois: "In the words of W.E.B. Du Bois '. . . our women in black had freedom contemptuously thrust upon them'" (Davis 1972, 87). Later, in *Darkwater*, in the chapter entitled "The Damnation of Women," Du Bois writes of the importance of black women to the dark world of the veil: "All the way back in these dim distances it is mother and mother of mothers who seem to count, while fathers are shadowy memories" (1920, 168). Davis's attention to the negative freedom of black women in the context

of black domesticity reframes Du Bois's writing about soul. Du Bois's conception of soul as mother, read through the lens of Davis's attention to the negative freedom of black women, repositions blackness as domesticity. Following Davis, I draw on the black feminine to relocate soul-as-affect in the discontinuity of a recursive temporality that recirculates blackness as affect, like sweet potato pie or 7up cake. I contend that the domestic production of soul—another word for emotion or feeling—is foundational to black survival. My tracing of soul shows that black women create objects of domesticity to counter the intensification of anti-black violence on a collective level.

Genealogy as an Affective Method

The dissertation provides a method to take a history of feeling outside of the universal white human through genealogical research. The fracture of the black soul is the object of this method. Specifically, to expose the fracture of the black soul is to reinvestigate the history that undergirds the westward expansion of modernity. I approach this history by conducting a genealogy of the murmur emanating from the abyss of soul. In *History of Madness*, Foucault describes what he calls the "murmur" of "unreason" as the dull sound of an absence of history and of language speaking to itself. Not to be confused with a historical root or singular origin that produces absolute truth, the murmur of history's absence is also history's condition of possibility. As Foucault puts it: "The great *oeuvre* of the history of the world is indelibly accompanied by the absence of an *oeuvre*" (2006, xxxi). Drawing on Foucault, I argue that the murmur of blackness comes from the repetition of the black soul's division and the intensification of the violence through which soul is produced as that which makes history possible. Foucault describes this conception of history:

> The plenitude of history is only possible in the space, both empty and peopled at the same time, of all the words without language that appear to anyone who lends an

> ear, as a dull sound from beneath the history, the obstinate murmur of a language talking to itself—without any speaking subject and without an interlocutor, wrapped up in itself, with a lump in the throat, collapsing before it ever reaches any formulation and returning without a fuss to silence that it never shook off. The charred root of meaning. (2006, xxxi-xxxii)

Foucault's early reference, in *History of Madness*, to an "empty and peopled" space, frames this genealogy of black soul in the break. History is critical for the genealogist, but only if she refuses the seduction of absolutes in the form of suprahistorical perspectives (Foucault 2006, 86). In other words, the genealogist must avoid the habit of reducing various epistemes' contingencies into one all-encompassing totality; she must forego a history that is interested in recognition and wanting to "fix" displacements of the past (Foucault 2006, 86–87). Genealogy requires a refusal of a singular origin of black soul. Even more, this dissertation refuses the presumption of a subject as given, as a substance, in the tracing of its emergence. I track black soul genealogically through its work as a double that makes possible the light world. Or in other words, I take a history of the "veil" (Du Bois 1994, 2) of the dark world that Du Bois asserts divides light and dark worlds**.**

Hence, I contend that genealogy is an integral way to account for the absences and voids in black history. My use of genealogy goes against the grain of black studies. Scholars such as Alexander Weheliye critique "the lacunae of racism as an object of knowledge" (2014, 57) in Foucault's work. Political theorist Brady Heiner (2007) points out the absence-presence of these "lacunae" by critiquing Foucault's inability to ethically acknowledge the influence of the Black Panther Party in developing his shift from archeology in the 1960s to genealogy in the 1970s. The most salient critiques are critical of Foucault's refusal to engage the racialization of carceral power (Weheliye 2014; Heiner 2007; James 1998; James 1998) or of his refusal to address the ontological question of what Calvin Warren calls black nonbeing (Moten 2003; Ferreira da Silva

2017; Warren 2018). Subsequently a critique of Foucault as anti-black has been collapsed with a method of genealogy; hence genealogy is an anti-black method because Foucault himself is anti-black. These longstanding critiques of Foucault in his failure to address blackness have rendered him an enemy of black studies.

By contrast, I proceed from this assumption that Foucault can be useful for black studies by conceiving of Du Bois's method as genealogical. That said, his "murmurs" are not the same "murmurs" to which I have "lent my ear" (Foucault 2006, xxxi) during my archival research on black soul. Black studies' critiques of genealogy assume that Foucault is the only thinker who uses genealogy as a method. Drawing on Nahum Chandler's deconstructive reading of Du Bois and blackness in *X: The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought*, I present Du Bois, as Chandler does, as a dark figure that both usurps and disrupts the genealogical line of filiation that links Foucault to Nietzsche. In demonstrating how Du Bois engages a slightly different mode of genealogy than offered in Foucault's Nietzschean conception, Chandler stresses the importance of Du Bois's reflections on how his own historical emergence and personal experience of race in the United States mediate his study of a concept of race. Du Bois's discussion of race in *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward An Autobiography of A Race Concept* moves through his own genealogical line to expose the incidental events leading to his racial designation as black. And while this conception of a genealogical line might appear at first glance to be antithetical to Foucault's idiosyncratic understanding of genealogy, it is precisely Du Bois's designation as black that *breaks* the lines of continuity between him and his white forefather, precisely the kind of continuous line that has defined genealogy in the traditional sense and against which Foucault argues for a different conception of genealogy.

As a result, I create a black genealogical method that draws on Foucault and Du Bois. The archive of black soul is a "distinctive generality" (Chandler 2013, 80) much like the archives Foucault conceives of through his own taste and his own dread. In other words, the genealogist must avoid the habit of reducing various epistemes' contingencies into one all-encompassing totality; she must forego a history that is interested in recognition and wanting to *fix* displacements of the past (Foucault 2006, 86–87). Genealogy, then, is a study of historical voids produced by encounters in fields of power. These voids refuse language: they can only be sensed. This is why I conceive of genealogy as an *affective* practice: a method in which the genealogist must *enter* the darkness, *enter* the void, and battle the multiplicity of affects produced in that entering.

Applying the frame my method provides, I approach my investigation into soul's effects by deflecting the metaphysical question: What is black soul? Rather my research questions are generated through about the *how* of black soul: What does black soul do? Moreover, how does black soul do it? What can be learned from the descent and emergence of the black soul? Using these questions as a guide, I trace black soul's discursive production in texts and recordings written and spoken by black folks about the black soul by focusing on discourse by and about black people to understand their use of soul.

My research questions guided my archive search for the murmur of soul in the archives across the United States. My archive research shows that domesticity is constitutive of soul's enduring effects. In May 2018 for three days, I conducted research at the Schomburg Center for Research on Black Culture in New York City. I viewed materials relating to soul in the papers of Ella Baker, James Baldwin, and Malcom X. Additionally, I surveyed the Schomburg's extensive African American cookbook collection. In August of 2018 I traveled to Cambridge,

Massachusetts, to the Radcliffe Institute for Independent Study's Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. The Schlesinger awarded me a research grant to spend three weeks viewing Ella Fitzgerald's, June Jordan's, and Florence Kennedy's papers. While at Schlesinger Library, I found a draft copy of a cookbook by Aldeen Louise Davis of Muscatine, Iowa, "All About Soul: Cooking and Other Related Topics," in Ella Fitzgerald's papers. My encounter with Ms. Aldeen's cookbook confirms the foundational question of my project: What is the capacity of black soul? Ms. Aldeen's cookbook marks studies of black emotion, not only as a unitary individuating experience so often characterized in other studies of emotion that produce a universal human, the collective capacity of black emotion produced by living in spite of anti-black violence.

My research into Ms. Aldeen's collecting of black Iowa history is vital to the production of soul as an archive of black living. In June of 2019, after conducting additional research on Ms. Aldeen, I traveled to the University of Alabama's David Walker Lupton African American Cookbook Archive to view a published version of Ms. Aldeen's cookbook I found at the Schlesinger, *Soulfood and Thought*. In addition to reviewing Ms. Aldeen cookbook, I spent a week surveying over seventy-five soul food cookbooks in the collection. Presented with two different version of Ms. Aldeen's cookbook, I used research funds from my American Council of Learned Society's Dissertation Completion Fellowship to travel to Iowa City, Iowa, to the University of Iowa Archives on the History of Women for a week. I viewed Ms. Aldeen's papers and found she wrote two different cookbooks. The first I viewed at the Schlesinger was drafted in the mid-sixties. Ms. Aldeen was unable to publish the first version since *Ebony* refused to publish a cookbook without standardized measurement and *Good Housekeeping* was not interested in a "ethnic" cookbook at the time. The second cookbook published in 1984, titled

Soul—Food For Thought, is based on her newspaper column "Soul Food and Thought," which was published for more than ten years in Muscatine, Iowa.

My conception of black genealogy undergirds my decision to rely on my own affective ties to objects to choose which ones I would write about in my dissertation. My research method produced . It is important to know that my genealogical method of reading archival materials is informed by Foucault's affective reading of archival evidence. In the brief 1979 essay, "Lives of Infamous Men," Foucault describes his reading practice as seeking "sparks" that left "impressions" on him that were physical:

> This is not a book of history. The selection found here was guided by nothing more substantial than my taste, my pleasure, an emotion, laughter, surprise, a certain dread, or some other feeling whose intensity I might have trouble justifying, now that the first moment of discovery has passed. (Foucault 1979, 157)

Much of Foucault's archival work relies upon his experience of the "spark" of "poem-lives" (1979, 159), the archival traces of those who were subject to power's effects. In paying attention to the affective resonances of Foucault's archival method, I hope to contribute to the growing work on Foucault's relevance to affect theory (see esp. Guilmette). Transposing Foucault's poem-lives as Du Boisian song-lives, I observe and interpret archival lives that spark affective registers in me, seeking materials that speak to my taste, pleasure, emotion, laughter, surprise, a sense of dread, or some other indescribable feelings in the song-lives of blacks.

Since the project focuses upon the discourse of black living, the writing style of the dissertation takes its inspiration from Christina Sharpe's 2016 book *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being.* Sharpe's poetics moves between personal narrative and theory in an effort to escape the violence of abstraction. The effect of such a maneuver, according to Sharpe, is "to illustrate the ways our individual lives are always swept up in the wake produced and determined, though

not absolutely, by the afterlives of slavery" (2016, 7). While wake work is not the focus of this dissertation, I draw inspiration from Sharpe's poetics for two reasons: First, I too want to minimize the violent effects of abstraction. And, second I want to build on Sharpe's poetics at the level of style.

The dissertation includes portions of my personal history to show how soul annotated and subtended my life and the lives of my family to materialize soul's work. As my opening vignette demonstrates, there are many reasons why I wrote the dissertation about soul and my personal relationship to it as an important object of endurance in my own life. At the outset of the project I wanted nothing more than to talk about soul at a distance and keep my relationship to soul's effects separate from my history with soul. I frantically looked for other people's stories to tell. The more I tried to write about soul from a distance, the more the object resisted my attempts to feel its murmurs and sing its song. Later I realized I bought way too much into my own image-making power. I too am a repetition with a difference of the many images of blackness that prefigure my emergence in history and will necessarily condition my descent into the other side of the veil that divides the living from the dead.

Second, I build upon Sharpe's poetics at the level of the sentence, phrase, and word choice. Language failed me many times over during my writing about soul and its affects. The resistance of the black object is "anagrammatical" (Spillers 1987; Moten 2003). In my attempt to concede to the expected forms of writing that academic discourse dictates blackness tripped me up and destabilized my performance of the human once again. While writing early drafts of chapters, I often typed phrases, words, and sentence structures that repeat the language of my black working-class family, what linguist Geoffrey K. Pullam (1999, 39) calls African American Vernacular English (AAVE), a dialect of Standard English that draws upon much of the

language and rules of Standard English but also has its own system of rules. Much like the writing of Zora Neale Hurston, who is one of the many black feminist patron saints of my dissertation, the writing moves between Standard English and AAVE throughout the dissertation—especially, since the objects of soul can only be expressed through black terms, phrases, transitions, and sentence structures produced in response to the peculiar conditions objects of soul emerge.

Chapter Summaries

My chapters unfold according to the structures provided by the primary sources I found in the archives. Chapter 1: Black Is a Soul: The Problem of Black Consciousness is structured like a song. Chapter 2: Soul: Food and Thought is inspired by a recipe for my momma's friend chicken. And chapter 3: Black Eros in the Archive of Soul: What's Love Got to Do With It? is a love letter to soul. More importantly, the chapters and their contents are inspired by my own experience of these objects in the counter-archive of soul. The contents of each chapter show evidence of black song-lives that endure through the pragmatic production of soul. Black soul's production is accidental; these cultural artifacts are produced in the historical conditions in which blacks found themselves. Black soul emerges on a stage of forces where inhabitants of different worlds collide. In this retelling of black soul's descent and emergence, I study artifacts from the fracturing of the black soul through the problem of the color line.

More specifically, chapter 1 provides a theoretical framework to define terms that are central to this project: soul, black feminine, and peculiar sense. This chapter focuses on the invention of the human in modernity by drawing on Joseph White's "Black is a Soul," excised from June Jordan's 1970 edited poetry collection *Soulscript: Afro-American Poetry*, found in her papers at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women. I ask: how does Paul Stephen

Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* and Joseph White's poem "Black is a Soul" materializes the peculiar figuration of black inhumanity? This chapter focuses on the invention of the human by way of a close reading of Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* to trace the emergence of the human through a lens of the black feminine. The black feminine is the tain of humanity's mirror. The black feminine's exclusion from the human legitimizes European expansion into the New World and subtends the history of this expansion. I reframe the problem of the color line Du Bois names in 1903 as the problem of modernity to show how the color line upholds modernity's networks of power through the "image-making power" of the black feminine. Building on this reading, I present White's poem as a visualization of the abyss of soul that represents the underside of modernity's network of relations. The black feminine covers over this abyss through her image-making power, protecting the inner workings of the black living in the abyss of soul. The abyss of black soul is my archive. The murmurs emerging from it produce a mute surplus that I frame as an excess of sensation experienced as eeriness in my encounter with the archive.

Hence I argue, through exclusionary practices, the color line mediates the division of the black soul producing peculiar sense. This division of soul through the color line produces a constitutive excess that I reframe as a form of excluded language that Foucault conceives of, in *History of Madness*, "The Absence of an Oeuvre" as a mode of language that produces a mute surplus in its doubling. I conceive of peculiar sense as a mute surplus shown in Du Bois's inheritance of his grandmother's music passed down to him through many generations. Du Bois does not know the meaning of the words of his grandmother's music, but he does know its feelings, which he describes in *Dusk of Dawn: An Autobiography of a Race Concept* as "African feeling." Moreover, this excess speaks through vibration inducing an experience of eeriness emerging from a black history of soul.

Chapter 2 draws on the previous chapter's figuration of peculiar sense as constitutive excess to engage soul as food. More specifically, Soul: Food and Thought expands upon my reframing of peculiar sense as an excess to explore sentiments: sense, sensation, affect, and emotion in fried chicken. Fried chicken does not make up the totality of soul food; it is one part of a larger universe of dishes such as collard greens, corn bread, potato salad, gumbo, BBQ, fried catfish, black-eyed peas, and chicken bog, to name a few. Soul food tells a story of how blacks survived slavery. Soul food is uniquely American. Soul food's Americanness is found in the Atlantic slave trade. It left a mixture of cultures and alterations that undergird American life, including its food ways (William-Forson 2006, 14). Much of soul food's repertoire is found in the combination of African, Native American, and European cooking techniques and ingredients mixed and re-mixed at every turn of history's spiral. However, soul food gets its signature taste in its thoughtful preparation. In each bite, one can taste black history. Each cook's preparation seasons soul food with memories about those who came before, those to come, and commemorations of good times and bad.

Therefore, I argue black history is sensed in the taste of soul food. Drawing on Cedric Robinson's (2000) concept of the "black radical tradition," which he defines as a form of black collective intelligence gathered through the accretion of struggle, I assert that Robinson's exclusion of black women, specifically black women's domestic work, from the "black radical tradition" elides social practices vital to black living that have an element of training built in. Rather through formal and informal practices of cooking, the black feminine's domestic labor produces and reproduces collective intelligence about food bound by the historical conditions in which it emerges as well as well as many more aspects of black living in the kitchen. Building on blacks' exclusion from the human that focuses on the black feminine bodies in the early modern

period, I contend that the exclusion of the black domestic work from the black radical tradition is the condition of possibility for soul food such as fried chicken to express history through taste. More broadly, soul food finds its affective valence through a reproduction of the color line that positions fried chicken as the dividing line between white and black constructions of the human in the late modern period. Ultimately, a taste of black history provides a brief respite from the horrors of anti-blackness in its seasoning, peppered with pain and pleasure.

My archival research on soul and soul food leads to my final chapter where I investigate the conditions present for me to take a history of soul. Chapter 3: Black Eros in the Archive of Soul builds on the previous chapters by showing how peculiar sense and endurance operates in black everyday life and in the archives of soul. After many days in museums, archives, and pondering my own family's relationship to soul I realized its love. What I call black eros is the condition of possibility for soul, and love undergirds what chapter 3 theorizes as black archival living. In this culminating chapter, love is materialized through the collecting and keeping of black history that produces the counter-archive of soul in the first place. I conceive of this love as black eros in the archive of soul by following the vibration emerging from a dark place beneath modernity. It is the vibrations from this dark place that condition my own ability to speak and write about soul as a historical formulation of a collective black feeling. These vibrations manifested through nothing more than my own experience of eeriness, taste, dread, and love in the archive of soul. Ultimately, these vibrations left such an impression on me that, I realized, were signals of black endurance, from the first contact in 1482 on the shores of Senegal to the present. Black endurance is grounded in the production and practice of love shown in black archival living.

Consequently, I argue black archival living is produced through love. Black archival living refers to the practices of collecting, keeping, and repeating different experiences, stories, songs, jokes, big lies, and recipes that speak to black techniques of endurance. In other words, the transmission of black techniques of black endurance emerge through the collecting of soul. In this chapter, I trace black archival living through Frank Wilderson's account of the impossibility of black sociality let alone love; Du Bois's keeping and repeating of his great-grandmother's music; Vertamae Smart-Grosvernor's collecting of vibration in her kitchen through annotations that mark her peculiar cookbook without measurements; Ella Fitzgerald's cookbook collection at the Schlesinger Library; and Aldeen Davis's collecting of soul food recipes and histories of black Iowa. All of these practices of collecting materialize black love's effects.

Soul in the black's use gives us a counter-archive borne in contestation to the violent repetition of the soul splitting violence of the color line. Through the repetition of this violence, soul becomes an independent concept within black history and culture that refers to a variety of ephemera that speak of love, loss, and endurance of an anti-black world. Yet, not all hear the murmur of soul-as-counter-archive performs. Instead soul says what it says through a feeling of love that resounds from the vibrations that serve as evidence of its absence-presence. Admittedly, our archives, our lives, are incomplete, violent, full of loss and unrecoverable connections. But by collecting and safeguarding these artifacts of black soul, we tell a story of black archive living over and over again to all those willing to feel black loves' reverberations. This is how we remain and continue to endure.

This dissertation concludes with a refrain on my own reason and occasion for soul. Through a discussion of endurance as a force of black domesticity, I provide a brief sketch of

soul's capacity to provide a break from anti-blackness, suspending its effects, allowing for a deep breath of enjoyment, if only for a little while.

Chapter 1: Black Is a Soul: The Problem of Black Consciousness

Black Is a Soul by Joseph White:

Down
Down into the fathomless Depths
Down into the abyss beneath the stone
Down still farther, to the very bottom
Of the infinite
Where black-eyed pea and greens are stored

Where de lawd sits among the melon rinds.
A dark blue sound (funky & barefoot)
entered & sang a tear for the People
Of black women (buxom & beautiful)
With nappy heads & cocoa filled breasts
Nippled with molasses,
& their legs sensual & long beneath short bright dresses
& of black men greasy from the sun-soaked
Fields sitting in the shade,
their guitars, the willow & the
squatting sun weeking authentic blues

These quantums of pure soul
Who pick cotton under the rant rays of the sun
Who eat hot greasy fish, chitlins, corn pone,
Pig feet, fat back & drink wine
On Sat. nights

Who get happy & swing tambourine & sing
them there spirituals
Who are blessed by the power of poverty
Who bathe their feet in streamlets of
simplicity
Who are torn by the insolence & depression
of bigot blonde America
Are the essence of beauty
The very earth
The good earth
The black earth

In these moments when my man preaches
About a no good nigger woman who did
him wrong
My fingers begin to pop

My feet jump alive
The blue sound clutches to it bosom
Until I become sound
In these moments when the sun is blue
When the rivers flow with wine
When the neck bone tree is in blossom
I raise my down bent kinky head to Charlie
and shout
I am black, I am black
I'm from Look Back

Introduction

I heard it before I saw it. It spilled out of the small room that the curator of the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, placed it within. The shadows were underscored by an eerie sound emerging from the room. It drew me in, stopping me in my tracks. Paul Stephen Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* stunned me. I knew without knowing that this installation has everything to do with blackness, double consciousness, and soul, even though these were not the terms I was thinking through when I saw it. I walked into the room where the installation was placed. Immediately, I was enamored. It moved me. The installation caused such stirrings in my soul that I rudely interrupted two white teenagers who were using the small room where the installation was staged as a place to coordinate their ride home. I was annoyed. They were giggling and talking loudly. They had no reverence for what lay before them. They overlooked its sound, its play of shadows, its beauty, and the feeling that the object spoke without saying a word. Perhaps they couldn't hear it? Maybe they couldn't feel it? My loud "excuse me!" shook the room. The intensity of my words bounced off the walls joining in with the eerie excess of the installation. Immediately it drew me further into its meanings. The teenagers left in a hurry. I had successfully activated my scary black auntie voice enough for them to know I meant business. I got worried that their dash for the exit meant a security guard would soon follow. Fate that day sided with me and no such violence occurred.

I sat with her—the installation—forging a weird kinship. She spoke through vibration. She spoke of my history. She spoke of the struggle my people went through to build a life out of scraps. She was scraps, bits of old technology left behind and forgotten and gathered anew to make a new life out of the old. Each one of the CRT televisions was different. Some had knobs, some had VCR ports, others were large, some were small, some flickered, some shone brightly as if they were still new, some were black like night, others were grey or maybe charcoal? Each television was different than the others. Each one spoke in a different voice at a different cadence at a different time. But their speaking was beautiful and I did not know if I should laugh or cry. Perhaps both? I felt embarrassed too. I had come to the High to view the main collection: the notebooks of Jean-Michel Basquiat. Instead, I had dragged my partner to an unpopulated floor of the museum, to a small room. Once there I had yelled at two white teenagers in my auntie voice so I could cry over old televisions? I lost myself in those vibrations of the installation. The fact that she spoke is all that mattered to me. Even more, she spoke to me. I cannot say for sure what she said but I felt it, I knew it matters, and if given the chance I will honor her by singing her song.

Benjamin's 2016 video installation *Black Is the Color* is made of forty-one CRT televisions stacked in one row of eight televisions on top of three rows of ten televisions. Placed apart from the other TVs lies another row of three very small televisions that sit off to the right side of the installation. Each screen repeats part of Nina Simone's song, "Black Is the Color of my True Love's Hair," at slightly different frequencies. Each screen flickers as a video of Simone plays; her moving image does not take up the entirety of the screen; the circular negative space that surrounds her is black. The installation's floor is made of a massive tangle of television cords, making it impossible to see where one cord starts and another cord ends. Cords

are spread over the fronts of the televisions; not obstructing the view of the screens, they are, rather, arteries of connection between the televisions. These crawling cords haphazardly lead to the larger piles of cords that cover the ground surrounding the installation. The subtle differences of articulation of sound between the televisions create an eerie excess that bends Simone's words in the song. She sings "black is *a* color" instead of the title of the song, "black is *the* color." The combined effects of light and sound emerging from the installation render any encounter with it strange.

My experience with *Black Is the Color* echoes Du Bois's experience of seeing Jubilee Hall at Fisk University for the first time. This building for him was made up of the sorrow songs of blacks that he describes as having a message for the world. According to Du Bois, songs are the ways the "soul of slaves spoke to men." Du Bois goes on:

> They that walked in darkness sang songs in the olden days—Sorrow Songs—for they were weary at heart. And so before each thought that I have written in this book I have set a phrase, a haunting echo of these weird old songs in which the soul of the black slave spoke to men. Ever since I was a child these songs stirred in me strangely. They came out of the south unknown to me, one by one, and yet at once I knew them as of me and of mine. Then in after years when I came to Nashville I saw the great temple builded of these songs towering over the pale city. To me Jubilee Hall seemed ever made of the songs themselves, and it bricks were red with the blood and dust of toil. Out of them rose for me the morning, noon, and night, bursts of wonderful melody, full of the voices of my brother and sisters, full of the voices of the past. (1994, 536)

Jubilee Hall is the oldest academic building on the campus of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. The building was built from the proceeds from the Fisk Jubilee tour, which began in 1871. During the early years of the university, money was limited and the singers toured the world to raise funds for the university. Presently the building still stands. While the interior of the building has changed and is now an undergraduate dormitory, the exterior remains the same. In 1974 the building was placed on a register for historic buildings. I suspect the importance of

this building for Du Bois is twofold: first, the building is a result of the "weird songs" "that stirred" in him "strangely" and, second, the building is a testament to black perseverance for education after being denied education through enslavement. Fisk's building, much like *Black Is the Color*, is a testament to the capacity of black soul to make a whole world out of scraps.

