

trailblazers whose leadership help create, maintain, and evolve the ideological tenets of Black Power. Farmer's text joins a growing list of recent scholarly works that solidifies Black women's places in intellectual history, which for too long have remained severely neglected. "Gendered imaginary" may very well establish a formidable theoretical framework for studying Black Power and other eras.

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Notes

1. Patricia Hill Collins, "Distinguishing Features of Black Feminist Thought," in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2009), 36.

2. Jennifer C. Nash, "Re-thinking Intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 1–15.

Of Collectivism, Artists, and the Politics of the Imprisoned Angela D. LeBlanc-Ernest

Historian Ashley D. Farmer's characterization of Black women's activism as Black women's "freedom dreams" is an apt description of the efforts of African American women, activists or not, since the earliest years of their presence in this country. Farmer uses "the gendered imaginary" (13) to explore Black women activists' ideas in their writings. She deftly crafts her language, traversing thirty-four years of Black women's political ideas. She introduces a wide array of women whose activism reflected their willingness to speak truth to all forms of power. These women used their minds and skills to challenge the status quo, subsequently shifting the way the world assessed their value.

Farmer's narrative paints a historiographical landscape with broad strokes as she presents these intellectual expressions, excavated from organizational records, exhaustive secondary-source material, and some personal interviews. Her discussion of such a large number of organizations and the resulting list of Black women thinkers and activists are refreshing. The list is also a source for anyone wishing to study any of these women individually. Her archival material—political speeches, essays, pamphlets, artwork, and literature—is apropos to the intellectual engagement she pursues.

Farmer innovatively and boldly enters the intellectual arena of Black Power scholarship, which, heretofore, has focused on the thoughts of Black men leaders circa 1966. However, *Remaking Black Power* deftly synthesizes

decades of existing historiography of Black women activists. Studies emerging since the 1980s clearly and effectively argue that Black women were critical agents in theorizing, organizing, and advancing civil rights movement activism. Farmer's text advances this body of literature as well, expanding scholarship on women in nationalist and revolutionary organizations and feminist groups. Farmer allows these Black women's writings to guide her pen, weaving together their dreams and voices: activist women whose ideas and physical bodies at times crisscrossed organizations, states, and countries.

The author categorizes Black women's intellectual labor into five Black Power women archetypes, reflecting various iterations of Black Power: "The Militant Negro Domestic (1945–1965)," "The Black Revolutionary Woman (1966–1975)," "The African Woman (1965–1975)," "The Pan-African Woman (1972–1976)," and "The Third World Black Woman (1970–1979)." Although Farmer paints with broad strokes, she is careful to note that "complexities and contradictions" filled these times (13). *Remaking Black Power* is a tour de force of Black Power organizations and conferences, locales for men and women activists to meet and influence each other's ideas, taking us on an intellectual exploration of Black women grappling with questions of agency, identity, power, and community.

The archetypes begin with Farmer tracing the influences on post-World War II Black women, primarily maids and cooks in white homes, who supported Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Communist Party (20–21). Select activists traverse the United States, incorporating other organizations and, ultimately, crisscrossing the world. Perhaps the most influential chapter is "The African Woman," within which Farmer carefully delineates Kawaida and how women, via the Malaika, Muminina, and separate women's divisions, led the way in expanding its meaning. Farmer lays out the literal creation of cultural practice in Los Angeles, with Ron Karenga's Us, and ends in Africa within an international context. Along the way the author's text reveals fissures, constant turnover within organizations, and the movement of individuals from one organization to another. Audley Moore is the one staunch activist moving through the narrative: crisscrossing generations, organizations, and nations.

While Farmer's pathbreaking monograph presents a nuanced reading of a large body of secondary and primary sources, the "Black Revolutionary Woman" chapter provides an opportunity to clarify and further contextualize Black Panther Party (BPP) women's lives and their gendered imagining. Many people recognize the BPP as a 1960s revolutionary organization. In its earliest years, teenagers and young adults filled the party, a large percentage of whom

lived and labored collectively twenty-four hours a day. Party members toiled while under constant local, state, and federal repression and surveillance. It matters to assess these members in their personal, collective, and community contexts as well as the rules and ideology that guided them.

