THE SELF IN BLACK AND WHITE

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The Self in Black and White

Race and Subjectivity in Postwar American Photography

Erina Duganne

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For My Family

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Introduction
The Self in Black and White

"The establishment of contact with self is key, the source point from which all messages flow. We speak of our lives as only we can."[1] To many the significance of this statement—made by Louis Draper in 1972 in reference to his involvement with the African American photography collective known as the Kamoinge Workshop—may appear self-evident. In asserting that "contact with self is key" and "we speak of our lives as only we can," Draper seems to imply that his individual circumstances speak for the collective experiences of African Americans as a group.

This reading of Draper's statement relies on the belief that African American photographers are born with an innate talent to represent their race and, by extension their selves, naturally and sympathetically. One of the ways that this essentialized understanding of the representation of race has been constructed and disseminated is by means of a comparison of images of black subjects by African American photographers with those produced by such European American photographers as Bruce Davidson, who spent a considerable period of time photographing this same subject matter. Even though scholars have praised Davidson's photographs of black subjects, many contend that his position as a European American necessarily "limits" these representations. Photography critic A. D. Coleman clarifies this point in a contemporary review of a series of photographs that Davidson took in East Harlem in the late 1960s:

> No matter how insightful a white photographer may be, and despite all precautions he may take, he remains white and therefore alien. Thus, even when there is mutual admiration and respect between photographer and subject, there is automatically a barrier, for they stand on different sides of the socio-cultural fence.

Here Coleman argues that regardless of Davidson's effort to promote reciprocity between himself and his black subjects through, for instance, his use of a 4 x 5 inch-view

camera and his distribution of prints to his subjects, Davidson's position as a European American necessarily restricts these representations.

When an African American photographer like Dawoud Bey photographs black subjects, this question of racial expertise is rarely posed because he shares their racial background. Yet, if race naturally predisposes Bey to represent black subjects more truthfully and sympathetically than his European American counterparts, why, in the mid-1980s did he, as Davidson had done a decade earlier in his East Harlem photographs, also attempt to establish reciprocity with his subjects by changing from a 35 mm camera to a 4 x 5 inch-tripod-mounted camera as well as by distributing prints to them? Rather than address Bey's collaborative efforts with his subjects in terms of the specificity of this history, scholars have instead turned to the tradition of black image making, and more particularly the binary of positive/negative images, to explain the transformation that occurred in Bey's working process.

Because access to the means of representation and the freedom to define and distribute one's own image has not always been readily available to African American photographers, scholars argue that these individuals, particularly those working during the 1950s through 1970s, turned to documentary photography, and above all its claims to truth, in an effort to gain increased visibility and to replace the largely negative and damaging images of their race with more positive ones.[3] By the mid-1980s, however, a shift supposedly has taken place. At this time, the belief in photography as a tool of documentation and social reform deteriorates as African American photographers recognize the limitations and outright inadequacies of so-called positive images and in turn use their work to question and criticize assumptions inherent in the tradition of documentary photography.[4] Scholars cite Bey's dissatisfaction with his 35 mm street photography and particularly the distance and lack of reciprocity that this approach supposedly creates between himself and his subjects as an illustration of this shift.[5]

This argument about Bey's practice situates him within several established art historical lineages and narratives. First, as the creation of an African American photographer, Bey's work is presented as the product of a unified and racially cohesive group of individuals. Second, in order to legitimize Bey's work in terms of already established canons, his photographs are aligned with postmodernist and multiculturalist theories of identity, whose very foundation depends upon a rejection or critique of what has come before. Both of these arguments view the relationship between race and the self in Bey's photographs as cohesive in terms of authorship, ideology,

and chronology. They thus fail to address the complex and even contradictory ways in which the meanings of those photographs were negotiated in terms of such historically specific contexts as the documentary-influenced practices of photographers like Bruce Davidson as well as the identity-driven work of postmodernism and multiculturalism. As Bey himself explains: "I've often thought of myself as belonging to the in-between generation: the generation after the Documentarians and before the Postmodernists who renounced the documentary impulse completely. I can't swear allegiances to either, but my vocabulary is drawn from both."[6] This statement reveals Bey's own awareness of the intertextuality of his working practice and, in turn, supports my decision to more carefully address the historically specific theoretical and ideological frameworks that informed it.