Similar to Du Bois, I see Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* as a testament to black soul insofar as the combination of Nina Simone's haunting, repetitive singing and the flickering of old televisions stirred my soul so much that I knew before knowing that it sang a song of what Du Bois calls peculiar sense—the soul of those who live in the afterlives of slavery's destruction. Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* is a representation of black soul that does not rely upon the human to convey its message. We have lost much—those of us who continue to live in the wake of slavery's aftermath—but we have gained so much as well. My encounter with Benjamin's installation reproduces Du Bois's admiration of Fisk Hall with a difference. Each one of the televisions in Benjamin's installation produces a new meaning beyond its original intent. In effect, Benjamin's installation is an archive of leftover scraps that performs the very problem I seek to question. In other words, *Black Is the Color* is an artistic testament to black living outside of the human that manifests as soul.

This inquiry explores how the black is excluded from the human by drawing on the opening epigraph: Joseph White's "Black Is a Soul," excised from June Jordan's 1970 edited poetry collection *Soulscript: Afro-American Poetry*, found in her papers at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. I ask: how does Paul Stephen Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* and Joseph White's "Black Is a Soul" materialize the peculiar figuration of black inhumanity? This chapter focuses on the invention of the human by way of a close reading of Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* to trace the emergence of the human through a lens of the black

feminine. The black feminine is the tain of humanity's mirror. The black feminine's exclusion from the human legitimizes European expansion into the New World and subtends the history of this expansion. I reframe the problem of the color line Du Bois names in 1903 as the problem of modernity to show how the color line upholds modernity's networks of power through the "image-making power" of the black feminine. Building on this reading, I present White's poem as a visualization of the abyss of soul that represents the underside of modernity's network of relations. The black feminine covers over this abyss through her image-making power, protecting the inner workings of the black living in the abyss of soul. The abyss of black soul is my archive. The murmurs emerging from it produce a mute surplus that I frame as an excess of sensation experienced as eeriness in my encounter with the archive.

Through my reading of White's and Benjamin's work, I argue the repetition of violent techniques of encounter and observation on the part of European travelers during the early modern black soul emerge as an hollow that contains and suspends meaning emerging through repetition of the black's performance of the human. Ultimately, peculiar sense in the early modern refers to the eerie sensations and perceptions emerging from the abyss of soul that cannot be read, translated, or copied, but only sensed.

I take a history of soul to conceive of how blacks use soul to endure an anti-black world. Taking a history of soul requires a method capable of dealing with the absences and gaps that constitute black history. Genealogy is a "history of the present," a phrase Michel Foucault uses to describe his method that is attuned to the "murmurs" emerging from the breaks, gaps, and absences of history. The genealogist's primary task is to trace a history of events: "it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history—in sentiments,

love, conscience, instincts," all of which are aspects of what Foucault calls soul (1977, 76). Foucault's genealogical method is a critique of traditional history's search for origins. Much of traditional history conceives of an event as a grand occasion, such as a battle, treaty, or some other such scene. Genealogy, by contrast, records a "reversal of an arrangement of forces, a usurpation of power, or an appropriation of vocabulary turned against those who once used it, a feeble domination that grows lax" (Foucault 1977, 88). In other words, a genealogical event is that which causes a shift in the field of thought: an epistemic displacement (Wynter 1995) or transgression (Foucault 2010). Refusing the search for origins, the genealogist bypasses the problem of metaphysics by eschewing the certainty of universal principles or values (Foucault 1977, 87). Instead, the genealogist seeks to record the descent and emergence of events in their disparity (Foucault 1977, 79), which is to say that this history does not give a sense of forward propulsion in its accounting; rather, genealogy registers events in their discontinuity to reframe our historical present as contingent. Hence, genealogy requires relentless "knowledge of details, patience, and a vast accumulation of source material" (Foucault 1977, 76–77). Consequently, this project uses genealogy as its method and records the descent and emergence of black soul even in the instances where there is no evidence of soul.

I am not the first person to do a genealogy of soul. Foucault's genealogy of soul, published as *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, was printed in French in 1975, followed by the English translation in 1977. Here Foucault describes soul as the "the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body" (2011, 30). The soul Foucault genealogically traces is not borne of sin, as modern theology presents. Rather the soul he describes is borne out of methods of discipline that produce knowledge:

> This is the historical reality of this soul, which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint. This real, non-corporal soul is not a substance; it is the element in which are articulated the effects of a certain type of power and the reference of a certain type of knowledge, the machinery by which the power relations give rise to a possible corpus of knowledge, and knowledge extends and reinforces the effects of this power. On this reality-reference, various concepts have been constructed and domains of analysis carved out: psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc.; on it have been built scientific techniques and discourses, and the moral claims of humanism. (2011, 30)

In short, what Foucault describes as "soul" is produced through the workings of modern power emerging out of the convergence of penal code and scientific knowledge. Soul is not the remains of a reactivated ideology or substance. Instead soul imprisons the body of "those one supervises, trains and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized" (Foucault 2011, 29). Foucault describes the production of the modern soul through a historical analysis of the transition from torture of the body to disciplining of the soul through a "political anatomy of detail" (2011, 139). During a period of penal leniency in the 1800s, the "great reformers" called for "more humanity" in punishment (Foucault 2011, 17, 75). Their demand was met with a transition towards a mode of punishment that did not focus on the body but focused on the soul. Foucault defines soul as the "punishment that acts in depth on the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations" (2011, 16). While there remained a trace of physical torture in more humane forms of punishment, Foucault is concerned with this new form of punishment that made the human into an object of science through the production of a "shadow" (2011, 17–18). "Shadow" is the word Foucault uses to describe the judgement of the criminal's soul, since soul is not "juridically codifiable" (2011, 18). The criminal shadow encompasses "knowledge of the criminal, one's estimation of him, what is known about the relations between him, his past and his crime, and what might be expected of him in the future" (Foucault 1995, 18). These

estimations of the criminal's soul emerge through an interplay between medicine and jurisprudence that has occurred since the nineteenth century that seeks to find cause for the crime (Foucault 1995, 18). The goal of such judgement and subsequent punishment is to rehabilitate the criminal to make them a law-abiding member of society. Vitally, Foucault's genealogy of soul offers an important historical tracing of the transition between techniques of punishment from the body to soul.

However, Foucault's tracing of soul cannot account for the history of black spectacular death since he does not take into account the history of the New World in his genealogy. Foucault's conception of soul cannot contend with the ways blacks use soul as a way endure an anti-black world. Black soul is vital in my present. Trayvon Martin's death is a repetition of black spectacular death where vigilantes and police officers became judge, jury, and executioner all in one. Trayvon's death challenges the workings of disciplinary power insofar as his death presents a emergence of sovereign power in modern disciplinary power. According to Foucault, sovereign power functions through a set of laws that represents the will of the sovereign. If the king's subjects transgress the law, "the crime attacks the sovereign: it attacks him personally, since the law represents the will of the sovereign; it attacks him physically, since the force of the law is the force of the prince" (Foucault 1995, 47). Thus sovereign power gives the king the ability to punish at will. The king enacts his will through a public display of power that has a "juridico-political function" (Foucault 1995, 48) that intensifies the king's power on the body of the condemned. Trayvon's death challenges the transition to disciplinary power that Foucault names since his killer enacts a similar form of sovereign power in the present, even though we cut the head of the king off a long time ago. In place of the king is the will of whites and nonblack people of color to enact sovereign power in response to any explicit and implicit

transgression of the color line by blacks. The emergence of sovereign power shown in Trayvon's killing presents a dilemma. Sovereign power emerging in disciplinary power is accounted for in Foucault's schema of disciplinary power. Yet, the repetition of sovereign power's emergence in relation to blacks marks the peculiarity of its emergence insofar as the black is a limit point of the human that divides the human from the inhuman. The division between these categories is violently policed by the repetition of black spectacular death.

Moreover, Foucault's definition of soul cannot account for the unique ways blacks use soul through practices of living. In an American context, soul refers to a broad range of black cultural productions such as music and food. I trace soul's emergence in the publication of Du Bois's 1903 *Souls of Black Folks* during the period immediately following the nadir of reconstruction. *Souls*' publication is important since it historically marks the transition period between reconstruction and Jim Crow. I mark black souls' descent in the 1974 publication of Dick Gregory's *Dick Gregory's Natural Diet for Folks Who Eat: Cookin' with Mother Nature*. Gregory's manuscript rebukes black food practices emerging from slavery. Instead Gregory's book advocated for a lifestyle that embraced a vegetable-based diet while denouncing soul food's unhealthy reliance on pork to season food. Nonetheless, soul never really went away. Instead soul is often conceived of as a scholarly discourse on black American music that joins together black gospel music traditions and secular musical themes. There are countless stories to be told about soul music's emergence and descent. Yet, in my experience of soul, growing up in Las Vegas, Nevada, soul music was usually accompanied by the delicious flavors of soul food. My family had many talented cooks and I was in the kitchen at a very young age, first peeling, then cutting, and later cooking alongside both my parents. My family speaks to each other

through food. Often beginning and ending each phone calls or gathering during a holiday regaling each other stories of the last thing we ate and its enduring deliciousness.

As a result, I build on Foucault's anti-humanist impulse by tracing the many threads between of race, gender, and the human by focusing on black domestic work. Much of black political struggles emerging out the mid-twentieth century made demands based on the human through gendered terms. Evidence of the human through gendered terms is shown slogans such as "I Am a Man" carried by black men in civil rights protest across the South. And, desires for a black human is further shown in the complicated histories emerging out of the Black Power movement that presented contradictory gender politics. As historian Robyn Spencer asserts, "the Black Panther Party's record on gender is complex, filled with innovative moments of gender progressiveness as well as moments of blatant misogyny and sexism" (2008, 108). Similar to the anthropological studies that Foucault draws on to conceive of disciplinary power, the black's inhumanity is shored up through the myth of the black matriarch. According to Angela Davis, the myth, which was made famous through the dissemination of the 1965 Moynihan Report and spread in black intellectual history by parts of the Black Power movement, places the problem of blackness at the feet of black women.

Davis refutes these myths by arguing that the black woman's resistance and importance to black community ensures the survival of her people through the social reproduction of the black slave quarters:

> There is a strange twist of affairs: in the infinite anguish of ministering to the needs of the men and children around her (who were not necessarily members of her immediate family), she was performing the only labor of the slave community which could not be directly and immediately claimed by the oppressor. (1972, 87)

Davis's reference to "a strange twist of affairs" refers to the black feminine capacity to use the burdens of gender to her community's advantage. Even more, her twofold role as a valued slave and sexual object allowed her to reproduce social relations not immediately graspable by the white slave master. Davis's compelling reading of black women's twofold role complicates the figure of woman in contradistinction to white women, whose humanity is shored up as the lessor of man. Davis's complicating of women does not make a distinction between human and inhuman. Instead she takes woman as a given category that renders black woman as different kind of woman due to the history she was forced to endure. Similarly, black feminism takes up women as different kind of woman in their discussion of black women (Lorde 1980; hooks 1981; Combahee River Collective Statement 1986; Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991). Other black feminist theorists conceive of black women through a discussion of the black's gender as the performance of the human (Hartman 1997) or black woman as flesh (Spillers 1987).

Curiously the black women's "strange twist of fate" renders black men accomplices in the reproduction of the slave's quarter. According to Hortense Spillers (1987), black men are one of the few groups of men who experiences the feminine. However, their historical resentment of this strange gender relation echoes into our historical present. Black studies conceives of this resentment as a refusal of gender as a means to refuse the human (Wilderson 2010; Sexton 2011; Warren 2018). On the other hand, Nahum Chandler (2013) conceives of the black feminine absence-presence in Du Bois's family line and Fred Moten (2003) conceives of the black feminine through Fredrick Douglas's Aunt Hestor's scream. Both of these scholars make the feminine into fetish through abstraction since their work lacks an investigation of the material conditions from which these figures emerge. As a result, Chandler's and Moten's work renders the black feminine ephemeral, producing a universal of "blackness" that sidesteps the analytic

specificity of black women's lives that black woman qua Davis (1972) interrogates. While I am critical of black studies' fetish of black women, I am convinced of their claims to thinking of the black outside of the human since black claims to humanism have not stopped the repetition of black spectacular death in our present. This chapter emerges from the nexus of black feminism and anti-humanism that marks certain strains of black studies.

Verse One: The Human, Race, and Gender

The relationship between the black as human and the problem of black gender hinges upon racialized histories that conceive of black difference through a gendered lens. I take up Sylvia Wynter's (1990) undertheorized concept of "image-making power" to visualize the black feminine's ability to cover over the abyss of soul. Wynter conceives of "image-making power" to point to the importance of the absent presence of "Caliban's woman" in her reading of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Wynter reads *The Tempest* as an allegory for modernity's emergence insofar as the absent present black feminine is the "demonic ground" on which European legitimize their enslavement of Africans and their subsequent expropriation of indigenous lands.

Nonetheless, I depart from Wynter's humanism. My alignment with Wynter falls apart in her recovery of the human. Wynter proposes a different genre to conceive of the human as praxis. This different genre of the human is produced through decolonial and black power struggles emerging from the mid-twentieth century social and political struggles (McKittrick 2015). While we are still grappling with the earth-shattering changes the mid-twentieth century political struggles provided, I am not convinced that a "new genre of the human" will avoid the pitfalls of humanism that Foucault describes through his conceptualization of disciplinary power. To be clear, blacks are indeed subject to disciplinary power. However black claims to humanism

will not provide relief from the double burden of sovereign and disciplinary power operating in our lives. Instead, I propose the exact opposite: becoming comfortable with our status of black inhumanity and using the old ways of living to produce a new old feeling to find relief.

Conversely, I take a history of soul through a lens of black feminism that is explicitly anti-humanist. I argue the archive of soul speaks of the black feminine sometimes as woman; however, the woman in this instance is not a stable subject of inquiry. Instead the black feminine much written about in black studies and black feminism is an image that covers over the abyss of soul. Her image is produced through the play between the performance of the human and object.

I am indebted to Benjamin's *Black Is the Color*. Benjamin's study of blackness exposes the messy entanglement of race, gender, and the human that blackness cloaks. *Burnaway* arts critic Carlos Rojas (2014) writes, "Benjamin makes nuanced works about the color black as a way to investigate 'blackness.' He sees the color black as a portal to many things; not just race." The "not just race" in Rojas's summation of Benjamin's work lands awkwardly. The placement of the term "just" in front of a word such as "race" is a reduction of artistic inquiries of race, implicitly valuing nonracialized forms of art. On the other hand, one can read the "not just race" as an opening to interpretations that cannot exclusively focus on race. Rojas is not to blame for this reading, as Benjamin describes his work as a study of blackness and "not just a study of race" (Rojas 2014). Regardless of the way the phrase lands, reducing Benjamin's study of blackness to discourse only about race limits the capacity of blackness and confines it to the category of the human.

In my reading of *Black Is the Color*, I define "blackness" through Fred Moten's conception of blackness as characterized by a phonic materiality born in Frederick Douglass's Aunt Hester's scream, her shouts and shrieks recounted by Douglass in his autobiography and

taken up by Saidiya Hartman (1997) and then Moten (2003) as a kind of primal scene for black studies. Blackness, for Moten, manifests as sound and, more importantly for my work, as feminine. In addition to Hartman, Moten (2016) draws his formulation from Nahum Chandler's (2013) conception of the paraontological distinction between black people and blackness. According to Chandler, black people have a privileged relationship to blackness, and blackness circulates as its own condition. My reading unfolds from Moten and Chandler's formulation of black ontological distinction insofar as I am interested in how blacks use blackness. Taken together, these perspectives ground this project in a conception of blackness as the absent modifier of modernity's expansion. In so doing, they allow me to situate black soul in a history of the present conceived through the lens of the black feminine. Benjamin, similar to Moten and Chandler, finds through his study of the color black that blackness does not easily provide definition nor fit into the taxonomic boundaries of race.

As such, blackness marks the black feminine as other in order to produce a boundary between human and inhuman. *Black Is the Color*'s repetition of Nina Simone on the screen is critical to understanding the function of race in modernity. Even more, Benjamin's choice of Simone produces the color line as mediated by race and gender. Her repeated image will come to represent the image that produces the boundary between human and inhuman. Simone plays a piano as she seemingly sings "Black Is the Color" over and over again. Her body is turned away from the viewer. She looks almost sideways as she plays. It is not clear for whom she plays, but the positioning of her body away from the screen implies an audience the viewer cannot see. Simone's image appears through a porthole. Her image is framed by an all-black negative space that envelopes around her image. What is visible is important; the viewer can only see a portion of what Simone can see. In this way an encounter with *Black Is the Color* repeats an encounter

with the color line. The viewer can see Simone play the piano and sing the verse "black is the color" over and over again, but the viewer cannot see what Simone sees with her head turned away from the viewer. Simone's turned-away face produces a division between the viewer and Simone. This imaginary boundary is materialized through the museum staff's effort to protect the integrity of the installation. The simple thin metal boundary that divides the installation from the viewer repeats a historical division and exclusion Du Bois names "the color line" in 1903. Du Bois conceives of the color line as the problem of the twentieth century. Yet he was too conservative in his scope. The problem of the color line is the problem of modernity. Du Bois's discovery of this division emerges during a tumultuous period of change immediately following the nadir of reconstruction signaled by the slow retrenchment of the slave holding aristocracy through a system of formal and informal laws and policies that governed and organized spatial relationships between black and whites encapsulated in the name Jim Crow.

For Du Bois, soul and consciousness are synonymous terms that refer to peculiar formulation of black soul as consciousness. Consciousness, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, refers to a "internal knowledge or conviction; the state or fact of being mentally conscious or aware of something." Critical to this definition is the presumption of interiority that generates a sense of self-awareness of "something." Consciousness is a critical link between race and the human.

Through my reading of Du Bois's concept of double consciousness, black soul is externalized by the production and maintenance of the color line. Du Bois asserts that the black is interdicted from self-consciousness since the black can only understand their soul in a reflection of another. The crux of my reading of soul as consciousness externalized hinges upon what Du Bois famously refers to this split of consciousness—a "double consciousness" that

produces a "peculiar sense": "One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (1994, 3). Double consciousness is the condition of possibility for the soul as consciousnesses to be externalized since, in my reading, the black's inhuman status interdicts them from an interiority. So the split of double consciousness produces a fracture of soul. Du Bois's conceptual explanation of double consciousness points to the fracture of soul as a exteriority. I locate my claim in his references to the "veil" and "second-sight." These terms imply an exteriority to double consciousness that is produced in a violent encounter with whites.

Although double consciousness is produced through violent conditions, soul is vital to black living. The shadow of the color line places a veil over the dark world, blocking the sight of the inhabitants of the light world into the dark world. Only the black is capable of "second sight," seeing and experiencing both the dark and the light world. Du Bois refers to the second sight of double consciousness as a gift for the black. The bloodshed of the black has a message for the world that "is [a] naturally veiled" (Du Bois 1994, 108) reflection of humanity. From this veiled reflection, the black gains in return a "second sight" that produces an asymmetrical relation to the light world insofar as the black can see into the light world but inhabitants in the light world can only see humanity reflected back.

The problem of consciousness during the early modern prefigures the problem of consciousness in 1903. Reading Du Bois's conceptualization of double consciousness alongside the history of the emergence of the modernity reveals that the problem of black consciousness repeats during the Columbian Exchange. The difference is found in the stakes of religious practices. The problem of the color line emerges in the early modern period through the linking

of race and the human made through the encounter of white European explorers with West Africans. While debates about coloniality and the production of the "New World" tend to foreground a dyadic opposition between European colonizers and the colonized people of the Americas, Wynter constructs a "triadic model" for thinking about the early modern invention of race through an exchange that depended upon an epistemic shift following Portuguese contact with Africa at the end of the fifteenth century. Wynter argues that the explorer's "subjective understanding"—the epistemic limits of Western reason—shifts upon the first contact with West Africans on the coast of Senegal. She asserts that Columbus's rounding of Cape Bojador, combined with his encounter with West Africans, allowed him to transgress the limits of truth dependent upon the theology of his time (Wynter 1995, 9).

In my reading, Columbus's crossing of the *nec plus ultra* (or nothing further beyond) marks the emergence of the color line in the early modern. European explorers' encounter with Africans thus constitutes the condition of possibility for the emergence of a new epoch defined by secularity instead of the rule of God. At the same time, it is Columbus's dependence on Judeo-Christianity in transition that marks West Africans as otherworldly through their idolatry (Wynter 1995,11). The black's illegibility to European positivism sets in motion the color line's fundamental division between human and inhuman. The white explorer's observation of West Africans as otherworldly marks the emergence of the *nec plus ultra* line in modernity that divides idolaters from the Christians. Thus, the encounter Wynter reproduces in her thinking about the Columbian Exchange shows how the African, now black, consciousness becomes externalized in this exchange. The body comes to represent Africans' otherworldly quality and their differing religious and social structure. As a result, through Wynter's reading, the illegibility of the black at the level of the body repeats Du Bois's conception of the veil of double

consciousness conceived through a different historical shift. The African's externalized consciousness reflects back Western European humanity. In this instance consciousness does not shore up the humanity of the African now black. Rather their perceived differences produce an exclusion of the African from the human. West African's dissimilar religious system reduces an alternative system of religion to a pathological form of consciousness that acts as the tain of humanity's mirror, a mirror that reflects back the white's humanity, rendering the African now black legible to positivist logics of reason that seek to separate and exclude.

More concretely, the black's otherworldly status is mediated by gender difference. The image of Nina Simone "cloaked in black" (Du Bois 1920, 168) in *Black Is the Color* materializes the historical emergence of this technique of human invention. First, the encounter of the European explorer with the African splits the soul of the black. This division externalizes consciousness by reducing difference to the body of the black due to their "otherworldliness," demonstrated through the European explorer's observations that the African lacks legible institutions and monotheistic religious practices. Second, the black's otherworldly status is cemented by the circulations of historical discourse that compares African, now black, women and European women. The European male gaze, fixed on black women's difference from white women, suspends European notions of femininity for black women, making black women illegible to the positivist ordering of the human. As a result, the writing about black women's difference subtends the arguments for a moral enslavement of West Africans insofar as African, now black, women cause a problem for thought during the early modern period.

Historical discourse suggests that European travelers used black women's bodies to support their claims to racial superiority that produce the human. European observations of black women shore up notions of European supremacy. Simone's image in *Black Is the Color* speaks

to European attempts to order what they perceive to be a disordered social world through the production of black women as overtly sexualized and monstrous. This is not to say that gender is more important than race; rather, the production of race is bound up with the difference of black women from European women. Gender difference overlaps with the production of racial difference by stabilizing the boundary between human and inhuman, evidenced in published accounts of English travelers' encounters with black women in Africa and in the Caribbean. Historian Jennifer L. Morgan argues, "African enslavement—that is, the development of racialist discourse—was deeply implicated by gendered notions of difference and the human hierarchy" (1997, 170). Morgan traces traveler narratives from 1500 to 1770 in an effort to capture the production of racial ideology in the early modern period. Consequently, racial difference is mediated by one of two extreme representations of black women: first, as exceptionally beautiful and second, as monstrous.

In the first representation, black women are hailed as beautiful due to their difference from European women. Evidence of this technique is found in Englishman Richard Ligon's *True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* published in London of 1657. He details his encounter with a

> Negro of the greatest beauty and majesty together: that I ever saw in one woman. Her stature large, and excellently shap'd, well favour'd full eye'd, and admirably grac'd. . . . [I] awaited her coming out which with far greater majesty and gracefulness, that I have ever seen Queen Anne, descend from the Chaire of State. (Ligon quoted in Morgan 1997, 167)

Ligon names this unnamable black woman "beautiful" due to her blackness. But it is his proximity to this presumably young "negro" woman in the Cape Verde Islands that makes her an object of desire and shores up meaning for Ligon himself. Ligon's comparison of her "majesty and gracefulness" with the English state's Queen Anne produces a strange contradiction. He

gives the qualities of "majesty and gracefulness" to a woman who does not have the social and political power of a rapidly developing nation-state, while reducing Queen Anne's status to that of a slave. Ligon's contradictory formulation of the captive woman's beauty and Queen Anne's lack of grace follows a logic of the human universal that reduces the human to European or Western and male. Ligon's encounter shows the subtle ways European observation produces the human universal in relation to race and gender, a sexual superiority founded upon his close proximity to the negro in view. He is unable to apprehend Queen Anne, presumably due to her status as representative of God on earth; nevertheless, his description of his encounter with the beauty of the Cape Verdean slave woman strengthens his own subjectivity by bestowing status on that which lacks status.

Second, the other extreme Ligon posits positions black women as monstrous; "their breasts 'hang down below their navels, so that when they stoop at their common work of weeding, they hang almost to the ground, that at a distance you would think they had six legs'" (Ligon quoted in Morgan 1997, 168). Ligon's change in naming black women as monstrous shifts once her body gives birth. Morgan claims Ligon is drawing upon a medieval notion of "female devils that included sagging breasts as part of iconography of danger and monstrosity" (Morgan 1997, 170). Her stooped-over, full body with breasts that no longer attracted him was a hint at sexual conquest by another. No longer is this woman full of "majesty and grace"; she now is tainted by Ligon's perception of immoral acts of sex. Yet, Ligon's incitement to write about the monstrosity of black women's laboring and reproductive bodies has a history. Morgan notes that "Pliny the Elder's ancient collection of monstrous, *Historia Naturales*, catalogs the long breasted wild woman alongside the oddity of Indian and Ethiopian women" (1997, 170). More specifically, the "long breasted woman" is described as a "female devil." She would disguise

herself with youth and beauty in an effort to satisfy her need for love and affection from mortal men (Morgan 1997, 170). The description of black women as both beautiful and monstrous draws on old figurations of evil in an effort to make her the ultimate other in the dual production of race and the human.