Farmer's exploration of the BPP's newspaper for examples of gendered imaginings is an excellent approach. The party newspaper, *The Black Panther Intercommunal News Service*, was a space where one could find progressive women and men thinkers. There were numerous male and female BPP newspaper editors and graphic artists between 1967 and 1980, with women editing during three of the nine organizational years covered during the "Black Revolutionary Women" period. Publishing the party newspaper was one such twenty-four-hour collective operation. With upward of a 400,000 copy per week circulation peak, the paper was produced collectively by the newspaper cadre: an assemblage of writers, editors, graphic artists, and photographers assigned to their duties based on skills. Emory Douglas, a formally trained commercial artist and the BPP minister of culture, was the party's first revolutionary artist, as well as a mentor for all artists. In a nonhierarchical way, Douglas intentionally rotated the newspaper cadre responsible for the cover art, alternating between three women and three men, himself included.

Whereas Farmer mistakenly labels Tarika Lewis, aka "Matilaba," as the party's first revolutionary artist, Lewis was the BPP's first woman graphic artist. Lewis had her own artistic technique, yet followed Douglas's tradition of drawing images of revolutionary women. He cast them alternately as individual women, armed revolutionary mothers with guns on their backs, and women with families, young and old alike. Like their militant Negro domestic foremothers—Claudia Jones (28), Esther Cooper (26), and those who came afterward—BPP women activists entered the party at different levels of growth and ideological development. The absence of background information for these and some other key individuals in the overall text at times makes it difficult to contextualize them. For example, it would have been instructive for the reader to know that Tarika Lewis was a teenaged Oakland Tech High School graduate who had enrolled at Merritt College. At Oakland Tech, she had cofounded the Black Student Union, staged sit-ins, and been involved in Black cultural activities, abandoning her jazz violinist dreams at the college. She joined the BPP and became a leader. When male comrades questioned her qualifications, she invited them to the shooting range to prove her skills. Her art mimicked her life during her party tenure (1967–69). Lewis's images reflect some of the BPP's earliest thoughts on police brutality that plagued the Black community.

On the other hand, Gayle "Asali" Dickson entered the party during a period when the Panthers were criticizing the system, with their emphasis on survival programs. Unlike Lewis, Asali entered the BPP as a married woman with a background in the visual arts, which helps explain her realistic artistic style. Dickson joined the party in 1970 in Seattle and was learning photography when she transferred to Oakland in 1972. When it became clear that she had experience in graphic art, she was assigned to the newspaper cadre where she drew and, from Douglas, learned how to make her art revolutionary. Dickson saw herself as contributing her talent and energy to the revolution; her emphasis on women and children was subliminal. During Dickson's two years as a BPP newspaper graphic artist (1972–74), Douglas guided the artists to add social message content collectively. Collective work also undergirded the ways BPP members created art for public presentation and BPP events.

Finally, Farmer's analysis of prison letters is both creative and compelling. We understand Claudia Jones's political thinking through her self-reflection. Similarly, Farmer reads insight into BPP member Joan Bird's ideas. I found myself turning the pages, anticipating an analysis of other incarcerated women, including Afeni Shakur, Bird's fellow New York 21 comrade, a group of BPP members charged with plotting to blow up landmarks in New York; or newspaper articles from the women of the New Haven 9, including Ericka Huggins. Excavating these women's experiences and their analyses in their own words is critical. A collective evaluation of the broader group's prison letters and articles also would have elevated the issue of motherhood in a revolutionary organization, given several women were pregnant or separated from their infants at the time of their arrest and incarceration. Black women's bodies were sites of contestation. State violence against BPP women's bodies was a real factor in their intellectual expressions of their lives as Black revolutionaries.

Farmer's timely analysis and her focus on exploring the nuances are a promising beginning for the continued growth of Black Power scholarship. Future scholarship can build on Farmer's work, taking the women's voices at their word, taking advantage of multimedia sources, and incorporating more significant numbers of oral histories. With so many organizations and women included in Farmer's text, there is no shortage of places to begin this necessary and worthwhile quest.

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