In an effort to situate Bey's practice as well as the representation of race in postwar American photography more generally within a fresh and much-needed historical and conceptual frame, this book takes as its focus a specific group of African American and European American photographers — Bruce Davidson, Roy DeCarava, Louis Draper, Robert Frank, Herbert Randall, Aaron Siskind and Beuford Smith, among others — who worked in or around a particular geographic location, New York City. I have chosen to center my investigation on this group of postwar American photographers for several methodological reasons. When scholars address the representation of race during this period, it is most frequently within the context of African American photography or the more general category of black photography. The absence of African American photographers from the history of photography largely accounts for this tendency. With not a single black photographer included in either Beaumont Newhall's 1982 edition of *The History of Photography* or Jonathan Green's 1984 *American Photography*, a number of scholars — most notably Deborah Willis — have focused their attention on the recovery, identification, and preservation of the works of African American photographers and the function of these images within African American culture.[7] While this significant and groundbreaking work has been necessary in order to subvert much of the exclusionism and racism that has permeated art history, scholars have more recently begun to develop a more critical study of race and its representation, one that art historian Jacqueline Francis has referred to as a "critical race art history."[8]

My decision to focus on a group of black and white photographers responds in part to this call. In order to move beyond evaluating representations of race, both

in isolation from their broader historical and cultural significance within the United States and as the product of a unified and cohesive group of individuals, I have selected a group of African American *and* European American photographers who share an interest in depicting black subjects. At the same time, in selecting this group, I do not, unlike Coleman in his evaluation of Davidson's East Harlem photographs, consider the relationship between race and self in these images as either essential or unmediated. Instead, I approach race and self as a socially and historically specific set of relations that can change according to the complex and at times contradictory terms of their production and reception. Such a comparative methodology—which is in dialogue with the important cultural studies work of scholars such as Sara Blair, Shawn Michelle Smith, Sasha Torres, and Laura Wexler, among others—is necessary because it offers a model for considering African American and European American photographers both within and beyond this book without reducing either group into overly broad categories of identity or discussing them and their representations through such binary oppositions as black/white, insider/outsider, and positive/negative images.[9]

The so-called documentary nature of these photographers' practices also played a role in my selection process. As I have already mentioned in relation to Bey's work, by the mid-1980s, the practice of documentary photography had become ideologically fraught, particularly for advocates of postmodernism. Critics such as Martha Rosler, Allan Sekula, and Abigail Solomon Godeau, for instance, offered trenchant critiques of documentary photography, claiming that it privileged the creative genius of the photographer at the expense of, among other things, the subjects that they depicted. Likewise, David Bailey and Stuart Hall also denounced this practice, arguing that the belief in the assumed objectivity of documentary photography and its ability to produce social change set up an implicit hierarchy between photographers and their subjects.[10] In both cases, the arguments of these critics, much like the reading of Louis Draper's statement with which I began, assume that the authors of documentary photography function as autonomous centers of meaning who both determine and guarantee the aesthetic and political value of their images.

To overcome this problem of the all-knowing author, several of these critics sought to call attention to the relative indeterminacy of photographic meaning as well as its dependence upon the contingencies of its uses. As Allan Sekula explains in his influential article "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," first published in

1975, "The photograph, as it stands alone, presents merely the *possibility* of meaning. Only by its embeddedness in a concrete discourse situation can the photograph yield a clear semantic outcome."[11] Here Sekula, largely building on Michel Foucault's notion of the discourse object, insists on photography's social determination and ubiquity, essentially arguing that a photograph's meaning is determined by the sociohistorical context in which it is used and circulated. Since I too wanted to distance the photographers in my study from notions of an all-knowing author—albeit an essentialized racial one—the idea that photographic meaning is mutable and contingent instead of determined by the race of its maker became appealing, particularly in the early stages of this project. At the same time, in adopting this approach, I came to perceive its limitations. For instance, if a photograph's meaning is entirely dependent upon the contingencies of its uses, is the photographer's subjectivity, by which I mean his or her sense of self—including the experience of racial difference—then entirely irrelevant to that photograph's meaning? For Sekula and many of his contemporaries, the complexity that subjectivity may bring to photographic meaning was not at all troublesome. In fact, they intended their emphasis on the function and social uses of photography to both challenge and negate the role of subjectivity in a photograph's meaning. Given my interest in how the photographers in my study used their representations of black subjects to explore the complex and at times even contradictory relationship between race and self, I realized that I could not so easily dismiss the complexity that their subjectivities brought to the racial meanings of their photographs. But the question remained as to how I might ground these subjectivities within the processes of social relations instead of within essentialized notions of race.