Both the beauty of the black woman and her insidious possibility for monstrosity become the motivation to radically exclude the black from the human, by means of European encounter and the subsequent observation of black women. Morgan's use of the term "woman" to describe the black feminine highlights this exclusion. The travelers' extreme poles of representation framed as beauty and monstrosity destabilize the very notion of "woman" that the black feminine has come to represent historically, while Morgan follows the naming of black "woman" emerging from the historical record. In doing so, Morgan reinforces the positivist thrust to contain and categorize the black feminine in "woman" that the comparison between white and black femininities seeks to clarify. As a result, the travelers' naming of "black woman" is a necessary precondition for her exclusion. Her difference from white woman makes her the inversion of "woman" shown in the reemergence of the "female devil" of medieval myth. The myth is no longer the details of legend but becomes truth through the circulation of the black "woman" as devil in European imaginaries. The effect of such a maneuver produces a complex "color line" in the early modern period that divides human from inhuman on the basis of race and gender difference.

In the same way, the black feminine's extreme beauty and monstrosity mediates the human and inhuman through the color line in the early modern through the techniques of encounter and observation. The same techniques, of encounter and observation, are used to circulate a discourse of African disorder to make a moral claim about the need to tame "African

savagery" through slavery in the early modern period along with colonization by European political powers. Much of the evidence of "African disorder" used by Morgan in her historiography explicitly shows how the black feminine's body became the symbolic frame within which to map a lack of moral management of sexuality through illegible social structures. As late as 1900, European explorers used the body of the black feminine to continue the circulation of African disorder. Morgan writes:

> *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, "in Ethiopia and in many other countries [in Africa] the folk lie all naked . . . and the women have no shame of the men." Further, "they wed there no wives, for all the women there be common . . . and when [women] have children they may give them to what man they will that hath companied with them." (1997, 170)

Mandeville observes in his travel in Africa a radically different form of social relations that is illegible to him. In his summation, the black's otherworldliness is marked by a lack of shame, a lack of patriarchal line of descent, and a lack of a family structure that replicates the European mother-father-child triad. This mode of racial production mediated by the black feminine's body causes a crisis for Western notions of social organization. Hence, the only way to deal with this problem, to echo Du Bois, is to exclude the black from the figuration of the human through a complex production of race.

Consequently, reading a history of race that is coextensive with gender through *Black Is the Color* confirms that the black's social, political, and sexual difference produces a reflection of the human Europeans depend upon to shore up their own humanity. These reflections of difference come to be the condition of possibility for history as such built on an absence of history (Foucault 2006, xxxi). And, importantly, these figurations of black women's bodies as other worldly and monstrous and the various permutations in between produce a malleable source of meaning making.

Chorus: The Ends of Man

Reading the assorted components of *Black Is the Color* along with the historical discourse on the development of racial ideology and the human makes plain a process of the invention of the human that Foucault gestures toward in the first part of his final refrain in *The Order of Things.* He asserts, "man is an invention of recent date . . . one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (2005, 422). This project gambles that the undoing of the human is found in the sea, the waters that connect the ship of fools, the Niña, the Pinta, the Santa Maria, Zong, and all the bodies beneath the water that never made it to land (Foucault 2006; Phillip 2008; Sharpe 2016. The water carries their memory through sound, not as music but in the vibrations emitting from the crashes and gurgles of waves hitting rock. Their murmurs speak in an indiscernible language unknown and unnamed but only sensed as an indecipherable feeling of eeriness emanating from blackness.

WHAT HAS NOT BEEN FULLY CONSIDERED IS HOW THE BLACK PRESENTS A CHALLENGE TO THE HUMAN.

Verse 2: Soul

The black presents a challenge to the human through the externalization of consciousness produced through the repetition of the black's performance of the human and object. This externalization of consciousness produced through the repeated encounter and observation of black living by whites and nonblacks relies upon visuality to render difference as pathological truth. Feminist historian Joan Scott, writing in response to histories of difference, is critical of

how visuality comes to stand in as truth in historical discourse. She sees the process of the visual operating in tandem with writing—writing becomes the transmission of the visual into truth:

> Knowledge is gained through vision; vision is a direct apprehension of a world of transparent objects. In this conceptualization, the visible is privileged; writing is then put at its service. . . . Seeing is the origin of knowing. Writing is reproduction, transmission—the communication of knowledge gained through (visual, visceral) experience. (1991, 775–776)

Vision stands in for any investigation of the terms in which these events occur. Even more, making the subject visible does not include an analysis of the workings of history that produce the subject in the first place (Scott 1991, 779). Scott's critique of vision's connection to automatic transmission of knowledge assumes a subject who has full access to one's "whole" corporeal self. The implication of the access to whole places a singular experience as the bedrock of knowledge and dangerously only provides evidence for the "fact of difference rather than the way of how difference is established" (Scott 1991, 777). Scott's comments about the visuality of experience and historical writing is a direct critique of history writing by nonwhites that does not place their experience within a historical discourse. Regardless, reading her critique of the connection between experience, visuality, writing, and historical truth against the dual operations of encounter and observation by early modern travelers exposes a logic vital to the production of blackness as pathological. The early modern explorers relied on a logic of visuality to inform their encounter and subsequent observations of West Africans. These techniques of encounter and observation prefigure later histories of the production of double consciousness that Du Bois conceptualizes through post-reconstruction histories.

As a result of this logic, Wynter argues the black lacks a "propter nos" formulated through a European Christian monotheism that relies upon religion to dictate the moral and behavioral modes of human societies (1995, 28). The problem of "nos" emerges from the (black) idolater's status in the subjective understanding of Columbus. Columbus was obsessed with the

second coming of Christ detailed in Christian ideology. In order to prepare the world for the return of Christ, he and other European explorers who came after him relied upon medieval Arabs' use of a shared knowledge of categories that situates the black not as being but as unmoored from reality. In other words, Arab perspectives about West Africans in the Middle Ages repeated in the early modern. Wynter draws upon the work of Daniel Sperber's central distinction of human cognition as twofold to make this claim. The first of these is "knowledge of the world as it is" (Wynter 1995, 20). Its central purpose is scientific, a logical representation of empirical reality that can be "independently verified" (Wynter 1995, 20). The second is knowledge of categories, its purpose to make use of empirical reality while producing factual data about that reality. These two modes of human cognition are critical for Wynter as she finds them to be foundational to her conception of consciousness as subjective understanding. According to Wynter, Arab traders depended upon the second mode of cognition, in their development of the rules of representation, to confirm black West Africans as irrational due to a lack of trading. Following Wynter's logic, West Africans became unmoored from reality and circulated as "stereotyped images" (1995, 20). These images of West Africans in the Arab world during the Middle Ages helped to render them the limit point in Wynter's triadic model. They made it easy for Columbus et al. to conceive of the black's lack of consciousness because they did not fit into what Wynter calls "one sheepfold, one flock, one shepherd," an "apocalyptic dream" that comes to stand in as the singular "nos" of the human species itself (1995, 28). Wynter defines "nos" as mind; thus, the black is interdicted from a "propter nos" since the black lacks a legible monotheistic religion that dictates lines of descent, sexual behavior, and the mother-father-child triad. In other words, the black doesn't have access to mind, since to

European explorers in Wynter's accounting it requires a single deity to provide evidence of mind.

Second, the human finds its support in Wynter's conception of the horizontal "demonic ground" of the absent black feminine in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "The absence of Caliban's woman is an absence which is functional to the new secularizing schema by which the peoples of Western Europe legitimated their global expansion as well as their expropriation and their marginalization of all the other populations-groupings of the globe" (1995, 360). Wynter privileges the absent black feminine in *The Tempest* since, in her summation, the plot engages in an "image-making power" foundational to the secular production of the New World. In the play, Caliban's woman does not appear. The only "woman" present on the island is Miranda, who is "canonized as the only 'rational' object of desire," and it is in her image that the New World must be made. Hence, Wynter argues that Miranda's rationality is juxtaposed with the absent black feminine, who is of another "population of the human," a "vile race" whose "ills" condemned to "oiginal sin" render Caliban and all their progeny as purely sensory beings (1990, 360). The black feminine's absence from the play becomes the reason and the occasion for the "race" of Miranda to take the island on which she stands, condemning the black feminine to the ground and interdicting her from Caliban's desire (Wynter 1990, 361), hence delegitimizing the children borne of this strange relation between Caliban and the absent black feminine.

Bringing Wynter's formulation to bear on Benjamin's *Black Is the Color*, my reading of Simone in the installation is the absent presence of her "image-making power," in contradistinction to Miranda, which provides the "demonic ground"[1] where the human reflects the self. Simone's image repeats across all forty-one televisions, reflecting a performance of a

[1] See Katherine McKittrick's *Demonic Ground.*

human that is emptied of meaning. Her hollowed-out image allows the observer to see what they want to see, reflecting back meaning to the observer. The historical discourse shows that black "women" historically have "image-making power."

Ligon returns again to help substantiate this reading. Morgan claims, "after Richard Ligon saw the black woman at Cape Verde, he pursued her around a dance hall, anxious to hear her voice, though she ultimately put him off with only 'the loveliest smile that I have ever seen'" (1990, 190). The smile of the Cape Verdean woman back to Ligon is a reflection of his status as human. This moment of exchange between this woman and Ligon has a history and is repeated with a difference in Simone's performance of the human. Different from the Cape Verdean woman, Simone is not silent. She repeats the words "black is a color" over and over again. The repetition of speech produces a rhythm that is mesmerizing, something akin to a spell that draws in the viewer closer and even closer again.

On the other hand, similar to the Cape Verdean woman, Simone's flickering image draws the viewer in to find out her secret, but the secret of the secret is that there is no secret at all. The absence of a secret or substance is vital to her image-making power. Instead, through a proliferation of discourses emerging from black history, these breaks, gaps, and absences repeat with a difference over and over again, constructing multiple images that subtend the dark side of modernity. Or in a different black intellectual genealogy, Spillers refers to this as the "locus of confounded identities, a meeting ground of investments, and privations in the national treasury of rhetorical wealth. My country needs me, and if I were not here, I would have to be invented" (1987, 65). Returning to Simone's image, the black feminine's "image-making power" repeats in Nina Simone's songwriting. In my reading, the black feminine's "image-making power" is confirmed in her 1966 song "Four Women"; she sings:

My skin is black
My arms are long
My hair is woolly
My back is strong
Strong enough to take the pain
inflicted again and again
What do they call me
My name is AUNT SARAH
My name is Aunt Sarah

My skin is yellow
My hair is long
Between two worlds
I do belong
My father was rich and white
He forced my mother late one night
What do they call me
My name is SAFFRONIA
My name is Saffronia

My skin is tan
My hair is fine
My hips invite you
my mouth like wine
Whose little girl am I?
Anyone who has money to buy
What do they call me
My name is SWEET THING
My name is Sweet Thing

My skin is brown
my manner is tough
I'll kill the first mother I see
my life has been too rough
I'm awfully bitter these days
because my parents were slaves
What do they call me
My name is PEACHES

Simone's reference to Aunt Sarah, Saffronia, Sweet Thing, and Peaches are four different images of black femininity emerging out of modernity. The first, Aunt Sarah, speaks to the mammie figure slavery produces. Second, Saffronia is the mixed-race woman resulting from systemic rape of black women during slavery by whites. Third, Sweet Thing refers to the hyper-

sexualization of black women's bodies. Last, Peaches is the figure Simone writes to speak to the trope of the angry black furious about problems of black living in spite of anti-black violence. These images of black women are copies of each other. They all emerge historically at different times and they all have radically different phenotypes. Aunt Sarah is described as having skin of black color. Saffronia is yellow. Sweet Thing is tan. And Peaches is brown. Each image must speak to their varying emergence in history. Which is to say, the black women Simone sings about in "Four Women" produce a multiplicity of images that reflect humanity through differing techniques of exclusion that mark her different performance of the human.

Reading Moten and *Black Is the Color* together, Simone's image, projected by a television screen, bears the mark of blackness insofar as Simone's image performs humanity in the reflection of the observer. In this move, she echoes Moten's notion of black objectivity. For Moten, "blackness marks simultaneously both the performance of the object and the performance of humanity" (2003 2). That is, Moten's notion of black objectivity draws directly from Saidiya Hartman's 1997 *Scenes of Subjection*, wherein Hartman investigates "the elasticity of blackness and its capacious affects" that enable "such flights and becomings" of those who are not black but desire to "slip into blackness" (1997, 25). Hartman turns to the theory of performativity to illuminate "the entanglements of dominant and subordinate enunciations of blackness and the difficulty of distinguishing between contending enactments of blackness based on form, authenticity, or even intention" (1997, 57). Therefore, blackness as performativity denaturalizes the givenness of blackness as "race" by unsettling the notions of authenticity and intentionality in regards to what is considered "black." The performance of blackness, then, does not assume an essence or a subject within or behind the performance; instead, the constant repetition of performativity refuses to "fix" the black body in a single scene of subjection, demonstrating the

fugitive possibilities within a blackness that cannot be reduced to a visibly black body (Hartman 1997, 57). Reading Hartman and Moten together, the slave is a being that is not a being at all but a hollow artifice of a human that plays with the "ocularcentrism" of the viewer (Moten 2006, 183). Moten describes "ocularcentrism" as the viewer's overreliance on the image as a means of knowing (Moten 2006, 183). Much like Ligon's detailed accounting of black women's extreme beauty and monstrosity, the "image-making power" of the black feminine in *Black Is the Color* plays with the logics of encounter and observation and allows the traveler, the explorer, the slave master to see what they want to see in the performance of the human.

Importantly, in the repetitive performance of human and object, the "image-making power" of the black feminine destabilizes a notion of black humanity. Instead, the black feminine's capacity for "image-making power" positions the black as an object among other objects on a horizonal plain of existence. The black feminine is the women of Cape Verde that possesses Ligon in his attempt to hear the voice of one of the most beautiful women he ever did see. And, the black feminine is also the *Black Is the Color* installation. While provocative, the "image-making power" of the black feminine covers over the hollow produced in the reflection of the human produced through the encounter and observation of the blacks with whites. The "image-making power" of the black feminine covers over the abyss of soul wherein a whole world is made.

Said differently, the duel performance of human and inhuman repeats again and again under different terms. In this instance the black feminine's repeated performance between human and inhuman is a *mise en abyme* that Lucian Dällenbach describes as being "governed by a truly compulsive repetition, a mimetic reproduction is in fact condemned to take a serial form and repeat continually the movement of its own resurgence" (1989, 111). This ongoing repetition

hollows out the image, one image from the next, from the next, from the next, producing a lacunary reserve—a fundamental aspect of Foucauldian genealogical method that is often overlooked. More importantly, the lacunary reserve is a hollow of thought that contains and suspends meaning produced through the mimicry and repetition in the play between human and inhuman indicative in the repeated performance of the black feminine. More concretely, the hollow of soul is the underside of modernity covered over by the black feminine's image-making power. The hollow soul produces and destabilizes meaning to those willing to lend an ear to murmurings of soul's hollow. The black feminine's ability to cover over this hollow through her performance and suspend and contain meaning renders her the condition of possibility for history—and importantly the figure on which the New World is made.

The other world of the black is not a material structure that can be taken, burned down, or destroyed; rather, the black's soul, as it emerges through *Black Is the Color*, is a play of light and sound. Simone's image plays on medieval notions of the "female devil" narrative that English travelers used in their production of racial ideology. Simone displays "majesty and gracefulness" as she plays piano. The viewer is transfixed by her image. The boxy fullness of the CRT television (different than contemporary LCD or plasma TVs with a slim profile) plays with historical logics that mark black women as untrustworthy and lascivious. Simone's beauty overshadows the fullness of the televisions that project her laboring body. It is not clear what lies behind the screen. Conversely, when opened, the CRT TV functions by transferring negative electrons into a moving image. Focused by an anode (positive) accelerator, the negative electrons are converted into a light beam. In color televisions, there are three different anode accelerators that project blue, green, and red onto a phosphor-coated glass. The coating on the glass is the condition of possibility for the light to glow and project an image. My reading of Simone's

image combined with the fullness of the CRT televisions produces a double movement. At first, she appears as an image of beauty moving on the screen; her blackness marks her as exceptionally beautiful. But the fullness of a CRT television mimics the fullness of an older black women's body hiding behind her image. While there are no sagging breasts in the installation, the inner workings of the CRT television show nothing at all. The television's internal functions look no different than any other CRT televisions. Yet, the play of light and sound draws upon medieval European notions of the female devil capable of transforming her abject body into a beautiful form, more attractive to her mortal male prey.

Yet, the CRT TV is hiding the gift, what Du Bois calls second sight. Second sight in *Black Is the Color* is made through a production of light and sound, a whole world unintelligible to those who do not lend an ear. The murmur of black soul gurgles beneath the repeated axis of the encounter and observation, producing a grid of intelligibility Foucault names the "quadrillage," the spatial partitioning and subdivision of a population taken to an extreme point (1992, 47). The "quadrillage" depends upon observation, but the image is not dependable. In an effort to confine the black through various techniques of exclusion and confinement, such as the slave ship, the plantation, and the prison, something else escapes. Moten theorizes the fugitive capacity of the black feminine as the scream of the black feminine, what he names "phonic materiality," more easily understood as noise. The combination of encounter, observation, and sound is the condition of possibility for the black to perform the human. In sum, the "quadrillage" produces the false image—an image that depends upon positivist secular law emerging in 1482 on the shores of Senegal that one can only believe if one sees. This play of light and sound depends upon the combined techniques of observation, encounter, and phonic materiality to produce the veil of the human. What emerges from this image, this performance of

the human, is a cloak, a shield, a veil that covers over the dark world, a world that distinctly has the capacity to prop up the human's emergence in modernity.

This project takes up the fourth form of excluded language, to echo Foucault (2006). The vibration sound emitting from black soul's murmur emerges beneath a grid of intelligibility ("quadrillage") in the dark demonic ground of the abyss of black soul, where a whole world is made. The vibrations, glitches, and fuzzy edges of *Black Is the Color* are produced through the installation's play with light and sound that covers over the hollow of black soul. The only way to encounter these black holes that mark modernity's grid of intelligibility is to feel your way to them using peculiar sense, a mode of affect marked by blackness.

Chorus:

Reading	development	that	he	be
the	of	Foucault	asserts	erased
assorted	racial	gestures	man	like
components	ideology	toward	man	a
of	and	in	is	face
Black	the	the	an	drawn
Is	human	first	invention	sea.
the	makes	part	of	(2005,
Color	plain	of	recent	422)
along	a	his	date	
with	process	final	one	
the	of	refrain	can	
historical	the	in	certainly	
discourse	invention	The	wager	
on	of	Order	that	
the	the	of	man	
	human	Things	would	

What has not been fully considered is how peculiar sense acts

as the forth form of excluded language.

Verse 3: Excluded Speech

The play between human and object that reflects the humanity of the white Europeans produces a reversal that opens up an abyss. I am not the only black thinker to conceive of blackness this way. Moten (2013) conceives of "the break," another word for abyss, as the ground that upholds subjectivity. Glissant (1997) conceives of the sea as a womb. Wynter's (1995) notion of demonic ground gestures to an abyss that the demonic ground of the absent present black feminine represents. These theoretical configurations of blackness all gesture to the fact that many black abysses subtend the underside of modernity's "quadrillage."

Nonetheless, in my configuration of black soul as an abyss, I draw from my archival research on June Jordan's poetics. In Jordan's papers related to the publishing of her 1970 *Soulscript: Afro-American Poetry* I found Joseph E. White's poem "Black Is a Soul." The poem did not make it to the final version of Jordan's edited collection of poetry. Nonetheless the poem, included in the epigraph of this chapter, repeats black soul as an abyss through a different form. Importantly, similar to *Black Is the Color*, "Black Is a Soul" materializes the abyss of black soul by placing all aspects of black living in a nonhierarchal plain of relation: men, women, melons, the Lord, black-eyed pea, greens, pig feet, fat back, corn pone, rivers full of wine, neck bone trees, misogyny, sexuality, and blue sound. What I find most compelling about the poem is that it does not prioritize any one form, but places all of these objects in relation to each other under the banner of soul. Soul as an abyss is not a hierarchal schema that attempts to group based on same

and difference. Instead, the poem shows how the demonic ground of the black feminine is an abyss that produces life in spite of, beside, and with anti-blackness. White's poem "Black Is a Soul" presents a nonlinear account of black living on the underside of modernity.

Even more, the exclusion of such a poem from a book on black soul is important. The exclusion of the poem repeats the exclusion of the black from the human with a difference. The difference lies in the fact I do not know why Jordan excluded the poem. The archive does not provide details. I found evidence of Jordan's exclusion of the poem on a draft table of contents for the book. I cannot recount why I decided to review the document so closely, however I do know that the "X" that crossed out the poem intrigued me. I ran my fingers over Jordan's penciled script that excised "Black Is a Soul" from her book, *Soulscript*. I immediately knew, without knowing the contents of the poem, that White's "Black Is a Soul"—much like my encounter with Benjamin's *Black Is the Color*—is vital to my conceptualization of soul. Jordan's paper only mentions "Black Is a Soul" but I did not immediately have the ability to read the poem. Rather, the image of Jordan's handwriting spoke that day, but this time the speaking came through sensation instead of sound. My encounter of White's excluded poem from Jordan's archive resounds with Foucault's (2006) notion of excluded speech.

These abyss of soul speaks through a language that says what it says without saying anything at all. I conceive of this notion of speech through sensation from Foucault's fourth form of excluded language. Foucault describes the forth form of excluded language as:

> speech that apparently conforms to the recognized code to a different code, whose key is contained in within that speech itself, so that the speech is doubled inside itself; it says what it says, but adds a mute surplus that silently states what is says and the code according to which it is said. (2006, 545)

For Foucault language is coextensive with acts not separate from them. His conception of prohibitions against acts are easily shown in history. For example, incest taboos are a feature

thought to have had a near universal appeal. However, what is not often discussed is the prohibition on speech. Foucault lists three prohibitions: first, language faults that he describes as the laws that govern linguistic code. The second is blasphemous speech that challenges the religious doctrine on magic and sex. The third prohibition Foucault identifies is censorship, which refers to an objection of meaning. The fourth form of excluded speech is more complicated. The forth form of prohibited speech is untranslatable. It is not legible to recognizable modes of language because it does not follow the language code. Instead, this mode of language establishes its own code within itself through a doubling of speech. In this process of doubling, it produces a mute surplus. Similarly, *Black Is the Color* repeats the hollowing technique found in the display of the play between the performance of the human and objectification of the black that manifests as a play of light in sound in the installation. The poem, on the other hand, is a repetition of a hollow emerging from black history and excised from Jordan's *Soulscript* manuscript.

Reading *Black Is the Color* and "Black Is a Soul" together, these two black art forms produce a mute surplus in their doubling. By juxtaposing these different art forms, I am able to discern a code in which they speak. First *Black Is the Color* speaks through a sonic excess that bends Nina Simone's song from "Black Is the Color" to "black is *a* color" shown in the cacophony of different televisions that speak through a joint voice. In contrast White's "Black Is a Soul" speaks though an excess of sensation I experienced in the reading room at the Schlesinger Library. Together these two different black art forms contain a key within their double speech that produces a mute surplus. The mute surplus is the murmurs of the abyss of soul that says what it says through sensation. These murmurs are sometimes sonic, or they

glimmer, or they produce some other indiscernible feeling. All that matters to me is that they speak at all.

Another example of this speech that speaks through a mute surplus is found in Du Bois's own account of sorrow songs and their meaning. Du Bois closes *The Souls*," a book of essays concerning a broad range of topics surrounding the experience of the divided soul of the black formerly enslaved, with a chapter on music, titled "Sorrow Songs." This final chapter, unlike any other chapter of the book, shows a hesitation in Du Bois's intellectual might. He asks: "What are these songs, and what do they mean? I know little of music and can say nothing in technical phrase" (Du Bois 1994, 106). Obviously reaching beyond himself, he finishes the sentence on a strong note, "but I know something of men, and knowing them, I know that these songs are the articulate message of the slave to the world" (1994, 106). Du Bois's hesitation combined with a strong rhetorical flourish shows a gap in knowledge. Obviously, he is clear he doesn't know much about music in "technical phrase," but Du Bois's announcing his limited knowledge on the technical aspects of music is not the only part of the work Du Bois struggles to cohere through scholarly form.