The theoretical ideas of structural linguist Émile Benveniste provided me with one way to respond to this problem. According to Benveniste,

> Consciousness of self is only possible if it is experienced by contrast. I use *I* only when I am speaking to someone who will be a *you* in my address. It is this condition of dialogue which is constitutive of *person*, for it implies that reciprocally *I* becomes *you* in the address of the one who in turn designates himself as *I*.[12]

In this passage, Benveniste proposes that subjectivity is not something that is stable or fixed—as assumed in my initial reading of Draper's statement as well as by critics regarding the authors of documentary photography—but rather something that is constituted by an intersubjective exchange. Film scholar Kaja Silverman clarifies this

claim as, "the impossibility of isolating language from discourse, or discourse from subjectivity."[13]

Benveniste's proposition has been particularly important to my study, since it has allowed me to consider the photographers discussed in my book, not as privileged and authentic sources of meaning, but in terms of how the racial meanings of their representations "are given concrete expression," as Michael Omi and Howard Winant argue in their important book *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s*, "by the specific social relations and historical context in which they are embedded."[14] In short, Benveniste's theoretical ideas, along with those of Omi and Winant, have enabled me to speak about these photographers without resorting either to essentialist binaries or to notions of the all-knowing author assumed intrinsic to the tradition of documentary photography. In their place, I have been able to focus on the specific ways in which the racial meanings of their representations shifted according to the social and historical terms of their production and reception.

To begin to reconstruct what it was possible to discuss about photographic representations of race in postwar America, and how these images shape and were shaped by broader social structures, I engage, in each of the four chapters in this book, in a kind of dual mapping, combining a consideration of art historical formation, including close formal readings of relevant visual and textual materials, with careful attention to the complexities of the historical moments and social relationships in which these images were produced and received. These include not only pertinent artistic and sociohistorical contexts—photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the representation of black masculinity in the print media, the discourse on the culture of poverty, and the function of violence within the civil rights movement, to name just a few—but also those more private and elusive attitudes, desires, and interpersonal relationships that influenced the manner in which these representations came to acquire meaning about race and self during this period. In mapping these photographers' representations in relation to the terms of these artistic, sociohistorical, as well as private contexts, I attempt to raise important questions about the varied ways in which these photographers navigated their way across this complicated terrain in their attempt to understand their own subjectivities and racial identities. I also question the central role that race as a sociohistorical concept and photography as a medium of intersubjective exchange played in these investigations. In so doing, I hope to establish the complex, shifting, and even fraught ways in which race, subjectivity,

and documentary photography—especially as an index of the "real"—not only produced one another but were inescapably intertwined in postwar America.

The historical and conceptual parameters for this analysis developed largely as a result of the extensive archival research that I conducted, at among other institutions, MoMA, the LBJ Library, the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and the International Center for Photography. Besides this research, I met and interviewed numerous members of the little-known African American photography collective known as the Kamoinge Workshop. I have used these materials alongside other contemporary visual and textual documents to develop and expand the historically specific set of conditions and debates addressed in this book. In so doing, I hope to sweep away many of the established art historical lineages and narratives concerning the representation of race during this period. In their place, I offer a model for assessing these images that emerges from more careful and critical considerations of the historical dimensions of the specific visual conditions and social relations that informed these photographers' explorations into race and self.

What follows, essentially, are four case studies for considering the varied ways in which postwar photographic representations of race collided and colluded with the broader social systems in which they were produced and received. In each of these studies, I use historically specific sets of conditions and debates that shaped, and in turn were shaped by, these representations to map the complex and even contradictory ways in which ideas about race and self and their representation in photography were articulated and negotiated, as well as contested, during this period. At the same time, while each of my studies focuses on a specific set of social and historical relationships as well as a particular group of photographers, images, and texts, I do not attempt to organize this material into discrete, self-contained chapters nor do I always introduce these chapters in the most straightforward manner. Instead, I begin each one with an extended discussion of a specific photographer, group of photographers, or photographic project, and then frequently shift this discussion to a different set of photographers or photographic projects by the end. I organize the material in this way not only to call attention to the varied, even disjointed, nature of the social and historical terrain against which I construct the arguments in my book but also to suggest how dense and circuitous the racial meanings are that I attempt to address in each of my chapters. These organizational strategies may at times try the reader's patience, but that structure is deliberate, since I want readers to become physically as well as

conceptually aware of the ways in which the racial meanings embedded in this material are not only willfully entangled but also continually rearticulated according to the socially and historically specific terms of their production and reception.