Rather, what he is actually describing to the reader is black music. The words sang by the slaves betray the feelings they convey. He states:

> They tell us in these eager days that life was joyous to the black slave, careless and happy. I can easily believe this of some, of many. But not all the past South, though it rose from the dead, can gainsay the heart-touching witness of these songs. They are the music of an unhappy people, of the children of disappointment; they tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world, of misty wanderings and hidden ways. (1994, 106)

Different than his contemporaries, who were interested in portraying slaves as happiest during slavery to solidify their arguments about the potential for beastly actions by newly freed slaves, Du Bois is uninterested in taking these songs at face value (Kendi 2018). He is clear these songs

first contain an "articulate message" for the world that technical training in music cannot easily convey. Second, his knowledge of men and their ways confirms for him that these songs are the music of "an unhappy people, of the children of disappointment; they tell of death and suffering and unvoiced longing toward a truer world." Third, and most importantly, he describes all of these songs as "heart touching." In fact, all of the words he uses to describe what other listeners and readers of these songs do not understand are affective. Terms such as unhappy, disappointment, heart touching, and suffering all point towards a complex arrangement of feelings, emotions, and intensities that annotate black experience in the world. Nonetheless, Du Bois's knowledge of "men" both helps and hinders his ability to fully realize the possibilities of his articulation. Du Bois's dependence on the knowledge of "men" produces a blind spot in his understanding. Du Bois's desire to order slave songs into a Western mode of thought blocks his ability to conceive of what slips out in his accounting. That is, in the space between technical knowledge of music and knowledge of man is another space. This is a space of knowing Du Bois begins to approach but backs away from in his attempt to correct the organization and misrepresentation of slave songs done by others who do not have the ear to fully hear the heart-wrenching longing for another truer world for the black.

Subsequently, Du Bois uses positivist techniques to categorize negro music into ten forms, explicitly showing the historical progression of black music. By using such methods, Du Bois implicitly insists on the intellectual development of the songs' differing uses and messages. In the break between Du Bois's lack of technical knowledge about music and his formal training on men, something else emerges—something important that *The Souls of Black Folk* conveys without saying but communicates through the feeling emerging from Du Bois's writing about his own experience of what he will later calls "the race concept." That haunting feeling is the ancient

music of the black feminine maternal that annotates every chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk* and remains with him throughout his career.

Evidence of the importance of the black feminine music to Du Bois emerges in his reproduction of his grandfather's grandmother's music in the beginning of his career in *The Souls of Black Folk* and toward the end of his career in *Dusk of Dawn.* In *Souls*, Du Bois describes his grandfather's grandmother's music as far more ancient than the words contained within. Her music traveled across the water in a ship from Africa after she was caught by an "evil Dutch trader" despite the harsh north winds in the Hudson Housatonic valleys (Du Bois 2006, 107). Du Bois names her sound as the first of such articulations of black music and sound that progressed as the slave expressed their displeasure with the peculiar institution of slavery. He represents the music phonetically as "Do ba-na co-ba, ge-ne me, ge-ne me! Do ba-na co-ba, ge-ne me, ge-ne me! Ben d' nu-li, nu-li, nu-li, ben d' le" (2006, 107).

This ancient music presents a code that Du Bois later names in *Dusk of Dawn* as African feeling:

> My African racial feeling was then purely a matter of my own later learning and reaction; my recoil from the assumptions of the whites; my experience in the South at Fisk. But it was none the less real and a large determinant of my life and character. I felt myself African by "race" and by that token was African and an integral member of the group of dark Americans who were called Negroes. (2006, 58)

Critically, in reflecting on his life, Du Bois reconsiders his refusal of such feeling that emanates from the black feminine through sound. The ancient melody resonates with him and strengthens his connection to Africa and his membership in the race "of the group of Americans called Negroes." Du Bois is only able to fully understand the capacity of African feeling in reflecting on his life alongside the ancient music of his grandfather's grandmother. This music Du Bois names, refuses, and then accepts as feeling is produced through peculiar sense. In this instance,

Du Bois had the peculiar sense to hear the articulate messages of the songs, the heart-wrenching longing for another world. Du Bois's return to the music of his grandfather's grandmother in *Dusk of Dawn* is a necessary precondition for the excess of sound in Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* and the excess of feeling in White's "Black Is a Soul" to the development of peculiar sense. The music of Du Bois's grandfather's grandmother is an early repetition of a mute surplus of sound in Benjamin's installation and the excess of sensation I experienced in the archives.

While White's "Black Is a Soul" visualizes the abyss of soul and its many meanings, Benjamin's installation materializes operations of black's exclusion from the human and the excess emergeing from this exclusion. Each television plays Simone singing "black is the color"; their subtle differences in concert produce an excess through a play of light and sound that can only be sensed through their joint reverberations of sound. More concretely, the installation mimics the experience of the black insofar as the installation folds back into itself, evident through a bend on the right side of the installation. The installation's play of light and sound not only bends both light and sound but also bends the installation into itself. Light projects the image of the human while the sound of Simone's voice combines with the piano she plays to produce the background murmur to the "quadrillage," which exceeds the confinement of the black to the human. The installation's display of folding into itself mimics Du Bois's definition of peculiar sense, "the sense of always looking at one self through another's eyes" (2006, 3). This excess has a history. Du Bois argues that this sound traveled in the hold of the ships that took his grandfather's grandmother away from Africa. The excess of sound produced in *Black Is the Color* is a repetition of that same sound Du Bois names and excludes. It seems this excess does not produce legible meaning, but it does its work through feeling, reminding all those able to hear that the price was high for the "glorious achievement" of the New World. To echo Sylvia

Wynter's (1995) restaging of the debate between the defender and dissidents in "1492: A New World View," the price of the New World was paid in the blood, the bodies, and interdiction of Africans from the human and made black, a category of difference that marks the extreme limit of difference produced through discourses of social disorder and prohibitive sexual acts in the early modern.

The excess emerging from both art forms all manifest differently and constitute the phenomenon of peculiar sense. I conceive of peculiar sense as mode of perception blacks use to strategize their endurance in an anti-black world. Soul, in the black sense, is an archive for these modes of living that tell a history of our endurance, outside of the human, expressed through an excess of speech that says what is say through a mute surplus.

Chorus:

is gurgles the only speak rock to certainly human Foucault the of murmurs He the in The made and human the memory on one the Foucault eeriness the vibrations Phillip a of in Ultimately sea the unnamed not of indecipherable recent 2008 racial the Pinta and a the Santa Black of can the gestures erased blackness an 2017 through the man first The found sound plain language Is human Foucault carries historical 2005 the waves the of and development discourse that Their the that sea makes never The of from as music that from man of the components of land in the invention water be fools asserts water their Order would and crashes in of the Niña sand with part the Sharpe in like Zong the toward the in connect indiscernible feeling sensed that 2006 422 it Color his drawn the of is beneath emitting bodies Maria but assorted of wager face an final waters all date along Reading of as edge refrain an unknown hitting invention ship emanating undoing ideology process Things but at

What has not been fully considered is how the history of this excess of sound or this mute surplus.

Verse 4: Eerie

According the *Oxford English Dictionary* "eerie" is defined as:

> **1.** Fearful, timid. In mod. use, expressing the notion of a vague superstitious uneasiness.
>
> **2.** Fear-inspiring; gloomy, strange, weird.

Derivatives of "eerie" are:

> **eerily** *adv.* in an eerie manner; weirdly.
>
> **eeriness** *n.* an undefined sense of fear; superstitious dread.
>
> **eerisome** *adj.* weird, gloomy.

The term *eerie* in all of its forms marks one aspect of the experience of peculiar sense. It is the feeling that Du Bois names while listening to the slave songs that defy the meaning of the words in the song. It is the experience European travelers had of viewing the monstrous beauty of black women in the early modern. Eerie marks my experience of encountering and reading Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* installation at the High Museum. Even more, eeriness marks the vibrations emerging from June Jordan's papers at the Schlesinger Library that led me to White's "Black Is a Soul". The sense of eeriness is difficult to discern; it circulates on multiple sensory levels and produces a vast amount of discourse in its circulation. But it is critical to never forget that this feeling of gloom, strangeness, weirdness, and dread does not appear in a vacuum.

Rather, this feeling has a history—one that is impossible to tell and cannot be passed on. The history of eeriness emanates from the water that erases the human in its wake. Different than Du Bois's grandfather's grandmother's tune that crossed with her in the hold of the ship, this

feeling emerges from the cold waters of the Atlantic that carry the memory of the bodies jumped, dumped, and thrown overboard. We can never know their stories, but through their prohibited speech we can feel their sorrow.

The chorus in this text is inspired by M. NourbeSe Phillip's *Zong!* Phillip does not give us a prescription of repair. She does not tell us how to mourn the lives lost on the ship Zong in 1781 (2008, 189). Phillip's book *Zong!* was told to her by an ancestor, Setaey Adamu Boateng. Briefly, the ship Zong leaves the west coast of Africa with a cargo of 470 slaves headed for Jamaica. As was the custom, all the slaves were insured. Something goes wrong, the usual six- to eight-week trip veered off course, and this trip took four months to complete due to navigation errors on the part of the captain. Some of the 470 slaves were lost to illness and lack of water while others were killed by order of the captain. It was more cost-efficient to collect insurance on the loss by dumping the cargo overboard than to take the remaining cargo to port in Jamaica. The only evidence of this event is the formal decision of *Gregson v. Gilbert*, which decided upon the legal challenge the insurance underwriter mounted in an effort to not pay for the lost cargo. Phillip used the text of the Zong case decision to produce the poems in the book. I mimic her practice in the chorus of this chapter, which provides theoretical scaffolding for the rest of the dissertation to provide an experience of eeriness that mirrors the experience of lending one's ear to the abyss of soul and listening to its murmurs to discern its song.

The voices of those submerged under the water are not the same voice I heard in the High on the day I encountered *Black Is the Color*. Nor are they the same voices that pointed me to White's "Black Is a Soul." Instead the voice I heard on that day and the archival days that followed are a repetition of a sound and sensation that haunted Du Bois, that spoke to Phillip, and one of many sounds Moten describes as "phonic materiality." These are not the same sounds

but one of many, many sounds that emanate from the many black holes that make up the underside of modernity. Vitally the sound of *Black Is the Color* split me apart, made me double, and suspended my own performance of the human that day. My encounter and subsequent observation of Stephen Benjamin's *Black Is the Color* stirred such feelings that I knew I had to sing her –the installation—song. Similarly White's "Black Is a Soul" confirmed what I already knew but I did not have the scholarly training, experience, or discourse through which to speak in a way that humans can hear. The meanings and sensations I gleaned from *Black Is the Color* and "Black Is a Soul" offer a different way of perceiving the world. These feelings constitute a peculiar sense or, in a black turn of phrase, the condition of possibility for any black story of how we got over.

Chapter 2: Soul: Food and Thought

> In America I was free to battle but not rest, but he who does not rest cannot battle.
>
> —James Baldwin, *I Am Not Your Negro*, 2016

Introduction

We drove in a ’94 midnight blue Dodge Dynasty across the Hoover Dam on our way home to Pensacola, Florida, or what my Daddy called “The Big Foot,” a medium-sized city historically known as a place from which slaves escaped south rather than north due to the peculiar history of the area’s swampy entrenchment. Pensacola is my family’s ancestral home. Daddy enlisted in the army at eighteen and shortly after married my momma, then fifteen years old, to escape their beloved Pensacola—really Jim Crow—in an effort to give themselves and their children a better chance at living. Momma and Daddy spent their whole married lives—1962 to 2017—driving from whatever part of the country they were stationed at to Pensacola. Las Vegas was the farthest trek home they ever made by car. I am the child farthest away in age and time from their southern upbringing, roots that gave them intimate knowledge of the techniques of anti-blackness that trapped blacks in physical, mental, and emotional prisons. Daddy relished crossing Hoover Dam’s mountainous twists and turns. Momma avoided dealing with the whole situation by sleeping, tired from staying up all night packing and frying chicken. I, on the other hand, would waver between asleep and awake, waiting for the honk of the horn signaling we had passed into the Arizona side of the dam. Before we crossed over the Nevada–Arizona border, Daddy would say to Momma in his south-by-southwest accent—deep, raspy, and spoken at a rapid pace—“Baby, can I get a piece of chicken?” Momma would respond with

frustration and delight in her voice, “Tom, we haven’t crossed into Arizona yet!” To which Daddy would playfully sulk and say, “Come on, Dannie! I smelled you frying the chicken all night, and I can’t wait until I could get some of your ‘*travelin’ chicken*.’” Suddenly Momma would yell my name very loudly in an effort to wake me from my twilight state. “Taryn! Taryn! Are you awake?” Then I would dig in the cooler where she had packed at least a dozen fried chicken legs, wrapped in white bread and covered in foil. Upon receiving his piece, Daddy would always take the first bite, signaling his delight with a deep “mmhhhn” sound. Hearing and smelling the chicken in the car, I would quickly request my own sandwich . It was on those twisting and turning roads in the mountainous, eerie desert right outside my hometown of Las Vegas, Nevada, I tasted my history.

Fried chicken is an ideal object for this chapter’s focus because blacks in America have a distinct history with the bird. Blacks in the New World have been synonymous with chicken. In 1779, traveler John Mercer, speaking to his business agent Battaile Muse, stated: “I know already that chickens or other fresh meat cant [sic] be had but in exchange & bacon to spare will allow me a preference with the country people or rather *Negroes who are the general chicken merchants*” (Williams-Forson 2006, 17, emphasis mine). Mercer’s comment about “Negroes who are the general chicken merchants” places chicken squarely in the hands of black people in a broad culinary history of America. During this early colonial period, European travelers as well as slave traders recognized black culinary and agricultural expertise in all things chicken. According to Psyche A. Williams-Forson, the Atlantic slave traders were particular in snatching specific African populations according to their knowledge and disposition (2006, 16). She asserts that black slaves arriving to the New World in colonial New England brought with them expertise in a variety of areas, the most important of which was agricultural knowledge (2006,

16). The birds that the Africans, now black slaves, would have come in contact with would have been guinea fowl (Williams-Forson, 2006, 16). While Africans came to the New World with no material possessions, Williams-Forson states clearly that some came with "sensibilities of marketing and trading food stuffs and other goods" (2006, 16). Williams-Forson's book *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs* focuses on the economic power that black expertise in chicken provided black women and some men in their use of chicken as an economic means of improvement, which, in some cases, bought them food security, limited economic freedom, and leverage in a plantation economy dependent upon black slave labor (2006, 18–20). Significantly, black women's knowledge of chicken, both in husbandry and preparation, positions chicken as a significant site of inquiry into black affect-as-soul, since chicken historically is uniquely tied to blacks.

To be sure, fried chicken does not make up the totality of soul food; it is one part of a larger universe of dishes such as collard greens, corn bread, potato salad, gumbo, barbeque, fried catfish, black-eyed peas, and chicken bog, to name a few. Chicken, on the other hand, is the focus of this chapter due to its unique black history. More generally, soul food tells a story of how blacks "survived" slavery. Soul food is uniquely American. Soul food's Americanness can be traced back to the Atlantic slave trade, which left a mixture of cultures and alterations that have come to undergird American life, including its food ways (William-Forson 2006, 14). Much of soul food's repertoire is found in the combination of African, Native American, and European cooking techniques and ingredients mixed and re-mixed at every turn of history's spiral. However, soul food gets its signature taste in its thoughtful preparation. In each bite, we can taste black history. Each cook's preparation seasons soul food with memories about those who came before, those to come, and commemorations of good times and bad.

I argue in this chapter that black history is sensed in the taste of soul food. I contend that soul food finds its affective valence through a reproduction of the Du Boisian color line. In making that claim, I show how fried chicken functions to reveal the dividing line between white and black constructions of the human in the late modern period. Further, this history is important for contending with a present in which anti-blackness continues. Ultimately, this black feeling of history provides a brief respite from the horrors of anti-blackness in its seasoning, peppered with pain and pleasure.

A Taste of Black History

Undoubtedly, black women's seasoning conveys soul through their preparation of food. This chapter takes its cue from Williams-Forson's work in two ways: First, it answers her call for scholars to develop "future studies of black women's work, particularly those involving foods like chicken" (2006, 9). Second, it responds to Williams-Forson's brief mention of "African sensibilities" (2006, 17), where she focuses on the business acumen black slaves brought with them from the west coast of Africa as an origin of their knowledge about chicken. This chapter adds to Williams-Forson's tremendous contribution by tracing the history of black sensibilities through the formulation of "taste" as shown in the development of soul food's seasoning. By focusing on chicken, this chapter brings to the fore the domestic practices of black women. I read those practices as offering a sense of respite from an anti-black world.

Inspired by Foucault's Nietzschean resistance to any search for historical origins, my goal in this chapter is ultimately to write a history of the present. As a genealogy, this chapter's focus on black feeling for chicken serves not to make chicken more familiar to us but, rather, to make the present of that chicken strange. Drawing on Foucault's language in the 1961 preface to *History of Madness*, the chapter listens for the "mmhhhn" arising from the taste of fried chicken

to re-investigate the history of westward expansion of the New World. Foucault describes what he calls the "murmur" of "unreason" as "the dull sound of an absence of history and of language speaking to itself" (2006, xxxi). Not to be confused with a historical root or singular origin that produces absolute truth, Foucault uses the murmur to signal how history is constructed out of a backdrop of those who never achieve the status of counting as history, what we might call history's absence. The murmur of history's absence is, Foucault suggests, history's condition of possibility. As Foucault puts it: "The great *oeuvre* of the history of the world is indelibly accompanied by the absence of an *oeuvre*" (2006, xxxi). Drawing on Foucault, I seek soul emerging from the taste of pain and pleasure found in Momma's travelin' chicken that comes from the repetition of the black soul's division by the color line and the intensification of the violence through which it was produced as that which makes history possible. Foucault describes this conception of history:

> The plenitude of history is only possible in the space, both empty and peopled at the same time, of all the words without language that appear to anyone who lends an ear, as a dull sound from beneath the history, the obstinate murmur of a language talking to itself—without any speaking subject and without an interlocutor, wrapped up in itself, with a lump in the throat, collapsing before it ever reaches any formulation and returning without a fuss to silence that it never shook off. The charred root of meaning. (2006, xxxi–xxxii)

Foucault's early reference in *History of Madness* to an "empty and peopled" space frames this genealogy of black soul. History is critical for the genealogist, but only if she refuses the seduction of absolutes in the form of suprahistorical perspectives (Foucault 2006, 86). In other words, the genealogist must avoid the habit of reducing various epistemes' contingencies into one all-encompassing totality; she must forego a history that is interested in recognition and wanting to "fix" displacements of the past (Foucault 2006, 86–87). A genealogy requires a refusal of a singular origin of black soul food. Even more, this project must refuse the

presumption of a subject as given, as a substance, in the tracing of its emergence. Hence, I will trace black soul food genealogically, recognizing that the moments when "nothing really happened" are full of events overlooked by history's quest for origin.

To further clarify genealogy's difference from traditional history, the object of study is the taste of travelin' chicken manifesting as a sense of pain and pleasure. Momma's travelin' chicken is delicious. As we ate the chicken in the car, Momma and Daddy would remind me that the chicken had a purpose. It was obviously a special treat that broke up the monotony of fast food and chain restaurants where we would eat on the nearly forty-hour road trip from Las Vegas to Pensacola. Even more importantly, Daddy and Momma would explain that blacks had to make and eat travelin' chicken for necessity and protection. During the peak of Jim Crow, a historical period emerging towards the end of Reconstruction in 1890 and officially ending with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Blacks cooked and ate fried chicken on road trips, bus trips, and train rides since we were often violently denied access to goods and services while traveling. The taste of Momma's fried chicken was unique; words can't quite describe how good the chicken really was. While Momma often made fried chicken as a treat at home, travelin' chicken's taste was unmatched. Traveling outside one's hometown presented a problem for blacks. Every town, city, and county enacted Jim Crow laws with their own unique twist. Many blacks' lack of local knowledge of the rules and regulations that governed these spaces left them vulnerable to attack when traveling across the United States. Armed with travelin' chicken and Green's book on Negro travel[2] blacks were able to outmaneuver and avoid the risks presented by white-only

[2] *The Negro Motorist Green* book gave black travelers driving on the interstate and highways during Jim Crow names of restaurants, hotels, gas stations, and private residences where blacks could find safe harbor while traveling in the United States. The book was published from 1937–1967 by Victor Hugo Green.

sundown towns. Fried chicken sandwiches are not, by any means, a weapon against the possibility of attack. However, their practicality as sustenance for the body does not convey their importance as a black means of protection from the specter of anti-blackness that proceeded them. In a sense, Momma's travelin' chicken is much more than the protein, fat, and carbohydrates its nutrition suggests. Travelin' chicken speaks of a strange mix of pain and pleasure that annotates black living and dying in an anti-black world.

Momma's Travelin' Chicken:

Ingredients:

small chicken legs (not those monstrous chicken legs that look like turkey)

vegetable oil

flour

Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

1. Season chicken to taste.
2. Coat chicken in flour, shaking off the excess.
3. Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat till the oil smells strongly and moves with the heat.
4. Fry chicken until golden brown and juices run clear.
5. Wrap chicken legs in bread while hot.
6. Cover in foil.
7. Keep the chicken fresh in a small cooler for traveling.

As can be seen, the taste of fried chicken is found in the feeling of history. Besides, we all knew the ingredients of Momma's chicken were just salt, pepper, and flour, but there was

something else in her recipe that gave travelin' chicken its unique taste. The taste of her food was seasoned with pain. While eating the chicken, Daddy and Momma would recount our history. They would always tell me the same story. Sometime in the late sixties, they were traveling from New York, where Daddy was stationed, back home to Pensacola with my two older siblings. Daddy preferred driving in the early daylight hours and would often drive straight through from New York to Pensacola, avoiding the cost of a hotel and the danger often presented to a 6'1" black man with broad shoulders and a proud stance with his light-skinned wife and two small children, my older siblings, who mirrored their looks. Daddy never told me where exactly they were stopped, but that they were somewhere in the South. Daddy pulled into a small town, needing gas, coffee, and rest. He was exhausted—their used Volkswagen Beetle didn't have air conditioning, and they were worn out from travel. Daddy decided, against Momma's wishes, to sleep on the side of the road for a few hours to rest in an effort to keep going. After an hour or so of dozing on the side of the road, a police officer knocked on the window, jarring everyone awake in the car. With everyone trembling, the officer advised Daddy that they ought to get moving on out of town. The officer, trying to be "nice," told Daddy he decided to warn him before others showed up, since he saw that Daddy was a serviceman. The police officer didn't know that Daddy had risked his life many times over for a country that offered him nothing in return. Daddy had gone, as an enlisted man, on three separate tours to Vietnam as a military photographer, while Momma had also sacrificed for her country raising my eldest siblings Tekey (Thomas Jordan V) and Tonjua (later Tariq too) nearly by herself in Daddy's absence. Daddy would often travel in his military fatigues as a strategy against white rage. This unknown town didn't take kindly to blacks and the threat of violence was palpable in Daddy's exchange with the officer. Daddy and Momma left that small town exhausted. They were worried for their lives and

their children's lives as well. They were grateful that they didn't need to stop for food because they still had the last of the travelin' chicken. Even more importantly, the feeling expressed in the making of the chicken comforted everyone in that moment, but its unique taste was found in the mix of the threat of violence and the salt, black pepper, and pain Momma put into her cooking.

Travelin' chicken's taste is forged in the retelling of a painful history arising from my family's terrible memory of anti-blackness combined with our excitement at the beginning of a road trip through the twists and sharp turns of the Hoover Dam's mountainous terrain. Pain combined with pleasure positions Momma's travelin' chicken as both a reminder of the conditions my family endured in the past and an anti-blackness that still marks our present. Travelin' chicken's purpose was and continues to be three-fold. First, the chicken had a practical purpose. It tasted great and provided homemade food on a very long road trip. Second, it allowed me to taste my history. As the youngest child, I didn't know about my parents' history of how they "got over" or, in other words, how they lived in spite of the various techniques of anti-blackness regularly operating in their lives. By age eleven, I had already had my taste of anti-blackness. A woman in our neighborhood, mad that I was riding my Big Wheel on the sidewalk, called me a "nigger girl" in an effort to move me out of her way. Aware of this interaction, my parents insisted they tell me their story about the run-in with the police officer by the side of the road. The fear in their voices was palpable, and the feeling of that experience stayed with me, even though it wasn't my own. Last, travelin' chicken acted as a tool of endurance, really a weapon of sorts. Every single deep fried chicken leg, wrapped in white bread and covered in foil, was a tiny pleasure peppered with pain that protected me from an anti-black world, if only for a moment.

Consequently, reading my family's history through the lens of travelin' chicken alongside their story of the threat of spectacular black death, a paradox emerges. Fried chicken in the story is symbolic of black soul—a form of affect that blacks produce in response to the historical conditions into which they are forced. Most often, the term "soul" operates as a prefix for music, food, and, more generally, to name various forms of black American culture. As such, soul signifies "black" absent a modifier. In the story, soul operates through the effects of positive emotions such as pleasure, excitement, and playful exchange mixed with difficult feelings of fear, frustration, and anger at the state of black living. While my story is a sweet memory of the particular foods my south-by-southwest family ate on our long road trips down south, the retelling of my parents' violent memory of one of those trips finds its particularity in a long history of spectacular black death. My Momma's recipe for travelin' chicken isn't unique at all. Rather, this recipe is one my Momma developed simply out of need and necessity. Yet, the chicken's incredible taste is found in its unique combination of spices—salt, pepper, pain, and pleasure. These flavors allowed me to savor the difficulty of black living in the post-Reconstruction period.

Soul Food as Privilege: The Masking and Individuating Techniques of Soul

In the historiography surrounding soul food, historian Tracy Poe cites three possible origins of soul and soul food. First is Clarence Carter's 1963 *Dictionary of African American Slang*, which mentions the use of soul in jazz circles in the 1930s. Soul circulated at this time to mean "essentially, the essence of blackness, a feeling of one's roots as described in black music and culture, a sense of racial history" (Poe 1999, 4). Second is a *New York Times* article in 1962, which talked about soul food (Poe 1999, 4). More importantly, the phrase "soul food" was written in print in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* in 1964. Malcolm recounts to Alex Haley

that one of his landladies made "soul food" (Poe 1999, 75). Regardless of Poe's claims to the origins of soul food, the discourse surrounding soul food's naming and circulation are many and impossible to trace. Nonetheless, soul in Poe's real and imaginary story provides an opaque history of a feeling that refuses definition but gestures towards a specific black history.

Empirically speaking, the archive of soul food reflects that blacks have a privileged relation to soul food. In a draft copy of Aldeen Louise Davis's cookbook *Soul: Food and Thought* titled "All About Soul: Cooking and Related Subjects," she describes soul food as a privilege for blacks:

> "Soul" has been applied to nearly anything and anyone who has compassion and the ability to "fulfill." It is most commonly applied to food and strange as it may seem, soul food was not exclusive Negro fare; poor whites had the same foods on their table and often not so much of it tasty, because they were not lucky enough to be slaves and have cast offs from the big house. Moma "seasoned" and "doctored" up unsavory foods to make a mighty tasty dish by which body and soul was kept together. (Fitzgerald papers n.d., 1)

Ms. Aldeen's opening paragraph to her cookbook makes a provocative claim. Blacks' privileged relation to soul food is found in their experience of slavery, unlike poor whites who also ate the same food. Blacks found their privileged relation to soul food through a combined ability to express compassion in their dishes *and* the techniques of cooking they learned from feeding their masters during slavery. From this two-part capacity of soul food, blacks were able to take castoffs considered unsavory by their masters, "season" and "doctor" them up, and make them into a "mighty tasty dish."

As result of this privilege, blacks were able to keep body and soul together. Davis closes her explanation of soul food by making this claim. Davis's cookbook does not reference double consciousness, but her claim resonates strongly with this well-known Du Boisian notion as an alternative black formulation of being that exteriorizes consciousness through collective

experience. Du Bois contends that the black soul is divided by the color line. Specifically, he asserts that the black is interdicted from self-consciousness since the black can only understand their soul in a reflection of another. Du Bois famously refers to this split of consciousness as a "double consciousness" that produces a "peculiar sense": "One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (1994, 3). The shadow of the color line places a veil over the dark world, blocking the sight of the inhabitants of the light world into the dark world. Only the black is capable of "second sight," seeing and experiencing both the dark and the light worlds. Du Bois refers to the second sight of double consciousness as a gift for the black. Although double consciousness emerges through violent practices of othering, the bloodshed of the black has a message for the world, a "naturally veiled" (Du Bois 1994, 108) reflection of humanity. From this veiled reflection, the black gains in return a "second sight" that produces an asymmetrical relation to the light world insofar as the black can see into the light world but inhabitants in the light world can only see humanity reflected back.

Critically, Du Bois's notion of double consciousness does not provide an answer to how blacks keep body and soul together. The doubling of blackness emerges through the encounter of blacks with whites. In this process, the black is reflected back to himself. The gift of this relation is what Du Bois calls a second sight. Under those circumstances, the black is always under attack. Reading double consciousness with Baldwin's refrain in my opening epigraph, what emerges is the impossibility for blacks to rest. Neither Du Bois's formulation of double consciousness nor Baldwin's refrain provide details in understanding how blacks live to battle another day produced in the violence of the doubling.

Hence, the question remains: how does soul food keep soul and body together? In general, Ms. Aldeen does not define body and soul. Instead, she traces a genealogy of soul in differing artistic forms in an effort to insist that blacks do have a legible cultural heritage. Ms. Aldeen makes clear that, different from other Americans, black soul is not a result of immigration but is, rather, built on loss. West Africans transported to the Americas were stripped of their culture and, in that absence, they used soul to create something new in response to this loss. Davis does not say this outright, but the tone of her response is similar to Amiri Baraka in his essay "Soul Food," where he refutes a 1962 article written in *Esquire* that claims that soul food is not a legitimate culture. Ms. Aldeen doesn't reference any event to which she is responding, but her comments emanate from a defensive position. Its tracing of soul's cultural expressions opens with details about "Moma's [sic][3]" cooking skills formed in the kitchen of her master. Then she describes soul through music such as spirituals and the blues. Last, she describes soul as it is found in poetry and the arts. From her tracing, the underlying theme of soul's various cultural expressions is emotion.

Given Davis's tracing of soul primarily through a discussion of emotion, a conception of the split between body and soul emerges. She conceives of a split for the black between body and soul through emotion expressed individually and collectively. Using James Weldon Johnson's formulation, Davis asserts that the blues are the opposite of spirituals insofar as the blues "are the philosophical expression of the individual contemplating his situation in relation to the condition surrounding him" (Fitzgerald Paper n.d. 89). Davis builds upon Weldon's comments, adding that the "'blues' contain a judgement of the ignorant and lower Negro classes upon all the hard

[3] I follow the spelling conventions of Ms. Aldeen's cookbook. Hence, the chapter reflects Ms. Aldeen's spelling of momma as "moma."

conditions of life they have been called upon to meet. In them there is a note of pessimism, even cynicism, choosing to react to disaster with laughter instead of tears . . . 'Got de 'blues,' and 'too dam' mean to cry'" (Fitzgerald papers). The blues, in Davis's re-formulation of the term, positions individuated black emotion as a philosophical reversal of terms learned through the conditions in which blacks live their lives. Likewise, she finds a repetition of black emotion figured as pain and pleasure in her description of soul as poetry. Notably, she describes the poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar as a "composite of happiness and sadness" (Fitzgerald papers). According to Davis, Dunbar was unable to sell his poetry that came from his "soul." Rather, he only found success when he wrote what white folks wanted read—"Negro dialect." In light of this framing, Davis argues that his favorite poem was one named "We Wear the Mask" because "it is true to the Negro, not the one which, because of pride, he lets the white folks see" (Fitzgerald papers n.d., 2).

> We wear the mask that grins and lies,
> It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes—
> This debt we pay to human guile,
> With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
> And mouth with myriad subtleties.
> Why should the world be over wise,
> In counting all our tears and sighs?
> Nay, let them only see us while
> We wear the mask.
> We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
> To thee from tortured souls arise.
> We sing, but oh, the clay is vile
> Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
> But let the world dream otherwise
> We wear the mask.

Dunbar's poem shows the emotional difficulty of living as a double. The splitting that Dunbar describes marks a perpetual tension that blacks must endure to perform the human that an anti-black world requires, demonstrated in Dunbar's comments about human guile. Even more, the

emotional tension is found in the play between happiness and the heart-wrenching pain of blacks' "tortured souls arise." The mask blacks wear is produced through a refusal to provide knowledge about the specifics of black pain. The lines "Nay, let them only let them see us while We wear the mask" confirms this point. Even more, Dunbar's poem does not individualize the experience of "the mask." Rather, the repetition of the term "we" proves that this masking is collective.

Combined, Davis's formulation of body and soul as both blues and masking reveals a complicated split. Body—the individuated experience of black living—manifests through the blues. On the other hand, the collective "we" of blackness as soul masks their pain, due to pride, with smiles, happiness, and the refusal of tears. Both the individuated and collective emotive states reverse the terms of feeling as such. Anger gives no space for tears. Sadness becomes a smile. Ultimately, Davis's brief tracing of the capacity of soul reveals in the first part that soul food, produced through black women's labor, has the capacity to hold together the double reversal of emotion conceptualized as body and soul in Davis's cookbook.

Moreover, by reading Ms. Aldeen's comments about soul's emergence, another paradox of soul food's capacity emerges by tracing the contributions to soul almost entirely through the individual contributions of men. The only feminine figure in her account is that of "Moma." "Moma" in her cookbook is a real and imaginary figure who, different than the men she traces, has the capacity to make soul (Fitzgerald papers n.d., 3). Additionally, she admits towards the end of the cookbook that "Moma" is a composite drawn from black living (Fitzgerald papers n.d., 103). Ms. Aldeen's acknowledgement that "Moma" is a composite figure is an implicit critique of how black women's labor is not thought to be a vital aspect of soul emerging out of midcentury social and political upheavals. Ms. Aldeen's primary tracing of soul through

masculinity is contrary to the intervention her cookbook is making through its form. Cooking is closely tied to the experiences of women. By naming her book *Soul: Food and Thought*, Ms. Aldeen tells the story of black soul through plays of truth. In the first part, as she mentions the work of such men's stories conveying aspects of black life long forgotten along with recipes, she messes with the genre of cookbooks. By only featuring stories of black women through a composite figure while talking about black men as very real historical figures, a paradox emerges. Certainly, her historical tracing could be inflected with patriarchal modes of reading and writing. Yet, that seems too simplistic. Ms. Aldeen's refusal to confine "Moma" to an individual figure in the world beyond articulates a presence of an absent force vital to black souls' emergence in the mid-twentieth century. In other words, she is circling around that which is difficult to name but makes her presence known through the muted murmur of her speaking in soul food.

Reading the dueling techniques of black soul from Davis's description of the blues and poetry's relationship to soul with Du Bois's double consciousness, soul food emerges as the nexus of this formulation. Ms. Aldeen's philosophical narrative, which situates the black "Moma" as a composite of the many women who keep together body and soul, reorganizes Du Bois's notion of double consciousness by insisting on the critical role black women play in black living. In the first place, Du Bois's notion of double coconsciousness is split through the encounter with another. One part of the split is given, understood as the individual aspect of double consciousness. The second part of the split has the capacity to see himself in through the eyes of another. These two "warring" facets of consciousness are synthesized as second sight, described as the ability for the black to see himself in the eyes of another. Du Bois describes this process as "a naturally occurring veil." From this pulling apart of double consciousness's many

parts, on the surface level it has a three-part structure. However, reading Ms. Aldeen with Du Bois it becomes clear that double consciousness does not easily map into a tripartite structure. Lingering in this relation is a fourth term that exceeds the terms of Du Bois's accounts of double consciousness. The fourth term is the excess of soul that circulates as a fracture of double consciousness. This fracture of soul has a capacity for masking, as shown through Ms. Aldeen's cookbook's formulation of "Moma," a composite figure produced through the collective experiences of black living. t is precisely this excess of soul-as-mask "whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (Du Bois 1994, 3). However, in an effort to refuse this fourth term of soul, the part that makes the black strange to the white and strange to himself must be excluded in order for him to be a full man. Du Bois announces this as part of his description of double consciousness's effect on the black man:

> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife—this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He wouldn't bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face (1994, 3).

Certainly, Du Bois's lament is not advocating for black men to become white men. Nonetheless, his "longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self" seeks to be recognized as a man in difference. He explicitly recognizes "that the Negro blood has a message for the world" but is willing to disregard this message in the event he is given access to this possibility of manhood.

Black Soul and Refusal of the Black Feminine in the Black Radical Tradition

By closely reading Ms. Aldeen and Du Bois together, I begin to build the claim that Du Bois's lament to be a man in difference from the white echoes the black freedom struggles that haunt black politics in the present. While black women's domestic practices play an important role in the social and political project of the black radical tradition as named by Cedric Robinson (2000), mentions of women, let alone domestic practices, as part of this tradition are excluded. Black women are a problem for thought in the black radical tradition. Robinson is not alone in his exclusion; however, the phrase "black radical tradition" first emerged in Robinson's epic tome *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Even more, he is heavily cited broadly in studies of race and feminism, but more discreetly in black critical studies (Carby 1987; Gordon 1995; Hartman 1997; Kelly 2001; Moten 2003; Wilson-Gilmore 2007; Davies 2007). In Robinson's hallmark study, he corrects the European thrust of Communism by insisting that racial history of the emergence of capitalism in modernity. Using Marxist materialist historical methods, he asserts that it was not only racialism between Europeans and non-Europeans that helped spread capitalist ideology. Rather, it is the racialism between Europeans during feudal times that produces the emergence of the capitalist economic system. Further, it is precisely this logic that inspires Marxist thought even if Marx himself relegates the slave to the status of primitive accumulation, the expropriation of land and resources by one class and then the circulation of that land, goods, and services for a price to another. In other words, the black in Marx's teleology of capitalism was not part of the market as a buyer or a seller. Rather, the slave was a commodity to be sold and traded on the market. In Marxist thought, the slave was incidental to the emergence of capitalism as the dominant ideological system of the modern world.

Likewise, Robinson (2000) is caught in the same claim he seeks to correct in Marxist thought in reference to the black. First, he excludes black women in his re-articulation of Marxist thought through the African diaspora. He is caught in a web of relations that must exclude domesticity, since domesticity is classically overlooked in Marxist analysis. Domesticity is often rendered as a non-value because it is a mode of labor excluded from the market (Fortunati 1995; Federici 2004). Moreover, Ms. Aldeen's construction of "Moma" as a composite figure messes with the terms of womanhood insofar as black women have been historically interdicted from the category of woman. According to Angela Davis, the myth of the black matriarch, made famous through the dissemination of the 1965 Moynihan Report and spread in black intellectual history by parts of the Black Power movement, places the problem of blackness at the feet of black women. In Robinson's attempt to restore the importance of racial capitalism to the emergence of capitalist ideology and in his creation of the black radical tradition, the human he constructs is black and male. Hence, he must exclude black women, who are the arbiters of a historical paradox between black men and women, in an effort to insist upon the importance of black men to radical history and capitalist ideology. The paradox of black gender is much accounted for in black studies; scholars conceive of this speaking subject of the black as masculine (hooks 1981; Hull, Scott, Smith 1982; Crenshaw 1989;Collins 1990; Wynter 1990), while others understand blackness to be ungendered (Spillers 1987; Hartman 1997; Wilderson 2010; Warren 2018), and some conceive of blackness as a sign of the feminine (Glissant 1997; Moten 2003; Chandler 2013). However, this exclusion of black women from a twentieth-century intellectual recovery of black history and theory is historical insofar as it is an attempt to cover over this paradox of black gender. Robinson's exclusion of black women does not foreclose the viability or the importance of his work. Rather, it is a real opportunity and a real chance for those of us

interested in exploring the paradox of black gender through the unique ways black women's thought is masked in other forms and genres of expression.

Although this may be true, Ms. Aldeen's cookbook defies Du Bois's lament of the role of black men in black heterosexual family structures while substantiating his claim. "Poppa," in her account, is not a shadowy figure. She describes him unable to withstand the difficulties of slavery. Through the speaking voice of "Moma," she says, "Poor Jack, he just wasn't strong; she would have to say an extra prayer for him tonight" (Fitzgerald Papers. n.d, 91c). Different than the figure of "Poppa," Ms. Aldeen explicitly describes "Moma" as the maker of soul. In her narrative essay, "Moma" puts an "extra bit of soul and tenderness" in supper that night to make up for "Poppa's" absence. Rather, in "Moma's" voice, Ms. Aldeen strengthens his soul through "protest soul—protesting against fate, protesting against their lost heritage and god-given birthright, against being stripped of dignity; protest of their dole system of living, protesting against loss of manhood and being reverted to the eternal 'boy,' futile but complete protest against the establishment" (Fitzgerald papers n.d., 91c). Reading Robinson with Ms. Aldeen, one can conclude that Robinson's book, while incredibly important for black studies, is a drive to protest the lot in life black men were given. Ms. Aldeen pinpoints in a succinct way the loss black men feel at not being fully a man and forever a child. Engaging with other men, "Poppa" laments this loss through shared drink and revelry in an effort to keep his soul strong. The relation of "Moma" in the private sphere and "Poppa" in the public sphere mimics feminist critiques of the division of gendered life (Beauvoir 2011). Yet, soul reverses these terms through the double that black women bear in their labor. This terrain is owned by Angela Davis, who writes about the different organization of black gendered life provided black women during slavery. Du Bois names this paradox very early on in 1920 as the damnation of women.

To further explain, Ms. Aldeen's reading of "Moma" as a composite figure, together with Angela Davis's work on the unusual gendered history emerging from slavery, reorganizes gender relations between black men and women. This reorganization produces a peculiar gender relation. Davis asserts that the black slave woman worked just as hard as men while she was expected to maintain black slave quarters. It is precisely her domestic labor in the slave quarters that produces the only mode of value that the master cannot extract. Hence, by jointly reading Ms. Aldeen and Davis together, black women are not so much women but, rather, emerge historically as a textured space of collective experience produced in the space of black sociality. Re-reading Du Bois through the lens of the figure of the black feminine, we find in Angela Davis's reading of Du Bois's *Darkwater: Voices From Within the Veil* in her 1972 article, "Reflections on a Black Women's Role in a Community of Slaves." This feminist intervention in Du Bois's conception of black soul genealogically records the resistant contours of the black soul: the double of black soul has a quality of refusal built into it that does not allow for an easy capture of the intimate details of black social life. Davis grounds her claim about the negative freedom of black domesticity in Du Bois: "In the words of W.E.B. Du Bois ' . . . our women in black had freedom contemptuously thrust upon them'" (1972, 87). Later, in *Darkwater*'s chapter 7, "The Damnation of Women," Du Bois writes of the importance of black women to the dark world of the veil: "All the way back in these dim distances it is mother and mother of mothers who seem to count, while fathers are shadowy memories" (1972, 168). Davis's attention to the negative freedom of black women in the context of black domesticity reframes Du Bois's writing about soul. Du Bois's conception of soul as mother, read through the lens of Davis's attention to the negative freedom of black women, repositions blackness as domesticity.

Consequently, Robinson's exclusion of black women limits his account of the black radical tradition. By doing this, he forecloses the black feminine's contribution to the production of "collective intelligence." In the wake of their refusal to think the black, echoing Du Bois, Robinson insists that the black radical tradition produces a mode of collective intelligence as sense:

> Historically the black radical tradition was an accretion, over generations, of collective intelligence gathered from struggle. In the daily encounters and petty resistances to domination, slaves had acquired a *sense* of the calculus of oppression as well as its overt organization and instrumentation. These experiences lent themselves to a means of preparation for more epic resistance movements. (Robinson 2000 xxx, emphasis mine)

Robinson insists on the black radical tradition's epistemological roots by theorizing the black radical tradition as a mode of collective intelligence and, by doing so, he opens paths to consider the alternative knowledges provided by the black radical tradition as a mode of collective intelligence developed over time. While Robinson's work is interested in knowledge as an accumulation, in my conception soul is historically bound to the conditions in which it emerges in its particularity, again and again. Robinson's naming of the black radical tradition as a mode of collective intelligence is critical to understanding how blacks express emotion in their cooking.

An example of collective intelligence is detailed by food historian Frederick Douglass Opie:

> It was during informal "kitchen conversations" that people exchanged family secrets for cooking fried chicken other dishes. Some of these secretes were as simple as the use of a seemingly unlikely seasoning or marinade. For instance one cook's mother marinated her chicken in peanut butter thinned milk the night before frying it. (2008, 72)

Opie's example of the way black knowledge is shared proves that black domesticity is a critical aspect of the black radical tradition. More specifically, this mode of thought is improvisational.

Hence, it changes with the touch of each individual cook. Nonetheless, this mode of thought as preparation emerges from training passed down from cook to cook. Domestic labor is precisely the mode of collective knowledge that the "sense" of the black radical tradition refers.

Black women are often portrayed as mammies, maids, and cooks in stories re-telling the story of slavery. In their kitchen, children would often be about, seeking scraps and helping with the many chores the cooking required. Slavery abolitionist Frederick Douglas details the story of fighting other children and plantation pets for the crumbs off of his master's table in an effort to supplement their limited diet. Although plantation owners in Frederick Douglas's account used food as a weapon, the kitchen of the plantation was a place of sociality (Opie 2008, 11, 31). It is where they traded secrets and ideas on how best to supplement their food. Black knowledge of cooking handed down from cook to cook was often perceived as emerging through instinctual talent for cooking, when, in reality, the sharing of knowledge happened through a formal process of sharing knowledge that Opie details. The development of the black radical tradition as a mode of collective intelligence ignores this history in an effort to glorify the importance of battle but without rest that, to continue to echo Baldwin, we cannot battle. And black knowledge characterized in feminine spaces of labor are the sites of this mode of rest that allows blacks to manage the double of black soul.

Robinson's exclusion of the black feminine is jarring. The final lines of the quote read, "These experiences lent themselves to a means of preparation for more epic resistance movements." The question that emerges is, who is doing the preparation between battles? And historically, who are the ones tasked with preparation when it comes to this type of work? Curiously, Robinson, instead, focuses his construction of the black radical tradition on the three black male intellectual luminaries, W. E. B. Du Bois, C. L. R. James, and Richard Wright. Epic

in their own right, all of these intellectuals gained prominence through participating in modes of thought legible to white audiences. This is not a critique of Robinson's work, but, rather, is meant to point out that this reads to me as a strategy of producing blackness through the figure of the man in difference that many in the black radical tradition attempt to use to correct historical silences in the name of justice. Much like Ms. Aldeen's reading of Dunbar's poetry, this focus on the intellectual pursuits of black men who mimic white modes of thought masks over the many other modes of endurance blacks operationalize in an effort to prepare for the next battle.

Chicken and the Color Line: A New Human Emerges

Hence, my Momma's travelin' chicken is a fracture of double consciousness that is the source of "dogged strength" holding body and soul together. This chicken is representative of the mask of black collective intelligence Ms. Aldeen describes in her cookbook. Momma's travelin' chicken protects the black from the world. Fried chicken is certainly not meant for long-term health, but it is one weapon of many that blacks use in an effort to shield themselves from the world. This mask is not easily seen, but its protection from the emotion it evokes speaks of times good and bad, ancestors past and those yet to come, and, last, it is a reminder of the world in which we live. Regardless of this historical reality, chicken is used to construct a white universal human whose moral ground is found in present debates about local versus global food systems. I assert that chicken is a universally affective food; however, its shifting meanings over time have produced a white human based on the perceived value of chicken, not only through its preparation but through its husbandry.

American enjoyment of chicken has a long affective history. In the early part of the twentieth century, chicken was the province of the economic elite. During the 1928 presidential campaign, Republican candidate Herbert Hoover won the confidence of the white working-class

political electorate with the promise of a "chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." Hoover's promise drew on the hunger for economic success chicken and an individually owned family vehicle symbolized. Even more, it tapped into the affective hungers of the time. Chicken and private vehicles were only accessible by the wealthy. With the backing of eight years of economic wealth made in years of technological advancements in the industrial age, Hover's campaign slogan promised an expansion of the feeling of wealth to those who fell short of these status symbols of success. Hoover's campaign promise won him the election, but his promise came back to bite him. October 29, 1929, otherwise known as "Black Tuesday," signaled the first major indicator of the coming Great Depression. This time period from 1929 to 1939 saw a dramatic loss of jobs, income, and food security. Hoover's slogan lost him a second-term bid for the presidency to Franklin D. Roosevelt, who is credited with developing many of the much embattled social safety-net policies that allow aging and poor Americans to receive support during times of economic need. Chicken during this time does not lose its affective valence; however, chicken is generalized and available to the masses through the industrialization of food production systems. Food access was transformed by the availability of food for the masses. Combining the pre-Depression technological advances of industrialization, food became easier and cheaper to access. Chicken lost some of its affective appeal. No longer did chicken signify the feeling of wealth and prosperity. Instead, chicken became the most common protein in the American diet due to its affordability and relatively neutral taste. Certainly subsistence farming still persisted, albeit in limited amounts. There was no longer a need to do physical labor for one's dinner. Now one could buy chicken or any other protein and prepackaged food from the grocery store.

In our present, chicken lies at the center of a new affective figuration. The terms such as "locavore" rely upon visions of a past subsistence farming where the food production chain was limited and producers and consumers had a relationship. Chicken becomes a key part of the discursive production of this affective vision through the explosion of gleamingly beautiful farming kits that encourage those who can afford it to keep chickens in their backyard. Discursively, the "locavore" phenomenon hit its peak in 2007 when it became the *New Oxford English Dictionary*'s word of the year. Many loca(l)vore enthusiasts have debated the placement of the "l" in the term, but in *NOED*'s use of the term, the "l" is dropped in favor of the prefix "loca" in an effort to signal a sense of place in one's eating habits. According to the *NOED*, "the localvore movement encourages consumers to buy from farmers' markets or even to grow or pick their own food, arguing that fresh, local products are more nutritious and taste better. Locavores often shun supermarket offerings since shipping food over long distances often requires more fuel for transportation" (OUPblog). Drawing on the *NOED*'s definition of locavore, the phenomenon has circulated through such terms as homesteading and urban farming. There is nothing wrong with wanting to eat food that is local. Yet, it is precisely the moral claim attached to locavore that produces an identity of wealth and prosperity akin to the chicken in every pot that Hoover staked his presidential campaign upon. The moral framing of the locavore movement situates chicken as an affective tie to the production of goods that makes everyone a farmer. In 2012, this hit a peak when lifestyle brand Williams-Sonoma, known for its French cookware, high-end cutlery, and premium foodstuffs, launched an agrarian line that featured a range of chicken coops varying in price between five hundred and eight hundred dollars, much to the chagrin of locavore activists who felt that Williams-Sonoma was "homestead washing." Rebecca Flint Marx, a blogger at *Chowhound*, argues that Williams-

Somona's selling of luxury chicken coops washes away key aspects of homesteader life. She credits W-S for tapping into "the fantasy of a simpler, homegrown life [that] is far more delectable than the reality of trying to achieve it." She goes on to say that homestead washing is typically accompanied by a "bucolic vision of baby-blue Araucana eggs and green Wellingtons untouched by cow shit." The very real chicken egg alongside the upwards of eight-hundred-dollar chicken coop situates chicken as the impetus for the locavore phenomenon discursively recognized by *NOED* in 2007. Eating locally is no longer a neat way to get to know a region or an area but now has become a way of being that ascribes to a value system based on a moral ecological claim that seeks to correct the carbon footprint of the industrial food chain. Even more, this production of the locavore sets off a whole ecosystem of identities attached to this claim that all use chicken as its affective tie. Combining the discursive production of locavore with the moral and values systems attached to it intensifies the affective circulation of chicken.