What does connect these four studies, however, is the concept of "intersubjective exchange" that I borrow from Benveniste. As I explain earlier, I am interested in this theoretical idea because of the way that it allows me to ground the subjectivities of my selected photographers within the processes of social relations rather than in essentialized notions of race. But while the notion of "intersubjective exchange" provides an overarching conceptual framework for my book, I also use this concept to discuss actual social relations, including the intersubjective relationships between the photographers, subjects, and viewers of images discussed in my book. My interest in the terms of these relations as well as in photography's potential to engage in them is two-fold.

I turn to this relationship in my book first as a way to complicate the subject/object hierarchy considered implicit in documentary photography as well as to suggest the manner in which ideas about selfhood were explored relationally during this period relative to the social world. At the same time, given my interest in how ideas about self were shaped and reshaped through photographic representations of race, it is often more accurate to consider the intersubjective relations of the documentary photographers that I address in this book, especially in Chapters 1 and 4, in terms of interaction as opposed to exchange. This is because, on the whole, many of the photographers that I consider did not intend their images to function as a form of collaboration as implied by the term "exchange"; several of them were specifically interested in using their photographs to explore the nature of their subjects' reactions to having their pictures taken. This is not to say that these photographers never took images of consenting subjects or that they were attempting to "speak" on behalf their subjects. But for the most part, they were more interested in using the relationship between themselves and their subjects as a means to negotiate the relational space between their private and social selves than in ensuring that their subjects were involved in the actual picture-making process. Some may criticize these efforts as upholding the privileged subjectivity of photographers at the expense of the subjects depicted. I would argue, however, that such challenges to the function of photographers as coherent and original sources of authorial power, while important, have nevertheless caused to remain largely unexplored the complex and often contradictory relationship that sub-

jectivity—as a socially and historically constructed not essentialized term—brings to the representation of race in postwar American photography.[15]

I also use the concept of intersubjectivity, especially in Chapters 2 and 3, to explore the complex network of social relations, and more specifically "structures of feeling," that exist between viewers and the subjects depicted in the photographs in my book. In these analyses, I turn to this concept as a way to call attention to the intricate and even conflicting ways in which the racial meanings of these photographs were formed, shifted, and even reconstituted according to the social and historical terms of their production and, more important, their reception. In both cases, the concept of intersubjectivity provides a way for me not only to address photography's dialogical potential but also to speak about the relationships between the authors, subjects, and viewers of these photographs in terms of the actual racial dynamics of social life as opposed to those more essentialized notions of identity implied by such binaries as positive/negative images, black/white, and outside/insider.[16] This does not mean that intersubjectivity is the only conceptual framework through which to analyze these images or even the most historically correct one. Instead, I have used this theoretical concept to suggest the historically specific ways in which these photographic representations of race have been understood, lived, and negotiated in relation to the multifaceted identities of their photographers, subjects, and viewers and the complexities of their social as well as private interactions in the world. It is my hope that in reading these images in this manner, this book will not only challenge commonly held assumptions about how the self has been experienced, conceptualized, and reflected in relation to photographic representations of race but, more important, will also begin to illuminate what is at stake when these efforts are overlooked or ignored.

CHAPTER ONE

Beyond the "Negro Point of View"
The Kamoinge Workshop's "Harlem" Portfolio

In the long run, everyone came to realize that we are all different. There are certain things that we share but we are still all individuals and that's cool.

—ALBERT FENNAR

Positive/Negative Images

In 1966, editors at the photography magazine *Camera* invited members of the New York-based African American photography collective known as the Kamoinge Workshop to submit images for publication in their journal.[1] From these, editor Allan Porter selected twenty-eight photographs that were published in the July 1966 issue as part of a twenty-three-page portfolio entitled "Harlem." Porter selected this title not to denote a geographical connection or even birthright of the members of Kamoinge. Instead he used it to indicate the shared racial background of the members, a commonality that he assumed enabled these photographers to depict Harlem and its people naturally and sympathetically or, in short, as "insiders."[2] Porter clarifies this distinction in the portfolio's accompanying text: "What is Harlem really like? What are the people like? These are the questions the Kamoinge Workshop asked and has tried to answer. This portfolio of photographs presents Harlem through the eyes of its inhabitants—the negro point of view of the negro's life."[3] Through this statement, Porter isolates the Kamoinge members' photographs and defines them in relation to one, predetermined value, their authors' race.