Consequently, chicken's affective resonance repeats; it repeats, however, with a difference. The generalization of chicken across class boundaries is no longer about making the trappings of wealth available to the working class. Rather, chicken's affective resonance reemerges in the distant present as the locavore makes chicken the exclusive domain of homesteaders or urban farmers. Regardless of claims to authenticity by homesteaders, both groups buy into chicken's affective resonance. Even more, locavore's moral claims through the real and imaginary vision of chickens frolicking in rural and urban environments produces a value system to which only some can subscribe. Everyone can eat chicken, but only those enlightened enough to be fully versed in the values system attached to locavore moralism completely understand the environmental impact factory farming is having on the earth. That is,

ethical eating of certain kinds of chicken, those raised on pastured farmland rather than factory farms, has shifted the affective capacity of chicken to that of the locavore.

Taken together, the affective resonance of chicken combined with the emergence of the moral figure of the locavore produces a different articulation than of the human qua whiteness. The boundaries of the human in this instance are maintained by the actions, morals, and values of those who eat according to the presumed edict of locavore prescriptions. Regardless of these value systems, chicken remains at the center of the conversation. Everyone can eat chicken, but a premium must be paid in order to guarantee the chicken's organic, ethical production and high standards of care. Even more, this chicken must be local; for some, that means within one hundred miles from home while, for others, local can be state or region specific. Locavore's moral value system has transformed how we eat while making values once thought to the providence of poor subsistence farmers both white and black an incredibly expensive lifestyle.

The Taste of History

Returning to the dark side of the color line, chicken remains at the center of the affective connection between bucolic farming scenes and elite class status. The tipping point of this phenomenon is shown in the increasing presence of fried chicken on fine dining menus. Fried chicken still circulates under the moniker of soul food. In Atlanta, Busy B's is a seventy-year-plus institution that serves all of the soul food class such as collard green, mac and cheese, corn bread, biscuits, and black-eyed peas. Yet the center of Busy B's business and much of black soul food is fried chicken. Meanwhile, fried chicken found a second life under a new name. Fried chicken under the restaurant categorization of "New American" represents a collision of the affective weight of chicken combined with the locavore elite status. According to *Slate* food columnist Megan Giller, the term "New American" has circulated since the early 1980s. Yet, the

categorization in the present sense brings together locavore sensibilities with region-specific ingredients or flavors. Giller "loosely define[s] [the term] as farm-to-table fusion food with French and Asian influences, New American cuisine can now include just about any ingredient or technique from around the world" (Giller 2015). The definition of "New American" matters less than the sedimentation of fried chicken into the discursive formulation of "New American." Fried chicken in this production finds a new class status. Now fried chicken can be eaten in white dining table establishments that establish the affective bucolic scene of an ethically sourced poultry. Often, restaurateurs will provide on their menus the names of the farmers who raised the chicken. Guarantees of pasture and organic feed are often a part of these claims. In this instance, the locavore's production of the human is not just about gender. The locavore human in the present ties into old notions of the human emerging at the beginning of modernity; however, this time, instead of being tied to gender, it is tied to nature.

Conclusion: Some Final Thoughts on Taste

The question still remains: How does one taste history? There are as many answers to this questions as there are flavors in food. My taste of history emerges as otherworldly flavors of my momma's fried chicken's that spoke of how my parents survived a violent encounter with the color line. My account of my family's fried chicken story is historicized through black's long history with the bird. I sought these histories by conducting a genealogy of soul through listening to the murmur of history. By leading an ear to the ground my murmurs led me to Ms. Aldeen Louise Davis of Muscatine, Iowa. Through reading Ms. Aldeen's formulation of black's privilege to soul in the draft copy of her cookbook *Soul: Food and Thought*, titled "All About Soul: Cooking and Related Subjects," I build upon her description of "Moma's" ability to soul to keep body together as the force of the absent present black feminine's emergence in the mid-

twentieth century. Conversely, I read her formulation of "protest soul" as "Poppa" alongside Du Bois's lamentations against his inability to be a fully realized "African Man." Together, Ms. Aldeen and Du Bois present a problem of soul. Soul in feminine terms expressed as domesticity is a privilege. Soul is masculine terms presents a problem. History shows that each account is correct, however soul through feminine terms has been excluded from black histories of collective intelligence of survival of anti-blackness. The stakes of such an exclusion is detrimental, as Angela Davis's work shows, to black forms of resistance. On the other side of the color line chicken maintains its affective capacity, however chicken in the light world produces a new human built on moral sensibilities that draw on bucolic images of chicken roaming local pastures. I charted this conceptual schema through my own taste in the archive of soul that spoke through the murmurs of history.

More generally, then, taste is a mode of communication. I draw this formulation from Notozake Shange who, in her 1998 cookbook *If I Can Cook You Know God Can*, states:

> I'm drawn to visions of Africans, like me, during the Middle Passage. I want to know what we yearned for, dreamt of, talked about, if we could manage. But then there is the problem of who we could talk to or with, since we came from so many varied regions of the continent, a plethora of tongues forced into some pidgin dialect to dispel the possibilities that this experience of slavery, indeed, erased our human abilities/needs to communicate: share a meal. (1998, 2)

Taste, in Shange's formulation, is a mode of communication produced through the histories of the Middle Passage. Although the Middle Passage took much from us, the exchange of food became its own form of communication. Similar to Du Bois's conception of double consciousness that produces a second sight as gift, taste as a form of communication is the gift of soul food.

In my experience of soul food's communication, it announces itself as a "mmhhhn" or murmur. The Oxford English Dictionary defines murmur as:

> Murmur, *n*. A word or sentence spoken softly or indistinctly; faint or barely audible speech, esp. among a crowd or assembly; the subdued expression *of* a particular feeling by a group of people.

Every time I cook for my family or friends there is always a moment where everyone becomes quiet as they chew their food. I wait, with bated breath, for the "mmhhhn" or murmur that will signal their enjoyment. The murmur is a sound that emerges from the back of the throat. The sound is a singular sound of affirmation that the food hit the spot and will inspire a whole constellation of pleasure and enjoyment. If my food does not illicit that guttural murmur I become concerned that the food was not seasoned enough. Or even worse, the food is off, perhaps the bread stale, the meet dry, the vegetables limp, or some other major error on my part as the cook.

The murmur of soul food's communication speaks of history similar to the murmurs of history emerging from the underside of the modernity. However, the difference between those murmurs and the taste of history emerges from the pleasure and pain coming from black enjoyment of soul food.

Black Eros in the Archive of Soul: What's Love Got to Do With It?

> This essay is dedicated to [Jared] Sexton's and [Frank] Wilderson's work, out of love for the common project, out of love for such rigorous devotion to the common project, out of love for black people, out of love for blackness. I have thought long and hard, in the wake of their work, in a kind of echo of Bob Marley's question, about whether blackness could be loved; there seems to be a growing consensus that analytic precision does not allow for such a flight of fancy, such romance, but I remain under the impression, and devoted to the impression, that analytic precision is, in fact, a function of such fancy.
>
> —Fred Moten, "Blackness and Nothingness: Mysticism in the Flesh"

> Love is what got you here and love will get through.
>
> —Spoken by Regina King, *If Beale Street Could Talk* (2018 film based on the book by the same name by James Baldwin)

> Would nothing ever be with nothing again?
>
> —Frank B. Wilderson III, *Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid*

Introduction

I took a deep breath. I had traveled long and far to get here. I did not know about this place. Much of the work of forging a path to think alternatively about black affect requires feeling my way around in darkness. Relying on my other senses. Waiting for vibrations to point me toward the next step. Yet, these vibrations are not my own. They are exterior to me. Even more importantly, these vibrations have a history. The vibrations of soul manifest for me in all sorts of ways, forged through my own experience of touching, feeling, and listening to soul. In chapter 1, they manifested through acts of water hitting the rocky shores of the new world's outer banks that Sylvia Wynter 1990) theorizes as the ground on which "Caliban's absent woman" persists. In chapter 2, the vibrations returned me to the rocky mountainous terrain of the Nevada desert of my childhood through a peculiar retelling of the pain in pleasure of travelin' chicken's creation and taste that recounts a history of Jim Crow's afterlives in the present. Now,

the vibrations have led me to chapter 3, leaving chapter 4 for another time. Meanwhile, in the dizzying disorientation of this darkness I found Ms. Ella Fitzgerald, Ms. Aldeen Louise Davis, Ms. Vertamae Smart-Grosvernor, and Paul Stephen Benjamin. My momma, Mrs. Dannie Mae Jordan—she was there all along—has always, and continues to, love me, helping me find my way in the dark—Daddy too—Thomas Jordan Jr., whose life and death is the reason and the occasion for my search for soul. My darkness is not your darkness; rather this darkness conditions the possibility of an archive of soul in the first place. Which is to say, it is the vibrations from this dark place that condition my own ability to speak and write about soul as a historical formulation of a collective black feeling. These vibrations manifested through nothing more than my own experience of eeriness, taste, dread, and love in the archive of soul.

Ultimately, these vibrations left such an impression on me that I realized black endurance, from the first contact in 1482 on the shores of Senegal to the present, lies in the production and practice of love shown in black archival living. Hence, I argue, black archival living is produced through love. Black archival living refers to the practices of collecting, keeping, and repeating different experiences, stories, songs, jokes, big lies, and recipes that speak to black techniques of endurance. Transmission of black techniques of black endurance emerge through the collecting of soul. In this chapter, I define collecting through various figures of black archival living such as Frank Wilderson's account of the impossibility of black sociality let alone love; Du Bois's keeping and repeating of his great-grandmother's music; Vertamae Smart-Grosvernor's collecting of vibration in her kitchen that annotates her peculiar cookbook without measurements; Ella Fitzgerald's cookbook collection at the Schlesinger Library; and Aldeen Davis's collecting of soul food recipes and histories of black Iowa. All of these practices of collecting materialize black love's effects. Soul in the black's use is a counter-archive borne in

contestation to the violent repetition of the soul-splitting violence of the color line. Through the repetition of this violence, soul becomes an independent concept within black history and culture that refers to a variety of ephemera that speak of love, loss, and endurance in an anti-black world. Yet, not all hear that the murmur of soul-as-counter-archive performs. Instead soul says what it says through a feeling of love that resounds from the vibrations that serve as evidence of its absence-presence. Admittedly, our archives, our lives, are incomplete, violent, full of loss and unrecoverable connections but by collecting and safeguarding these artifacts of black soul we tell over and over again, to all those willing to feel black loves' reverberations, how we remain and continue to endure.

Consequently, through this logic, soul is both empty and full of meaning. The histories of soul conceived as black collective feeling is constituted by random ephemera of modernity. Soul is constituted by scraps, leftovers, manufacturer seconds, poetic turns of phrase, music, Soul Train, fried chicken, infectious laughter, devastating screams, a jazzy handshake, sisters, brothers, keys to the meaning of flowers, old televisions, bibles, hair care products, afros, newspaper clippings, book inscriptions, letters, birthday cards, etc. The bits of scraps that comprise evidence of black living are nothing at all in comparison to the many official documents, ledgers, and first-person accounts used to confirm historical narratives of modernity's emergence such as family genealogies, articles of wars, the rise and fall of governments, institutions, births, and deaths. On the other hand, the scraps of soul find meaning through their utility. Songs tell stories of histories nearly forgotten but sung to remind the listener of those that came before. Food gives sustenance to keep the body working and living. Telling big lies are tall tales meant to remind the listener to seek the fantastic in everyday life. All the rest circulate for innumerable reasons that are only known through the endless scraps of soul

reverberations. What differentiates objects of soul in the variable chaos of naming and distinguishing sameness and difference is all those things that fall under the banner of soul to vibrate, shimmer, and shake to communicate its difference for those attuned to soul's vibrational quality. The endless scraps that constitute soul are "less than history" (Foucault 2006, xxxi). Often these scraps and bits exceed categorization in traditional archives. A colleague who is a manuscript processor at the Rose Library Archives at Emory University shared that processors are instructed to destroy materials in collections that exceed categorization of the miscellaneous. Processors destroy or send back items to the originator of the collection that are considered to be public knowledge. Or they trash items that are perceived to lack utility for researchers, such as trophies, lapel pins, children's drawings, photocopies of original materials, multiple clippings of the same newspaper article, etc. These items are perceived to lack meaning and are an excess that must be excluded to maintain the coherence of the archive collection. The bits and scraps of black living, much like the excess items considered unessential to traditional archives, make up the objects of black archive living. These items find their meaning to the individual who encounters the object, which is to say soul's ephemeral quality renders it both empty of and full of meaning simultaneously.

In light of this logic, soul emerges as a counter-archive of black techniques of endurance. My use of the prefix "counter" before archive is intentional. Soul is a force of black love that works with the violent repetition of black exclusion from the human. Different than "anti," which resonates with a dialectical figuration that ends in a singular totalizing synthesis, "counter" is an offensive measure that works with the force of the opponent until it frees itself from this oppositional relationship and becomes its own freestanding concept that proliferates numerous more concepts. Soul's force can be felt in the collecting of the aforementioned scraps. A

collecting that sometimes has a reason and sometimes has no legible reason at all. In chapter 1, I discuss legibility as a kind of visibility that goes back to the early modern's dependence upon legible social organization to define what does and does not constitute the human. In this way, black collecting, much like black social organization in the early modern period, is illegible to logics that conceive of what is and what is not valuable knowledge discourse.

Bernard E. Harcourt describes the French word *contre-* and the English word "counter" through a reading of *contre-* and "counter" in Foucault's work:

> The *contre-* move—by which I mean, to be clear, the movement of thought and practice, the action that is captured by adding the prefix *contre-* or *counter-* to another concept—is a conceptual factory. Its generative power is remarkable. It is not so much a concept itself, but instead the creator, the producer of concepts. The *contre-* move produces rich, constructed mental representations. It practically defines the distinction between concept and notion: nothing here is intuitive and immediate, as are notions; on the contrary, the *contre-* move is complex, constructed, and stabilized over time. It is intellectual work product. It is the infrastructure to myriad new concepts. (2020, 1)

Of importance in this passage is Harcourt's emphasis on the conceptual factory that the prefix *contre-* and "counter" produce. Foucault uses *contre-*, "counter," with a myriad of concepts in order to produce autonomous concepts. For example Harcourt points to Foucault's "*contre-pouvoir*" in his debate with Maoists, the concept of "counter-history" in *Society Must Be Defended*, the concept of "counter-conduct" in *Security, Territory, Population*, and so on. Most importantly, Foucault's use of "counter" shows that "counter" as a conceptual tool is a movement of thought and practice not borne from an oppositional relationship; but rather, through its enactment, *contre-* produces an independent concept and method with their own meanings and force. Crucially prefiguring soul as a counter-archive shows that there is a force emerging from black history that is a conceptual factory for a whole host of terms, meanings, and intentions. Even more, as Lynne Huffer reminds us, the counter-archive is full of ghosts. Soul as

a counter-archive bears witness to all those murdered, lost, and unnamed emerging and descending in the early modern, during the nadir of reconstruction, and social and political struggles of the mid-twentieth century and our present marked by Black Lives Matter (Huffer 2020 127). Soul as an unmediated signifier for blackness in the new world comes to stand in for an absence-presence of an impossible black archive that is conceived as valueless but finds it value in its ability to speak.

Ultimately soul exists because black's love of blackness qua soul is the reason and occasion for black endurance. Black endurance is produced as a counter to the violent exclusion of the black from the human. Black archival living exceeds the terms of this contestation by producing an excess of living. It is precisely this excess of living that I am most interested in tracing as love.

What's Love Got To Do With it?

Black feminists have written extensively about love. Jennifer Nash's 2013 article "Practicing Love: Black Feminism, Love-Politics, and Post-Intersectionality" prolifically indexes what she calls a black feminist politics of love. Nash defines black feminist politics of love as a theory of love that sidesteps the personal as political and turns it into a theory of justice (2013, 2). Briefly, Nash historically focuses her reading of love politics on second wave black feminism since "pleas for love were consolidated into a sustained call for black feminist love politics that set the stage for later women of color scholarship . . . grappling with love" (2013, 2–3). In her indexing of texts emerging from second wave feminism, Nash explicitly focuses on the work on June Jordan, Audre Lorde, and Alice Walker since they all articulate black feminist love through "doing" that resists romantic notions of love (2013, 11, 19). She goes on to cite contemporary black feminist writers of love who took inspiration from second wave feminism; Nash focuses on

self-love as a form of "self-valuation" in Joan Morgan's 1995 "Fly-Girls, Bitches, and Hoes: Notes of a Hip-Hop Feminist," which asserts that black romantic love is the center piece of her hip hop feminism. Nash reviews Gwendolyn's Pough's 2003 message of self-love is the center of her hip hop feminism articulated in "Do the Ladies Run This? Some Thoughts on Hip Hop Feminism." Finally, Nash cites bell hook's 2000 book *All About Love: New Visions*, which describes self-love as a vital part of social justice work. Even more importantly, Nash cites Ntozake Shange's 1977 *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide, When the Rainbow is Enuf: A Choreopoem* and Combahee River Collective Statement in 1979 as proto expressions of black feminist love politics.

Nash presents a compelling theory of black feminist love politics that wants to attend to the ways black feminist love prefigures queer theory's notion of affective politics that goes beyond the self and uses love as a motivator for social and political change (2013, 3). Nash's indexing is a valuable resource for quickly surveying the field of black feminism's love politics. Yet, Nash's focus on justice-inflected aspects of black feminist love politics sidesteps black feminist discussion of self-love to rethink black feminism outside of identity politics (2013, 3). Which is say, Nash is concerned most heavily with developing black feminist love practices in a cohesive politics, as a result of which she loses focus of the very specific histories and struggles that black women experience.

Building on these legacies of black feminist love politics, I sidestep both the personal and the political in an effort to take into account a historical reality of the black's exclusion from the human. As a result, I conceptualize black love with a black feminist lens. Black feminism has a fraught relationship to black studies. Afropessimists refuse gender since gender is an category of

the human that cannot be thought in relation to the black. Afropessimists such as Frank Wilderson III insist on the "nothingness" of black ontology in an effort to avoid a history that proves the gender difference is vital to the black's exclusion from the human. By giving in to this history of black exclusion from the human, I reorganize Frank Wilderson's response to an impossible question, a question he dreads because he could not bear to respond:

> Last night Naima asked me a disturbing question. Would I ever be with a black woman again? The question startled me, though I tried not to show it. I pretended it was as ordinary as the other question that had been bandied about the living room that night. But it wasn't an ordinary question. I knew Naima wasn't making a pass at me. That would be too simple. (2015, 265)

Wilderson avoids her questioning but later on that night as Wilderson drives Naima home he can no longer avoid her question: "'So what gives?' she said, playfully, but firmly. 'Naima,' I said, the truth is . . . then I looked at her in the dim light of the car and I knew I couldn't say what I wanted to say. How does one speak the unthinkable?" (2008, 265). Wilderson lies to Naima in an effort shield himself from the dread her question incited in him. But he writes:

> I am nothing, Naima, and you are nothing: the unspeakable answer to your question within your question. This is why I could not—would not—answer your question that night. Would I ever be with a Black woman again? It was earnest, not accusatory—I know. And nothing terrifies me more than such a question asked in earnest. It is a question that goes to the heart of desire, to the heart of our black capacity to desire. But if we take out the nouns that you used (nouns of habit that get us through the day), your question to me would sound like this: Would nothing ever be with nothing again? That night I lacked the courage and the integrity to speak such words. I can hardly write them now. (2008, 265)

Wilderson's question "Would nothing ever be with nothing again?" emerges from a painful place of history's convergence on his body made flesh through slavery's afterlives in the present. Wilderson uses this experience of dread as evidence of his inhumanity, his nothingness, and, most importantly, his imposition as an object rather than a subject. Reading Wilderson's response to Naima is unpleasant. It requires me to grapple with my own histories that condition

my emergence as an object in the afterlife of slavery. My past reading of these passages filled me with dread. I wanted to confront Wilderson and tell him in the black turn of phrase that "he is somebody" and "not to buy into what they say about us." And yet, what Wilderson discovers and enters into through this line of questioning is that in the afterlife of transatlantic slavery blacks are objects not subjects. To be clear, I diverge from the Afro-pessimist position that slavery never ended. I enjoy too many pleasures of modern life that my ancestors could only imagine to take that claim up in my own work. Nonetheless, present black objectification operates through the very same dread Wilderson feels as he is forced to grapple with the nothingness that structures his reality and the dread that I too feel in trying to take a history of anything that could be called black love. In fact I have written thousands and thousands of words that will likely never see the light of day in an effort to approach my own questions about love, blackness, and endurance.

Perhaps the difficulty of writing about love is due to its peculiarity? Questions about love's capacity have evaded scholars well before me and will continue to cause confusion for those after me. One reason I find love difficult to trace is that discourses about love proliferate in cringeworthy circulations. Love in one way circulates in philosophical discourses as eros, agape, and philia. Eros denotes a passionate (sexual) desire for an object and agape God's unconditional love, while philia refers to a nonsexual love between friends (Helm 2017). Love is the reason and the occasion for numerous platforms of television, film, and an assortment of other forms of entertainment. These forms of "love" forward a whole assortment of meanings easily reducible to greeting card narratives about love's feel good merits. In contrast, love becomes the basis of the law dictating marriage, immigration, inheritance, end-of-life decisions, and financial culpability for a whole set of relations. These discourses on love follow modernity's thrust to

sort, classify, and name an essential love. By doing so, love becomes flattened and reduced to stereotypes that elicit eyerolls, loud sighs, and nervous laughter. On the flipside, love is the basis for long-term relations, sources of encouragement, and friendship.

Regardless of love's cringeworthy capacity, black love emerges in the resounding vibrations in my archive of soul. I conceive of love as a "strange eros," what Lynne Huffer conceptualizes as a "poetics of unreason":

> Distinct from madness, unreason is the term Foucault offers in *History of Madness* (1961) for a strange murmuring "background noise," or *bruit de fond*, out of which reason extracts the language of madness and turns the mad into objects of science. Five years later, in "The Thought of the Outside" (1966), Foucault calls the murmur the "outside" [le dehors]. To ask about Foucault's strange eros is to ask about that outside, a difficult concept if we've taken to heart Foucault's more famous claim that "there is no outside." As I conceive it, the thought of Foucault's eros is the thought of the outside, where thinking refers to something other than the bringing of concepts into the interiority of the mind. The murmur of eros as the outside invites a focus on how Foucault's writing opens toward the erosion of the interiority of the thinking subject. (2020, 2)

Of importance in Huffer's conceptualization of Foucault's "poetics of unreason" is her emphasis on sound. Huffer is clear, "unreason is the term Foucault offers in *History of Madness* (1961) for a strange murmuring 'background noise,' or bruit de fond, out of which reason extracts the language of madness and turns the mad into objects of science" (2020, 2) Since unreason's inarticulate sound objectifies the mad into a stable knowable objects, Huffer's conceptualization of "strange eros" as unreason that is the background sound to modernity's will to know positions sound as the condition of possibility for eros.

Even more, in Huffer's work she focuses on "how Foucault's writing opens toward the erosion of the interior of the thinking subject": Huffer's re-reading of eros as the outside of thought that erodes the difference between interiority and exterior provides a compelling basis

for a thinking about black love. Since blacks are excluded from the human, according to Wynter (1995) they were considered to be in the early modern period "purely sensory beings." The tension between interiority and exteriority here is important insofar as the history of the black's exclusion from the human shows an understanding of love dependent upon the sound of unreason. Black love undoes the interiority of consciousness by not resisting the violent exteriorization of black consciousness. Black consciousness is externalized through the violent policing of the color line that splits the black's soul. During this encounter, the black's soul produces a veil that covers over the black world. Black consciousness externalized is not an effect of an agential action. Instead black consciousness is externalized through violent techniques. By living with this exclusion, black love is materialized through the collecting of objects, details, and histories, etc. that tell of black endurance in an anti-black world.

As a result, I rearrange Wilderson's question "would nothing ever be with nothing again?" to ask: can a nothing love another nothing? Or mostly simply, can objects love? My question is loaded with the dread of black love that my reading of Wilderson's unanswered question provides. In light of this dread I feel and the many stories of black death in our present, asking questions about love feels trivial. Love in the broad schema of black living despite, beside, and with anti-blackness is overlooked or considered inessential. Yet, love is the key to black endurance.

Black love's importance is in the object's speech. Wilderson's words are painful but he was able to speak them as a testament to the importance of the object's speech to black history and culture. Reading Huffer's "strange eros" as a murmur of Foucault's poethics of unreason with Fred Moten's conceptualization of the value of the object speech, black speech comes to stand in as love in the archive. Moten argues that the value of the black object is produced prior

to exchange in the object's speech (2003, 8–9). Through a close reading of Marx's comments on the object's inability to speak, Moten claims Marx reasserts the impossibility of the object's speech in two ways. First, he reproduces the speech of the "dumb commodities" by saying "our use-value may interest men, but it does not belong to us as objects. What does belog to us as objects however, is our value. Our own intercourse as commodities proves it. We relate to each other merely as exchange-value" (2006, 8). And second, through the object's speech Marx reproduces in the performance of the economist: "Riches (use-value) are the attribute of man, value is the attribute of commodities. A man or a community is rich, a pearl or a diamond is valuable. . . . A pearl or a diamond is valuable as a pearl or diamond" (Moten 2006, 8). Moten's critique of what he calls Marx's "dual ventriloquizations" contradict each other insofar as Marx does not come down on either side of his staged debate (Moten 2006, 9). Rather Marx "traverses" what he conceives of as an empty space between the two of them. Moten calls this space "material substance of the commodities impossible speech" (2006, 9). While Moten is interested in the inherent value of the object's speech, I am much more concerned with what is at stake for Moten in his reading of Marx. For Moten what is important is not *what* the objects says but rather *that* the object speaks at all. The fact that the object speaks is evidence of its relation prior to their exchange on the market producing a shared value for the object through their speech.

Bringing Huffer's reading of "strange eros" back into focus with Moten, black speech is the background sound of unreason. Black love is produced in the object's vocal exchange. This mode of exchange erodes the interiority of thought and manifest an outside of reason that articulates itself through feeling. This inarticulate noise is the condition of possibility for black love to emerge in an archive of soul.

I am not alone in using affect as a way to guide my genealogical experience of the archive. Similarly, my genealogical method of reading archival materials is informed by Foucault's affective reading of archival evidence. In the brief 1977 essay "Lives of Infamous Men," Foucault describes his reading practice as seeking "sparks" that left "impressions" on him that are physical:

> This is not a book of history. The selection found here was guided by nothing more substantial than my taste, my pleasure, an emotion, laughter, surprise, a certain dread, or some other feeling whose intensity I might have trouble justifying, now that the first moment of discovery has passed. (1977, 157)

Foucault's reflections on his experiences in the archive are an invitation to think more closely about affect and history. Only if one listens for black eros's vibrations that often feel like dread or some other indiscernible feeling. Much of Foucault's archival work relies upon his experience of the "spark" of "poem-lives," the archival traces of those who were subject to power's effects. Paying attention to the affective resonances of Foucault's archival method legitimizes my very distinct experience of the archive of soul. Transposing Foucault's poem-lives as Du Boisian song-lives that resonate through vibration, I observe and interpret archival lives that spark affective registers in me, seeking materials that speak to my taste, pleasure, emotion, laughter, surprise, a sense of dread, or some other indescribable feelings in the song-lives of blacks.

Consequently, the reorganization of Foucault's poem-lives into Du Boisian song-lives by way of Wilderson's unanswered question, Huffer's "strange eros," and Moten's "phonic materiality" allows me to conceive of black lives as song-lives since the archive of black soul is annotated and arranged through practices of black love that vibrate. These practices of love are shown in Du Bois's repeated reference to a song he inherits from his great-grandmother Violet:

> With Africa 1 had only one direct cultural connection and that was the African melody which my great-grandmother Violet used to sing. Where she learned it, I

> do not know. Perhaps she herself was born in Africa or had it of a mother or father stolen and transported. But at any rate, as I wrote years ago in the "Souls of Black Folk," coming to the valleys of the Hudson and Housatonic, black, little, and lithe, she shivered and shrank in the harsh north winds, looked longingly at the hills, and often crooned a heathen melody to the child between her knees, thus:
>
> Do bana coba, gene me, gene me!
> Do bana coba, geneme, gene me!
> Ben d' null, null, null, null, ben d' le (2006, 58)

In Du Bois's summation the origin of this song is not clear; the song traveled for some two hundred years through his family passing from generation to generation. What matters most here is that this practice of singing, this "heathen melody to a baby between her legs," (2006, 58) is produced in an exchange of love between objects. In Du Bois's description of the song's meaning, a paradox emerges, "knowing as little as our fathers what its words may mean, but knowing well the meaning of its music" (2006, 58). The paradox emerges in the strange way Du Bois articulates the meaning of the song. Du Bois and his family do not know the meaning of the words of the song but they do "know well the meaning of its music" (2006, 58). Between words and meaning black love emerges as an erosion between thinking and feeling. Du Bois endeavors to explain this tension between thinking and feeling through an explanation of how the words do not signify the meaning of the song. Rather the music Du Bois inherits from his great-grandmother provides meaning through a feeling of love.

Much like the words spoken by Regina King in *If Beale Street Could Talk*, a 2018 film based on the book by the same name by James Baldwin, "Love is what got you here and love will get through." Black love is not an individuated feeling emerging from a unitary subject. Rather black love is a constellation of thinking and feeling, thinking or feeling, emerging as a thinking-feeling-sensing expressed as an alternative to reason that conditions my own entering into and sitting in the dark. The effects of this spiral of thinking-feeling is shown in the habitual

collecting of black love's effects. Consequently, I do not think it overly confident to say that blacks have a privileged relationship to love. Blacks find their privileged relation to love through vibrations transmitting their effects in a whole host of black discourses that proliferate as soul producing a collective of objects whose differences cohere them under soul's vast veil. Soul in this sense makes love strange.

Hence, in this chapter, I read this paradox of soul, articulated by my re-reading of Du Bois's double consciousness through feminine terms, to form a theory of endurance that circulates as love by taking a history of blacks' use of love. I do this by sensing the vibrations of black love in the archive of soul. My counter-method in the counter-archive of soul produces black love as a counter-concept that renders an entirely new meaning to love. Black practices of love are found in the keeping, arranging, and reminding of how long we have lived and continue to live despite and beside anti-black technologies that seek to fill in the darkness that undergirds modernity. Drawing on Lynne Huffer's refrain of the Socratic question—how are we to live?—this chapter uses her notion of eros to think more about black love's effects:

> How are we to live, today, not only as points on a normative grid of biopower-knowledge, but also as possibilities of rupture within it? As a post-Freudian term for life and an alternative to bios, eros is the name I give to experiences of connection and rupture that both fix and free us into a historical present that is unstable. (2013 103)

Huffer's conception of eros, as "a name for experiences of connection and rupture that fix and free us in the present" (2013 103, along with the history of black's exclusion from the human, positions black eros as the condition of possibility for black love to materialize through an externalization of black consciousness. Black externalized consciousness emerges from the violent policing of the color line that produces a veil between light and dark worlds. Or in other

words, through the black feminine's "image-making power" that veils the dark world, soul is externalized.

Vital to my conceptualization of black eros is Angela Davis's underread 1972 article "Reflections on a Black Women's Role in a Community of Slaves." Davis's work is explicitly responding to black nationalist discourse pathologizing black women's sexual relationships to white slave masters as a reason for their misogynist behavior during mid-twentieth century social and political upheaval. Davis, through Marxist materialist terms, responds to this critique by arguing that black women's social reproduction—forms of domestic work such as cooking and caring for others—in the slaves' quarters produced a form of negative freedom unavailable to the slave master. In other terms her domestic work in the slave quarters produced a form of surplus of labor that the slave master could not immediately apprehend as a source of value.

Davis's work is the foundation for my research into soul produced through black feminine's domestic work. I build on Davis's work to assert the black feminine's dark existence not only is vital to the underside of modernity's "quadrillage" or a grid of intelligibility but her ministrations are precisely the key to black endurance insofar as without her work of collecting black story, song, and recipe we would cease to exist. To be clear, her domestic work has not stopped the killing of blacks on the street, or in homes, or in prisons, or any other institution that seeks to slowly kill us. Nonetheless, the black feminine's work in the dark makes it possible for all of us to continue to exist. The black feminine's soul work counters the violence of the color line with good feelings, delicious tastes, and a recognition that the world is terrible but love resides here too.

Vibration in the Archive

Vibration emerges as a critical experience of the archive of soul. However, vibration is not without a history. Foucault describes his experience of the archive through vibration: "it is doubtless an account of that vibration which I feel even today when I happen to run across these lowly lives reduced to ashes in the few phrases that have destroyed them" (1979, 77). Vibration as a counter-method of the counter-archive of soul also finds its way into black practices of love. In Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor's poetic treatise on her life, food, and black living, *Vibration Cooking or, The Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl*, first published in 1970, vibration is conceived as an affective formulation within black practices of living. Soul's culinary vibrations emerge in Ms. Smart-Grosvenor's formulation of vibration in her cooking practices:

> And when I cook, I never measure or weigh anything. I cook by vibration. I can tell by the look and smell of it. Most of the ingredients in this book are approximate. Some of the recipes people gave me list the amounts, but for my part, I just do it by vibration. Different strokes for different folks. Do your thing your way. (2011, xxxvii)

The vibration Ms. Grosverner-Smart uses to cook with relies on her senses. Here she describes looking and smelling food to tell when it needs the next ingredient, if it needs to be flipped or stirred, or when the temperature needs to be lowered. Importantly, Ms. Smart-Grosvernor uses vibration in her cooking, but she makes plain that vibrations are not a one size fits all method. The use, feeling, and experience of vibrations are up to the user, which is to say vibrations in soul emerge as "different strokes for different folks."

Reading Ms. Smart-Grosvenor alongside the poetics of Sly and the Family Stone's 1968 song "Everyday People" unpacks her use of the colloquial phrase "different strokes for different folks":

Sometimes I'm right and I can be wrong
My own beliefs are in my song
The butcher, the banker, the drummer and then
Makes no difference what group I'm in

I am everyday people, yeah yeah

There is a blue one who can't accept the green one
For living with a fat one trying to be a skinny one
And different strokes for different folks
And so on and so on and scooby dooby doo

Oh sha sha we got to live together

I am no better and neither are you
We are the same whatever we do
You love me you hate me you know me and then
You can't figure out the bag I'm in

I am everyday people, yeah yeah

There is a long hair that doesn't like the short hair
For bein' such a rich one that will not help the poor one
And different strokes for different folks
And so on and so on and scooby dooby doo

Oh sha sha we got to live together

There is a yellow one that won't accept the black one
That won't accept the red one that won't accept the white one
And different strokes for different folks
And so on and so on and scooby dooby doo

I am everyday people

Sly and the Family Stone's "Everyday People" is a poetics of soul or, more precisely, what Fred Moten refers to as a "(per)version of Greek philosophical tradition's notion of poiesis" (2016, 24). Moten contends that poiesis "is a social poetics: a constant process where people make things and make one another or, to be more precise, where inseparable differences are continually made" (2016, 24). This making resonates with the generative force of the counter-method of the counter-archive of soul. The song brings together two dueling voices not

in the mode of negation or contradiction but of the counter-move. The first being the "I" that Sly performs, while the second is a collective chorus characterized by an undifferentiated mass of black feminine voices. The chorus chastises Sly for his inability to manage difference and sameness in the collective mass of "everyday people."

Critically, what emerges in the play between Sly and the chorus is the relationship of blacks to "everyday people" that arranges black living. Blacks in the present are an effect of a historically contingent network of relations produced through bio-power-knowledge that brings blacks into view as less than human despite the supposed progress of modern humanism. The song, originally released in November 1968, follows a two-decade period of social and political unrest that rendered porous, the legal boundaries between Du Boisian dark and light worlds, or more precisely black and white worlds.

Consequently, the song's happy affective edge inverts the terms of black collective grief insofar as the plea "we got to live together" speaks to a transition period marked by desegregation. The events that precede the emergence of "Everyday People" follows on the heels of the deaths of Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968, and Malcom X on February 21, 1965. In effect these events rendered Sly and the Family Stone's demand "we got to live together" radically practical, since the passage of the Civil Rights Act on April 11, 1968, a response to the killing of MLK, is inclusive of legislation dictating equal housing practices regardless of race, religion, or national origin. The song's practical demand signals a transition point where the effects of a nearly four-hundred-year history shifts its terms.

The period between 1955 and 1968 changes the terms of the prior historical period by undoing the formal and informal laws and codes that kept "separate but equal accommodations" between light and dark worlds. Gone are the de jure or legal mechanisms that allow the state to

enforce racial segregation. However de facto segregation still persists, as shown for example in banking and financial institutions' attempts to limit loans and investments in neighborhoods considered black. The laws barring social mixing between black, white, and non-black people of color are seemingly no longer decimated. While the signing of the civil rights legislation does change the effects of four hundred years of policing a line between dark and light worlds, what it cannot erase are the differing social and political proclivities of the dark world. Which is to say, what did not change prior to or after 1968 is blacks' less-than-human status. Black inhumanity is the subject of chapter 1, but as a reminder European colonizers' perception of West African social organization as irrational became the reason and the occasion for the Colombian Exchange. This point in the very emergence of modernity coincides with what Sylvia Wynter (1995) references as the emergence of the triadic model that produces blacks as civil slaves in need of discipline. It also coincides with what historian Jennifer L. Morgan (1997) details as the split between the otherworldly beauty and monstrosity of black women's bodies in early modern travelers narratives between 1500 and 1770. Their monstrous body renders the black feminine as supernatural and ultimately inhuman.

Returning to the song, it speaks to the split between singular and collective that follows the logic of soul that Ms. Aldeen Louise Davis lays out as a function of soul discussed in chapter 2. As a reminder, for Ms. Aldeen in her draft copy of *Soul: Food and Thought* titled "All About Soul: Cooking and Related Subjects," soul food is the intermediary between body and soul, as shown in her description of soul food's affective capacity:

> "Soul" has been applied to nearly anything and anyone who has compassion and the ability "fulfill." It is most commonly applied to food and strange as it may seem, soul food was not exclusive Negro fare; poor whites had the same foods on their table and often not so much of it tasty, because they were not lucky enough to be slaves and have cast offs from the big house. Moma "seasoned" and "doctored" up

> unsavory foods to make a mighty tasty dish by which body and soul was kept together. (Fitzgerald papers n.d., 1)

Critical to Ms. Aldeen's formulation is the split between body, which she conceives of as masculine, and soul, whose condition of possibility is found in the domestic practices of the black feminine. Specifically, Ms. Aldeen's cookbook contains all manner of recipes; however, interlaced between them are reflections on black living. In the first reflection, in the voice of "Moma," Ms. Aldeen describes "popa" being unable to contend with the complications of black living and finds his relief in drink and what she calls "protest soul—protesting against fate, protesting against their lost heritage and god-given birthright, against being stripped of dignity; protest of their duel system of living, protesting against loss of manhood and being reverted to the eternal 'boy,' futile but complete protest against the establishment" (Fitzgerald papers n.d., 91c). On the other hand, through the speaking voice of "Moma," she says, "Poor Jack, he just wasn't strong; she would have to say an extra prayer for him tonight" (Fitzgerald Papers n.d. 91c). Different than the figure of "Popa," Ms. Aldeen explicitly describes "Moma" as the maker of soul. In her narrative essay, "Moma" puts an "extra bit of soul and tenderness" (Fitzgerlad Paper n.d. 91c) in supper that night to make up for "Popa's" absence. Importantly, this differently structured gender relation is repeated in the Sly and the Family Stone song, as shown in the play between the singular voice of the male and the collective of feminine voices that make up the chorus.

Returning to discussion of "different strokes for different folks," in the years immediately following reconstruction and Jim Crow, the mid-twentieth century social and political upheaval marks a period where the veil of black double consciousness shifts. Du Bois contends that the black soul is divided by the color line. Specifically, Du Bois asserts that the black is interdicted from self-consciousness since the black can only understand their soul in a

reflection of another. Du Bois famously refers to this split of consciousness as a "double consciousness" that produces a "peculiar sense": "One ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (1994, 3). The shadow of the color line places a veil over the dark world, blocking the sight of the inhabitants of the light world into the dark world. Only the black is capable of "second sight," seeing and experiencing both the dark and the light worlds. Du Bois refers to the second sight of double consciousness as a gift for the black. Although double consciousness emerges through violent practices of othering, the bloodshed of the black has a message for the world that "is naturally veiled" (Du Bois 1903, 108) reflection of humanity. From this veiled reflection, the black gains in return a "second sight" that produces an asymmetrical relation to the light world insofar as the black can see into the light world but inhabitants in the light world can only see humanity reflected back.

In my rereading of double consciousness lingers a fourth term that exceeds Du Bois's account of double consciousness. The fourth term is the excess of soul that circulates as a fracture of double consciousness. In other words, the externalization of consciousness veils the hollow of the dark world of soul that undergird modernity's enlightenment. I conceive of this fracture as the veil of double consciousness that historically emerges through black women's domestic practices. Soul, then, has the capacity to stand in for a space where black women are not so much women but, rather, emerge historically as a textured space of collective experience produced in the space of black domesticity in the dark world.

Although this is true for soul in a pre-1968 world, Ms. Aldeen's formulation of protest soul as the masculine and my reading of the fracture of soul as a textured space of the feminine finds its difference in post-1968 as a more legible version of black sociality in domestic

practices. To be clear, since first contact blacks are indeed observed, measured, and studied. Nevertheless, Angela Davis (1972) contends that the black feminine maternal uses her double burden both as slave and sexual object to produce the space of black domesticity in relative darkness. This darkness is key—domesticity severed from white appropriation of black women's domestic labor is counter to the appropriation of labor during and after slavery—in a counter-site of darkness "in a utter real and utterly unreal" space of transgression.

Returning to Ms. Smart-Grosvenor's cookbook on the poetic practices of vibration, cooking becomes an ideal representation of this emergence of soul as legible in the post-1968 era. Echoing her use of "different strokes for different folks" and the final phrase "do your thing, your way" reiterates the problem of same and difference that Sly and the Family Stone perform with a change in register. This time Ms. Smart-Grosvenor is speaking to questions of sameness and difference within the dark world. She is not interested in making black culture into a monolith (2011, xxvii). In its place, vibration is the expression of this movement between the individual and the collective, sameness and difference, masculine and feminine. Vibration for Ms. Smart-Grosvenor does not privilege blacks, but vibration also comes from other objects and spaces, such as the kitchen, pots, pans, or other people. By telling the reader she uses vibration to cook, Ms. Smart-Grosvenor tells us what she tells us without giving away the code to what she is doing. Vibration is a critical aspect of her cookery; however it is up for the user to feel, touch, and decide for themselves how best to operationalize vibration in their cooking. And, as a way to understand how to use vibration, Ms. Smart-Grosvenor suggests to readers: "[t]he amount of salt and pepper you want to use is your business. I don't like to get into people's business. I have made everything in here and found everything to be everything and everything came out very together. If you have any trouble check your kitchen vibrations" (2011, xxxvii–xxxviii).

Vibration in Ms. Smart-Grosvenor's conception is an affective formulation conditioned by black women's domestic practices in the kitchen. Those practices reverberate as the black vibrations of the counter-archive.

Yet, it is vitally important that she makes clear that there is no singular way to cook soul food. She did not articulate the meaning of such techniques of cooking. Vibration is not a meta-historical essence. Each time soul food is made, the cook uses their own vibrations or their own touch to make their food their way. My vibrations are my own and your vibrations are your own. These vibrations are not the same and they dissipate as soon as they arrive. Vibration is the necessary condition that makes black food cookery distinct. Different than in the pre-1968 period, there is a historical change and the fracture of black soul emerges differently. Instead of soul referring to the concerns of a changing society that Sly and the Family Stone sing about, soul vibrates in Ms. Smart-Grosvenor's kitchen.

More importantly, the fracture of black souls' expression as vibration in the post-1968 era is also found in Foucault's experience of the archive. I do not argue that the vibration Foucault experienced in the archive is the same exact vibrations Ms. Smart-Grosvenor uses in her cooking. Rather by reading Foucault's description of his experience of "that vibration," (1979, 77) along with Ms. Smart-Grosvenor's expression of vibration as the technique of her cooking, I find that vibration much like Huffer's formulation of eros's ruptures and reassembles modes of knowing. Those ways of knowing do not rely on reason but, instead, draw on eros's erosion of thinking-feeling-sensing. In my search for a history of soul there have been loads of materials I have reviewed that will never make it to the pages of my dissertation. And yet, let us remember the vibrations that connect Ms. Aldeen Davis, Angela Davis, Ms. Smart-Grosvenor, and Ella

Fitzgerald. If it were not for those explorations of these varied and many vibrations I would not have ever discovered that Ella Fitzgerald loved food.

Black Eros in the Counter-Archive of Soul

Everybody knows that Ella Fitzgerald loved food and by extension that she loved cookbooks. After her death in June 1996, many of Fitzgerald's personal papers were divided across multiple archives, the bulk of which are stored at The National Museum of American History. Fitzgerald's "out of the ordinary" cookbook collection is available for research at the Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library located at Harvard University since, according to Fitzgerald's estate archivist Fran Morris-Rosman, "the Schlesinger has the very best collection of cookbooks in the country" (1996). While this bit of information seems minor, *The Crimson*, Harvard University's newspaper, announced the availability of her beloved cookbook collection in the months following her death. The announcement finds its importance not in the prestige of the archive. Rather the announcement details Fitzgerald's love, not of a lover, but of food.

> Library to Unveil Fitzgerald Cookbooks
>
> NO WRITER ATTRIBUTED
>
> October 7, 1996
>
> Radcliffe's Schlesinger Library plans to unveil a collection of Ella Fitzgerald's cookbooks bequeathed to the library by the late jazz singer's estate last summer.
>
> Officials at the library said that while the books arrived three weeks ago, they are uncertain when they will be made available.
>
> Barbara Haber, curator of books at Schlesinger Library, said the library was contacted in July by the lawyer for Fitzgerald's estate about the donation of her extensive cookbook collection.

Fitzgerald, a legendary figure in the music world for her contributions to jazz, died last June at the age of 79. In June 1990, she received an honorary doctorate from the University.

According to Fran Morris-Rosman, one of the directors of the Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation and the archivist of Fitzgerald's estate, the foundation decided to donate her cookbooks to Harvard because the Schlesinger Library has the best cookbook collection in the country.

The Schlesinger Library, which specializes in women's history, has a collection of about 12,000 cookbooks, according to Haber.

"Ella Fitzgerald was inordinately proud of her cookbook collection," Morris-Rosman said. "In interviews, she almost always mentioned them."

The reason Fitzgerald amassed such a large collection is somewhat out of the ordinary, Morris-Rosman said.

"According to her son, Ray Brown, Jr., Ella never cooked," Morris-Rosman said. "She read the cookbooks like most people read a novel, even annotating in the margins."

"However, Ella always loved to eat," Morris-Rosman said. "Even toward the end, when she was severely limited in diet because of her diabetes and heart condition, she loved to talk about food."

All of Fitzgerald's cookbooks will be on the browsing shelves of Schlesinger Library once they are catalogued. The bookplate inside will read "From the Estate of Ella Fitzgerald, First Lady of Song," Haber said.

"Ella's bookplate will add value to the books and luster to the library," Haber said.

According to Haber, Fitzgerald's collection numbers about 300 books. It is not a rare collection, but contains many general books.

The collection, which spans from the 1970s to the 1990s, has several books that feature Southern food and cookbooks by African-American and Jewish writers, Haber said.

"Basically, she seemed to like hearty food," Haber said.

According to Haber, cookbooks are important in women's history and many people choose to collect them.

> "Cookbooks give a sense of everyday life for women throughout history," Haber said. Our collection is comprised of many private donations, including papers and cookbooks of Julia Child.

Ms. Fitzgerald's life was strange to say the least; many of her life details are a mystery. Outside of her musical performances, she granted few interviews, often refusing to speak to media outlets who sought to know her. Ms. Fitzgerald's refusal to speak echoes with the early histories of European travelers who longed to hear the voices of black women in the early modern period who would only smile in response to travelers' demands to speak. While Ms. Fitzgerald refused to speak to media outlets, her three hundred cookbooks she collected, including three archive folders worth of materials, spoke of her love of hearty food. One such folder had pages from *Jazziz*, a three-decade-old magazine that documents the latest sounds, artists, and trends in jazz, which published a tribute to Fitzgerald after her death in 1996. Curiously the three-article dedication made clear that Ella is a woman of her own creation. In the few interviews she did give, Fitzgerald never spoke of her private life in her interviews.

Ms. Fitzgerald's cookbook holding at the Schlesinger constitutes what Foucault might call an event—an emergence that ruptures the present; this cookbook event does the impossible. That impossible event—an event that emerges in the archive without having "taken place" (Foucault 1977)—is an announcement of Fitzgerald's love. None of her biographies mention her love of food and eating (Nicholson 1995). Implicitly, the refusal to deal with her love of cookbooks and food was ignored and overlooked. Ms. Fitzgerald's previous biographer ignored her cookbook collection since her love of food was unexplainable. In subsequent years, feminist literary critics, theorists, and historians have recognized cookbooks as vital evidence of women's lives. Similarly, biographers of black women's culinary traditions can be seen as a larger attempt at literary reclamation of black women's written voice (Williams-Forson 2011, xii). "Cookbooks

tell us much about the lives of women, and through the words of such women we find their 'personal, family, and cultural drama[s]' (Theophano)" (Williams-Forson 2011, xvii).

All of these "reclamation" projects are noble and useful but Fitzgerald falls between the cracks of these genres. She was a collector, and I want to stress the importance of collecting as a method that generates a counter-archive of black endurance. Fitzgerald collected, read, annotated, and reflected on the various stories in her cookbooks is indicative of the importance of these objects in relation to her. She loved them and, by doing so, she left behind a counter-archive of black living produced through the random ephemera of soul. That ephemera, gathered up with love, produces, maintains blacks' privilege relationship to soul.