In using the assumed truthfulness of the Kamoinge members' racial background as the organizing structure for presenting and evaluating their images within the pages of *Camera*, Porter relies on the binary category of positive/negative images. His description of the formation of this Workshop in the accompanying text for the portfolio further supports this reading. According to Porter, "The people of Harlem—we have all seen—the white man's interpretation of the riots, and the sensational news

features in countless publications; this is the reason why the Kamoinge Workshop was formed—to take photographs to act as a balance to previous publicity."[4] In this passage, Porter defines the photographs produced by the members of Kamoinge as challenging negative and frequently degrading stereotypes of African Americans circulated by the mainstream print media and, in their place, offering more positive ones. This binary, while not unique to the Kamoinge Workshop, has remained one of the principal interpretative frameworks for evaluating its images both then as well as now.[5]

Postwar black photographers historically encountered a lack of power within the field of representation when attempting to reflect and depict their own experiences, which largely accounts for this reliance on the binary of positive/negative images. As black photographers began to gain greater access to the discourses and practices of photography—a process that many argue mirrored larger postwar independence and political struggles, such as the civil rights movement in the United States and the decolonization movements in Africa and India, among others—increasing attention was given toward challenging negative stereotypes and replacing them with more positive ones. Cultural critic Stuart Hall and curator Mark Sealy address this trend in their 2001 book *Different*, in which they argue that, from the postwar period until approximately the mid-1980s, black photography functioned within predominantly political contexts, and that even those images not directly related to political events were understood as part of "a broader cultural struggle to challenge negative stereotypes and to replace them with positive, even celebratory, counter-images."[6] Cultural critic bell hooks has also commented on this situation: "Cameras gave to black folks, irrespective of our class, a means by which we could participate fully in the production of images. . . . The camera was a central instrument by which blacks could disprove representations of us created by white folks."[7]

The formation of the Kamoinge Workshop was also propelled by this struggle. In the early 1960s, two clusters of African American photographers, working and living independently of each other in New York City, separately formed a support group. The first—composed of photographers Albert Fennar, Louis Draper, Jimmie Mannas, and Herbert Randall—named themselves "Kamoinge" after the Gikuyu word meaning "a group of people acting together." In 1963, this group decided to merge with a second informal group of African American photographers, known as "Group 35," whom they had befriended at a meeting to discuss how African American photog-

raphers could better nurture and support one another in their efforts to secure access to the field of representation.[8] This larger group subsequently adopted the name "Kamoinge Workshop."[9] Yet, unlike the binary framework of positive/negative images assumes, for the members of Kamoinge, securing access to the rights of representation did not necessarily precipitate the related effort of counteracting "negative" images of their race with more "positive" ones. In fact, the tendency to read the photographs of the Kamoinge Workshop in terms of this structuring device has suppressed important differences within the group. Further, it has obscured the complex and even contradictory ways in which their conflicting individual and collective experiences as African Americans were negotiated in relation to their images of black subjects.

The complex interplay between the Kamoinge members' singular and collective identities is no more apparent than in their decision to name themselves Kamoinge. Because of its African origins, it is tempting to align the Kamoinge Workshop with the Pan-Africanism of Black Power or the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s. Yet, although interested, as Kamoinge member Albert Fennar recalls, "in all things African"[10]—which led to the discovery of their name in the glossary of Jomo Kenyatta's 1938 ethnography *Facing Mount Kenya*—the members of Kamoinge never aligned their photographic practices with the collective-based political goals of these movements.[11] Instead, the Workshop was foremost a community of individual friends who casually gathered in each other's homes—usually on Sundays—to eat, listen to music, and discuss photography, among other things. Often disagreeing with one another about the purpose and intention of their work, the members also had no set ideology to which they subscribed as a group, either artistically or politically. This nonalignment is reflected in the diversity of styles and subject matter in their photographs. While some members, like Louis Draper, primarily photographed black subjects in the tradition of street photography, others, like Albert Fennar, turned to abstraction and nonblack subjects.[12] Additionally, unlike other African American collectives such as Spiral, Weusi, OBAC, or AfriCOBRA, as a group, the members of Kamoinge never attempted to make a collective-based art; they preferred to photograph alone, although occasionally in pairs.[13]

The group did agree, however, that the Workshop should provide a forum to view and critically discuss each other's work, and the members often used their meetings to debate the aesthetic merits of each other's prints as well as the advantages of approaching their subject matter through such formal means as realism and abstrac-

tion.[14] In addition, since a number of the members had firsthand experience of the shortcomings of commercial photography and photojournalism, including the limited number of jobs for African Americans and the compromises demanded by them, the group also supported fellow members' efforts to secure access to the representation and reflection of their own experiences, both individually and collectively. Draper recalls: "We saw ourselves as a group who were trying to nurture each other. We had no outlets. The magazines wouldn't support our work. So we wanted to encourage each other. . . . To give each other feedback. We tried to be a force, especially for younger people."[15]

Besides being a support network, the group also sought to agree on the artistic nature of their work and the importance of its relationship to their lived experiences, including race. To achieve this aim, the members rooted their photographs in their individual and collective experiences, believing that, as Draper further elucidates: "Contact with self is the key. . . . We speak of our lives as only we can."[16] As a result of this emphasis on the self—both individually and collectively—a number of the Kamoinge members photographed black subjects. This content did not mean that they intended their work to speak for African Americans as a group or to act as a corrective lens. In focusing on black subjects, the Kamoinge members explored the multifaceted ways in which the particularities of their lived experiences and interpersonal relationships—including their singular and collective experiences of racial difference—informed and complicated their art.

Given the diversity and differentiation within the Kamoinge Workshop as well as the complexity and specificity of its members' relationships to the representation of race and self, it would seem that their photographic production more closely parallels what Stuart Hall describes in his influential 1988 essay "New Ethnicities" as "the end of the innocent notion of the essential black subject."[17] As part of this essay, Hall addresses a shift in black cultural politics from a stabilized and universal—often by Nature or some other essentializing framework, including the binary of positive/negative images—conception of the black subject and black experience, to an understanding of difference and diversity, or what he terms "ethnicity," as culturally, historically, and politically constructed. Hall explains:

> That is to say, a recognition that we all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being

> contained by that position as "ethnic artists" or film makers. We are all, in that sense, *ethnically* located and our ethnic identities are crucial to our subjective sense of who we are.[18]

In foregrounding the importance of "history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual,"[19] Hall could thus easily be addressing the complex and even contradictory ways in which the photographic representations of black subjects by the members of the Kamoinge Workshop were socially and historically determined. Nonetheless, although Hall initially acknowledges that this shift in black cultural politics did not occur at a "definitive" moment, in his 2001 book *Different*, he defines this new "politics of representation," at least in terms of its photographic manifestations, as a product of the 1980s and of photographers such as Dawoud Bey—whose practice I address in more depth in the Epilogue—whom he argues used the constructed and manipulated nature of their representations to question and criticize essentialist assumptions inherent in the tradition of postwar documentary photography and, by implication, the photographic practices of the Kamoinge Workshop.

In this chapter, I address some of the limitations that this supposed rupture between black photographic practices of the postwar period and the 1980s brings to the study of the representation of race and self in the photographic practices of the Kamoinge Workshop and by extension postwar American photography. In so doing, I suggest that the images made by the Workshop are more than, as this rupture implies, transparent instruments of social activism and reform made in the service of "positive, even celebratory, counter-images."[20]

Furthermore, while scholars like Hall have argued that dissatisfaction with the untruth of documentary photography brought about a supposed shift in African American photography, and black photography in general, during the 1980s, I propose that the challenge to assumptions central to the tradition of documentary photography began at a much earlier date than is generally recognized. The members of the Kamoinge Workshop were all equally invested in critically coming to terms with the representation of race and selfhood in photography. Yet, unlike their 1980s counterparts, their consideration of these issues did not emanate from within the constructed or manipulated nature of the photograph itself but through (borrowing again the words

of Omi and Winant from my Introduction), "the specific social relations and historical context in which they are embedded." It is only through rearticulating the images of the Kamoinge Workshop with respect to the social and historical terms of their production and reception that one can begin to recognize, as Hall remarks in relation to Robert Mapplethorpe's photographic representations of the black male nude, "that deep ambivalence of identification which makes the categories in which we have previously thought and argued about black cultural politics and the black cultural text extremely problematic."[21]