Ms. Fitzgerald's cookbooks were not particularly valuable, but their value is not in their exchange value in a market. Instead Ms. Fitzgerald's collection is a counter-archive of soul that speaks. Barbara Haber, curator of books at the Schlesinger at the time of publication, found the book's value in Ms. Fitzgerald's ownership. Regardless of this fact, Haber was not particularly excited to take her collection, as evidenced by their repeated shoring up of the library's prestige in phrases like "'*Ella's bookplate will add value to the books* and luster to the library,' Haber said" (emphasis mine). The paragraph immediately following reinforces the idea of the collection's low value: "According to Haber, Fitzgerald's collection numbers about 300 books. *It is not a rare collection*, but contains many general books" (emphasis mine). And last, the final paragraph contrasts Fitzgerald with the archive of a Julia Child, a white American woman well known for demystifying French cooking techniques for American home chefs. "Our collection is comprised of many private donations, *including papers and cookbooks of Julia Child*" (emphasis mine). Together, all of these references to the lack of value of Fitzgerald's collection show that the library did not perceive the collection as particularly rare, but their provenance gave them

some perceived value. Additional rational for taking the collection include Fitzgerald's honorary doctorate and the fact that the archivist of Fitzgerald's estate recognized the prestige of the Schlesinger's cookbook collection and contacted them.

These references to the collection as valuelessness also underscore her love of food as peculiar. Her peculiar love of food and, by extension, food discourse follows a similar logic of nothingness that Wilderson names in his attempt to make sense of his inability to be with or love a black woman. The valuelessness of black objects in the eyes of the Schlesinger Library curators repeats an exclusion of the black that the early modern period names; however this exclusion is not based on the details of the human but instead is based on value or the lack of perceived value of the cookbooks in the collection. The utility of the collection is found in Ms. Fitzgerald's collecting of objects that speak of black love.

Further, while it is unknown why exactly Fitzgerald collected cookbooks, the Crimson article details her peculiar relationship to food. Both the archivist for Ms. Fitzgerald's estate, Fran Morris-Rosman, and Schlesinger curator Barbara Haber note Ms. Fitzgerald was "*inordinately proud* of her cookbook collection" and, "[t]he reason she amassed such a collection is somewhat *out of the ordinary*" (emphasis mine). In addition, "According to her son, Ray Brown, Jr., '*Ella never cooked*,' Morris-Rosman said. '*She read the cookbooks like most people read a novel*, even annotating in the margins'" (emphasis mine). Even more, "'*Ella always loved to eat*,' Morris-Rosman said. 'Even toward the end, when she was severely limited in diet because of her diabetes and heart condition, *she loved to talk about food*'" (emphasis mine). These highlighted quotes show evidence of the "out of the ordinary" status of her collection.

Combined, the repeated references to the collections lack of value, the attempt by the curator to maintain the prestigious status of the library by highlighting Ms. Fitzgerald's celebrity, and Ms. Fitzgerald's son's repeated references to her love of not only food but also food discourse all signal her love shown through her peculiar collecting of black cookbooks from the period of 1970 to the early 1990s. The habitual collecting of cookbooks, mostly of African American origin, does not make sense for someone who did not cook. But Ms. Fitzgerald's collection is indicative of a broader peculiarity of black archive living. While her cookbook collection is housed in a prestigious library at an Ivy League institution, the press release accompanying her donation of her collection shows the tentativeness the curator has in holding on to these peculiar objects of Ms. Fitzgerald's love. So much so the Schlesinger felt the need, in the final moment, to reassert the archives' interest in food history by assuring the Crimson that they also have Julia Child's papers in an article about Ella Fitzgerald as a way to stabilize the peculiarity of their holding. Moreover, Morris-Rossman's and Mr. Brown's comments about Ms. Fitzgerald's regard for the collection, love of eating, and love of talking about food show how black archival living is intimately tied to loving black objects of domesticity even if they are perceived as valueless by the very same institution that agreed to take these objects.

Consequently, Ms. Fitzgerald's celebrity does not absolve her of the "image-making power" that Wynter fashions as demonic ground through her reading of *The Tempest*. I reconceptualize this ground as the abyssal ground of modernity's primary functioning among white women, black men, and white men. Ms. Fitzgerald is one of many images of black women that circulate as an artifice to cover over the hollows of soul that mark modernity's network of power relations. She and many other black women who came before her are song-lives—an arrangement of details, birth, death, music—that produces breaks in her existence, however

bright, but props up a projection of a human where there is none to be found. Ms. Fitzgerald, much like the images of black women Nina Simone's song "Four Women" details, is one of many images of black womanhood that constitute a black feminine on which black sociality depends. Ms. Fitzgerald's refusal to speak along with her massive cookbook collection renders her much like one of the many different images of black women emerging out of post-emancipation histories.

Ms. Fitzgerald's status as a hollowed out projection of black women is confirmed by the appearance of another image of a different black women in the archival folder attached to Ms. Fitzgerald's cookbook collection at the Schlesinger. Among Ms. Fitzgerald's many promotional photos included with the collection, I found an image of a dark-skinned black woman with pearls and short dark brown hair among the photos. The figure was nameless. Mistakenly, I thought it was photos of Ms. Fitzgerald but perhaps taken later? After some web searches I laughed at my own ridiculousness in thinking it was Ms. Fitzgerald. It included another woman entirely. Still dumbfounded, I opened the second folder of the collection. The contents of the folder are two hundred plus typed pages of a yellowed paper titled "Soul Food and Thought" written by Ms. Aldeen Louise Davis. After flipping through the lovingly annotated pages, bits of masking tape and flurries of aged graph paper fell away from the yellowed pages of the document. I realized it was a cookbook like none I had ever seen before. Ms. Aldeen's cookbook contained recipes, poetry, keys to the meaning of flowers, and a philosophical narrative. These collected fragments theorized a notion of soul that aligned with my own experience of soul. Significantly, Ms. Aldeen's book confirmed my scholarly hunch that soul is a black collective feeling produced through black women's domestic labor that drove me to study soul as the condition of possibility for black endurance in the first place.

The peculiarity of my chance encounter with Ms. Aldeen Davis's cookbook hidden among Ms. Fitzgerald's papers is entirely unexpected. The story of how I found Ms. Aldeen's cookbook is weird to say the least. In a published interview with archivists from University of Iowa Women's Archive, I detail how I found Ms. Aldeen's cookbook or as I am quoted in the article as saying: "It's 'like she found me,' I said, 'I feel like we're talking to each other across time.'" (2019) I knew when I encountered Ms. Aldeen's cookbook that it was important. My skin tingled as I scanned the pages. I got a lump in my throat. Tears welled in my eyes. The cold reading room at the Schlesinger suddenly felt warm. I closed the folder. I held the contents to my heart as though I was reunited with a long-lost friend. I have no idea how much time went by as I embraced the cookbook. Time stopped. I took a deep breath and suppressed a quickly emerging sob. It wasn't until a year later on that archive trip to the University of Iowa's Women's Archive that I found out any biographical details about Ms. Aldeen. In an article about my research, an archivist from the University of Iowa's Women Archive writes:

> Aldeen Davis the author of *Soul Food for Thought* was a writer and community activist who moved to Muscatine, Iowa in the 1940s. She became thoroughly involved in Muscatine and its black community, serving on the Muscatine Human Rights Committee and the Equity Committee of the school board, and published articles in *The Iowa Bystander*, an African American owned newspaper. Her book was based on her long running column "Soul Food and Thought," that combined recipes with African American history and descriptions of daily life (2019).

Returning to the reading room at the Schlesinger, tears ran down my face as I reopened the folder and read the inscription to the cookbook I had overlooked in my first scan of the cookbook. The inscription said: "*To Ella who's [sic] songs live long and remain beautiful to me as her for many years. May God smile his blessing on you as you go life's highway. Thank you for a most enjoyable and unforgettable evening - Aldeen Davis*" (emphasis mine). The words shimmered as I read them. These words are words of love. A love recognized between two women who loved

food, loved each other, whose soulful vibrations remained for me to find some decades later after the original moment of love passed. The vibration of their love remained and I could feel it all.

Conceptually, the short biographical information about Ms. Aldeen reveals her lifelong enduring love of blackness as prefigured in her work on soul beginning in the 1940s. Under the banner of soul as a counter-archive, Ms. Aldeen archived aspects of black living that positioned her small town of Muscatine, Iowa, at the center of the black world. For all intents and purposes Muscatine's black population and history are less than history. In genealogical terms it is a history that does not lead to some grand narrative considered deserving of recognition in the annals of history. Instead Ms. Aldeen's writing was about the remarkable aspects of mundane black living, which she collected with love. That is not to say that lesser known histories of black living in unlikely places not paid attention to in the accounts of black migration are unimportant or not valuable. It is precisely the unimportance of Muscatine's black population that presumably drove Ms. Aldeen's writing. She collected all sorts of information about black Iowa including her own personal history of the Muscatine, Iowa. She detailed her adventures in Elder Hostel, a summer camp for elders where they took continuing education credits and built new friendships; black success from hometown heroes; her excitement about the first black Miss Iowa to go to the Miss America pageant; her appreciation of Barbara Bush's grace and style (in an article she wrote); and so many soul food recipes.

Ms. Aldeen's collecting, much like Ms. Fitzgerald's collecting, emerges in the vibrations of black eros. There is much that is unknown about the who, what, and why of Ms. Aldeen's cookbook showing up in Ms. Fitzgerald's archives. After the University of Iowa's Women's Archive posted their interview with me to their social media pages, a member of Ms. Aldeen's family contacted me wanting to know more about the who, what, and why of how Ms. Aldeen's

cookbook ended up in Ms. Fitzgerald's cookbook collection. Unfortunately, I had no answers at all. Certainly I had many fan fiction worthy stories I made up in my head during my drive home from a long writing day, or in the quiet moments on the plane while frantically pulling together a conference paper. My favorite of these stories consisted of Ms. Aldeen and Ms. Fitzgerald being secret lovers unable to publicly express their love for each other due to the sexual mores of their time. And then I realized, after a few too many of these scenarios swirling through my head, that my favorite story that gives an account for a what and why of this emergence of black eros in the archive attempts to fill the silences and the gaps that are constitutive of modernity's emergence. Blacks have made a whole world in these hollows, in these breaks, creating a way out of no way with the scraps and bits of modernity's debris. By filling in the absence that conditions the emergence of black eros in archive of soul in the first place, I found myself reproducing the very violence that precipitated the creation of the hollow of black soul. I encountered black eros in the counter-archive of soul and experienced something that I am still trying to find words to fully express. Instead of being comfortable with the illegibility of my encounter with Ms. Aldeen's cookbook and the very strange way I found out about Ms. Fitzgerald's cookbook collection in the first place, I subjected Ms. Aldeen and Ms. Fitzgerald's love story to a legible love exchange that their story of black eros exceeds and undermines. I wanted to make them visible to our present's logic of gender, sexuality, and love, which the black's exclusion from the human subtends. Blacks, let alone black women, are not often allowed such flights of fancy, such romance, but in an echo of Fred Moten's beautifully devastating phrase: to love blackness is to practice analytic precision (2013, 737). I knew I had to tell the story of soul as a counter-archive of black living, of black eros, as it is full of absences, breaks, and stories that emerge and descend into darkness.

What I do know, however, is Ms. Aldeen and Ms. Fitzgerald's love story is a story of a shared love of blackness, black food ways, black history, and black domesticity. These women produced the something in the nothingness of blackness that Wilderson experiences but backs away from in his inability to ever be with Naima. Ms. Aldeen's and Ms. Fitzgerald's soul externalized produces a counter-archive of black collective feeling that tells me and others over and over again, for all those willing to hear black eros's vibrations, how we endure. After all, if it were not for the various forms of black sociality, domesticity, and black eros that led me to their archive of soul these words would never exist. On that day in the archives the vibrations told me to speak of soul, of taste, of love all in an effort to tell a very different story of black living often overlooked and considered unessential.

Coda: Or Something Like Final Words on Endurance

ETYMOLOGY OF "SOUL"

A. The word "soul" derives from Gothic and Old German:

B. The Gothic *saiwala* and the Old German *saiwalo,* can be connected etymologically with the Greek *aiolos,* "quick moving," "twinkling," "iridescent." The Greek word *psyche* also means "butterfly." *Saiwalo* is related on the other side to the Old Slavonic *sila,* "strength." These connections throw light on the original meaning of the word *soul*: it is a moving force, that is, life-force CW8 ¶ 663

C. "Soul" derives from the Latin *anima,* the same as the Greek *anemos,* "wind" CW8 ¶ 664

D. These connections show clearly how in Latin, Greek, and Arabic the names given to the soul are related to the notion of moving air, the "cold breath of the spirits." And this is probably the reason why the primitive view also endows the soul with an invisible breath-body CW8 ¶ 664 (ARAS.ORG)

This dissertation ends as it just starts to begin. It begins and ends with a refrain on soul. At the onset of this project I wanted to write a philosophy of endurance. What I mean by philosophy of endurance, I no longer know. But I suspect that endurance had everything to do with respite after Daddy died.

Respite *n.*

I. Senses relating to delay, postponement, or reprieve.
II. Suspension, commutation, or cancellation of a death sentence; an instance of this. In extended use: a reprieve from death or destruction.
III. Temporary rest or relief from an unpleasant, undesirable, or tiring situation; a period of rest, a break (OED)

After Daddy died I sought many ways to find ease my pain. Much like my parents I spent most of my adulthood living away from home. I would come home to visit my family frequently for most holidays, every single time Daddy got sick, for graduations and births of new babies, and just because. My parents began the practice of sending cards and little notes to me in college,

the first time I left home, as a way to materialize their love and encouragement. I would keep their cards pinned up around my desk and would hug them when I missed my family the most. I would send cards too but often I gave them in person since I avoided going to the post office. Regardless of my post office avoidance, I managed to keep nearly every single one of the cards, notes of encouragement and letters Momma and Daddy sent me in a white plastic box that I moved multiple time in all of my transitions between Las Vegas, Flagstaff, Phoenix, and Atlanta. The box contained nearly fifteen years' worth of birthday cards, graduation cards, and little I love you/I'm proud of you notes. It was bittersweet to find Daddy through his brief, humorous, and passionate writerly voice. Nothing makes up for his loss of presence but these small token are my inheritance. After Daddy's death I would open this box and look at the notes in an attempt to hear his voice. I noticed he signed every single one of those letters by saying " I love you with all my heart and soul—Daddy." After reading Daddy's cards I able to breathe again knowing I am loved.

The archive gave me the terms of my project. However, unlike traditional history projects, my archives consist of letters from my parents, memories of cooking with Daddy, cooking with Harmony, oral stories of my parent's travel to the Southwest, road trips of my youth, trips to Museums, as well as to Harvard's Schlesinger Library, the University of Alabama's David Walker Lupton African American Cookbook Collection, and the University of Iowa's Women's Archives. So while in this dissertation, I have argued that blacks have historically used soul, another word for collective black feeling, to produce a counter-archive of soul based in domestic practices, this argument is borne from my own black archival living. This project, then, was only possible through a black genealogy.

Through black genealogy, I have traced a history of the present to reframe the problem of the color line as the problem of modernity. This history shows how in the early modern European travelers used black women's bodies to exclude blacks from the human. European traveler's repeated encounter and observation of black women's bodies divides and externalizes black soul, producing a hollow in its wake, rendering blacks to an image of the feminine that covers over this abyss. Evidence of the black feminine speech is shown in a mute surplus emerging from her divided soul. I conceive of this mute surplus as peculiar sense a form of excluded speech that says what it says through sensation. Hence, I offer peculiar sense a mode of perception that black use to strategically navigate an anti-black world. Additionally, I showed the capacity of peculiar sense to assert that one can taste history in fried chicken, offering up a story of how fried chicken saved my family's life to challenge the masculinity of the black radical tradition. I contend that knowledge of the black radical tradition is passed on in the kitchen. And, I propose that peculiar sense is further shown in the habitual collecting and keeping of black history. I challenge affect studies' refusal to deal with the repetition of black spectacular death by seeking black eros in the counter-archive of soul. Black eros is not reducible to romantic notions of love but is materialized in black archival living that keeps, shares, holds on to the scraps of black history till things change and those ways of knowing, feeling, and thinking no longer serve their purpose.

My personal philosophy of endurance, then, is this dissertation. It is the archival research, the reading and re-reading of materials, and the writing that gave me respite from grief. I did not experience respite every time I sat down to write. In fact, the moments of pause where few and far in between. I was not in control of these moments of respite. They emerged despite me and in many ways to *spite* me. I am left, then, with the question not of *what* endurance is, but rather

how endurance is produced from these particular moments of soul. In an echo of Nahum Chandler, I hope these moments of "distinctive generality" of a black genealogy will someday provide a philosophy of black endurance.

References

Ahmed, Sara. 2015. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge.

Archive For Research of Archetypal Symbolism. "Entomology of Soul" Accessed February 20, 2020, https://aras.org/concordance/content/etymology-soul

Baraka, Amiri. 1998. *Home: Social Essays*. New York, New York: William Morrow & Co

Beauvoir, Simone de, Constance Borde, Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, and Judith Thurman. 2011. *The Second Sex*. New York, New York: Vintage.

Benjamin, Paul Stephen. 2016. *Black Is the Color*. The High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia. www.paulsbenjamin.com.

Berlant, Lauren Gail. 2011. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Carby, Hazel V. 1989. *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence Of The Afro-American Woman Novelist*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Chandler, Nahum Dimitri. 2013. *X—The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8 http://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol1989/iss1/8

Combahee River Collective. 1986. *The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing In The Seventies And Eighties*. Albany, NY: Kitchen Table Press.

"consciousness." *OED Online.* Oxford University Press.

Cvetkovich, Ann. 2003. *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Dällenbach, Lucien. 1989. *The Mirror In The Text*. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Da Silva, Denise Ferreira. 2017. "The Banalization of Racial Events." Theory & Event 20, no. 1: 61-65. https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/646842.

Davies, Carole Boyce. 2008. *Left of Karl Marx: The Political Life Of Black Communist Claudia Jones.* Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.

Davis, Angela. 1972. “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves.” *The Massachusetts Review* 13, no.1/2 (Woman: An Issue): 81–100.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Du Bois, W.E.B. 1920. *Darkwater: Voices from Within the Veil*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe.

Du Bois, W.E. B. 1994. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications.

Du Bois, W.E.B. 2006. *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward An Autobiography of Race.* Taylor & Frances.

“eerie | eery, adj.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press.

Fitzgerald, Ella Papers. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College.

Federici, Silvia. 2004. *Caliban and the Witch*. New York: Autonomedia.

Fortunati, Leopoldina. 1995. *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital*. New York: Autonomedia.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.” *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Edited by D.F. Bouchard, translated by D.F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1979. “Lives of Infamous Men.” In *Michel Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy*, edited by Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton, pp. 76–91. Sydney, Australia: Feral Publications.

Foucault, Michel. 2011. *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison.* New York, New York: Vintage Books

Foucault, Michel. 2006. *History of Madness*. Translated by Jean Khalfa. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Foucault, Michel. 2010. “What Is Enlightenment?” In *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rainbow, pp. 32–50. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault, Michel. 1992. *The Order Of Things: An Archeology Of The Human Sciences*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Gordon, Lewis. 1997. *Existence in Black: An Anthology of Black Existential Philosophy.* New York, New York: Routledge

Giller, Megan. 2015. New American Food is Un-American: We Deserve a Better Less Derivative National Cuisine" Accessed July 10, 2018, https://slate.com/human-interest/2015/06/new-american-food-is-un-american-derivative-and-bland.html

Glissant, Édouard, and Betsy Wing. 1997. *Poetics Of Relation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth. 2010. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Gregory, Dick. 1974. *Dick Gregory's Natural Diet For Folks Who Aat: Cookin' With Mother Nature!* New York, New York: Perennial Library.

Hartman, Saidiya V. 1997. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Harcourt, Bernard. "Contre-" (unpublished manuscript, 2020), typescript.

Helm, Bennett. 2017. "Love." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (fall 2017 edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/love

Heiner, Brady Thomas. 2007. "Foucault and the Black Panthers." *City* 11, no. 3: 313-356. https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810701668969.

Hill-Collins, Patricia. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and The Politics of Empowerment.* Boston, Massachusetts: Unwin Hyman.

Hooks, Bell. 1981. *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women And Feminism*. The United States: Southend Press.

Huffer, Lynne. 2013. *Are the Lips a Grave? A Queer Feminist on the Ethics of Sex*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Huffer, Lynne. 2020. *Strange Eros*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hull, Gloria T., Patricia Bell-Scott, and Barbara Smith. 1982. *But Some Of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*. New York, New York: The Feminist Press.

James, Joy. 1998. *The Angela Y. Davis Reader*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Kelley, Robin D. G. 2008. *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting The Culture Wars In Urban America*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Kendi, Ibram X. 2018. "The Soul of W. E. B. Du Bois." *The Paris Review*, February 14, 2018. www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/02/14/the-soul-of-w-e-b-du-bois/.

Massumi, Brian. 2002. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

McKittrick, Katherine. 2006. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and The Cartographies Of Struggle*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Morgan, Jennifer L. 1997. "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1: 167–192. https://doi.org/10.2307/2953316.

Moten, Fred. 2003. *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.

Moten, Fred. 2013. "Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 4: 737–780. https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-2345261.

Moten, Fred. 2016. *A Poetics of the Undercommons*. Sputnik & Fizzle.

"murmur, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press.

Muñoz, José Esteban. 2006. "Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, the Performativity of Race, and the Depressive Position." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 31, no. 3: 675–688.

Nash, Jennifer. 2013. "Practice Love: Black Feminism, Love Politics, and Post-intersectionality." *Meridians* Vol. 11, No. 2 (2011), pp. 1-24. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/meridians.11.2.1

Nicholson, Stuart. 1995. *Ella Fitzgerald A Biography of Ella Fitzgerald: The First Lady of Jazz.* New York, New York: Da Capo Press Edition.

Opie, Frederick Douglass. 2010. *Hog and hominy: soul food from Africa to America*. New York, New York: Columbia University Press.

"Oxford Word Of The Year 2007: Locavore." *OUPblog*. Oxford University Press, 12 Nov. 2007, blog.oup.com/2007/11/locavore/.

Philip, Nourbese, and Setaey Adamu Boateng. 2011. *Zong!* Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.

Poe, Tracy N. 1999. "The Origins of Soul Food in Black Urban Identity: Chicago, 1915-1947." *American Studies International* 37, no. 1: pp. 4–33.

Pullam, Geoffrey K. 1999. "African American Vernacular English is not standard English with mistakes." In *The Workings of Language: From Prescriptions to Perspectives*, edited by Rebecca S. Wheeler, pp 59–66. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Puar, Jasbir K. 2007. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

"respite, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press.

Robinson, Cedric J. 2000. *Black Marxism: The Making Of The Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Rojas, Carl. 2014. "Studio Visit: Paul Stephen Benjamin." *BURNAWAY*, April 9, 2014. burnaway.org/interview/studio-visit-paul-stephen-benjamin/.

Scott, Joan. 1991. "The Evidence of Experience." *Critical inquiry*17, no. 4 (1991): 773–797.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, and Adam Frank. 1995. "Shame in the Cybernetic Fold: Reading Silvan Tomkins." *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. 2: 496–522.

Sexton, Jared. 2012. "Ante-anti-blackness: Afterthoughts." *Lateral* 1, no. 1. https://csalateral.org/issue/1/ante-anti-blackness-afterthoughts-sexton/

Shange, Ntozaki. 1998. *If I Can Cook I Know God Can.* Vol. 5. Boston: Beacon Press.

Sharpe, Christina. 2016. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Smart-Grosvernor, Vertamae. 2011. *Vibration Cooking: Or, the Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.

Spencer, Robyn Ceanne. 2008. "Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle: Revolutionary Black Womanhood and the Black Panther Party in the Bay Area, California." *Journal of Women's History* 20, no. 1: 90–113.

Spillers, Hortense J. 1987. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17, no. 2: 65–81.

Spinoza, Benedictus de. 2001. *Ethics*. Wordsworth Editions.

Talbert, David E., and Will Packer [Directors]. 2016. *Almost Christmas*. Universal Pictures.

Tomkins, Silvan S. 1962. *Affect, Imagery, Consciousness*. Springer.

Warren, Calvin L. 2018. *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Weheliye, Alexander G. 2014. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Wilderson III, Frank. 2015. *Incognegro: A Memoir of Exile and Apartheid.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Wilderson III, Frank. 2010. *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of US Antagonisms*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Williams-Forson, Psyche A. 2006. *Building Houses out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Wilson Gilmore, Ruthie. 2007. *Golden Gulag: Prison, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition In Globalizing California.* Berkley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Wynter, Sylvia. 1990. "Afterward: Beyond Miranda Meanings: Un/silencing the 'Demonic Ground' of Caliban's Woman." *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean Women and Literature*, edited by Carole Boyce Davies and Elaine Savory, pp. 355–66. Trento: Africa World Press.

Wynter, Sylvia. 1995. "1492: A New World View." *Race, Discourse, and the Origin of the Americas: A New World View*, edited by Vera Lawrence Hyatt and Rex M. Nettleford. Smithsonian Institution Press, pp. 5-57. Smithsonian.