Negotiating Harlem

Besides using the racial background of the Kamoinge members to overdetermine their images, editor Allan Porter's decision to title their *Camera* portfolio "Harlem" posits a natural and unmediated relationship between them and this vastly diverse geographic locale. The photographs that Porter selected for inclusion within the portfolio underscore this intent. While some of the images depict specific locations and people in Harlem, many others were taken in various cities throughout New York, New Jersey, Virginia, Mississippi, and even Bermuda. Porter ignores this discrepancy and instead posits all of the pictures as transparent depictions of Harlem. To challenge this prescriptive categorization of their photographs, the members of Kamoinge wrote a "post scriptum" that appears at the end of the portfolio and which, according to Kamoinge member Louis Draper, "was an effort to salvage the piece from a terrible detonation in communications between the Workshop and the editor of that publication."[22] To this end, in the post scriptum, the members of Kamoinge suggest that they are less interested in depicting the specific social, geographic, or economic aspects of Harlem than in suggesting its more varied and diverse dimensions that expand and surpass its actual physical boundaries: "The point of view expressed by these photographers is personal and individual. The Kamoinge Workshop see Harlem as a state of mind, whether it exists in Watts in California, the south side of Chicago, Alabama, or New York."[23] Through this disclaimer, the members of Kamoinge offer a more complex and emotionally driven understanding of the relationship of Harlem to their photographs than is implied by Porter's reduction of them to "insider" views.

Rather than take these complexities, or even the specific circumstances under which the photographs by the Kamoinge members were produced, into account, Porter's prescriptive categorization and corresponding use of the binary of positive/nega-

tive images instead relies on ideas about Harlem, and by extension African Americans, disseminated during the 1960s by the print media. "'Life Magazine,' 'Look' and the 'Saturday Evening Post,'" explains Porter in his accompanying text, "published sensational photographs depicting the problems, desperation and poverty in Harlem — and the riots. In fact, events in Harlem over the last year provide enough material to fill a book."[24] Much of this coverage that Porter references focused on Harlem's decrepit, even pathological, conditions, often using text and images to persuade readers of the poverty, violence, and drug use that existed there. For instance, immediately after the Harlem riots of 1964, the editors at *Time* published a cover story entitled "No Place Like Home" that attempted to "explain the ghetto called Harlem."[25] Included, as part of this coverage, is a four-page photo-essay entitled "The Look of the Place." Though many of the photographs in this photo-essay do not literally depict Harlem's impoverished conditions, the editors use text beneath each picture to direct readers to a meaning already chosen in advance, namely to provide visual support for the article's report on the unbreakable cycle of overcrowding and dilapidated living conditions in Harlem. The first photograph in this photo-essay offers a case in point (figure 1.1). The only reference to Harlem's destitute conditions in this image of a group of individuals casually sitting on a stoop is a sign that reads "No Renting: To Be Demolished." Yet, in adding the caption "Steps of condemned tenement offer escape from crowded rooms" to this otherwise mundane image of everyday life, the editors use the words "condemned" and "crowded" to influence the image's meaning and to encourage readers to interpret the people depicted in the picture in relation to these descriptions.

Aware of the extent to which such photo-essays provided one of the most popular means by which the general public learned about Harlem and formulated largely "negative" opinions about this community and the people who lived there, several members of Kamoinge used their photographs to respond to these representations. In so doing, however, they did not aim to offer their images merely as visual correctives to these frequently degrading and stereotypical representations. Instead, many of them sought to complicate and even destabilize these representations by engaging in a dialogue with them.

This is the case for a photograph from the "Harlem" portfolio taken by Kamoinge member Herbert Randall that depicts a group of children surrounded by buildings in various states of dilapidation (figure 1.2). Upon first glance, this image might well,

Figure 1.1. Photograph in "The Look of the Place," *Time,* 31 July 1964.

with the appropriate caption, function as evidence of the impoverished conditions and associated racial problems that Porter and the print media describe as intrinsic to Harlem. But, although obviously an urban subject, Randall's image—which depicts a site in New York's Lower East Side—is not meant to literally describe the specific social or economic aspects of Harlem, much less provide a corrective to them. Instead, interested in the relationship between what his photograph depicts and the set of behavioral traits posited by the print media as intrinsic to this content, Randall uses the complex host of associations evoked by the decrepit buildings and the young children who play near them to explore how the construction of Harlem as a "problem" in the print media has shaped not only mainstream conceptions of African Americans and their artistic creations but, more important, how these representations, both real and imaginary, might be negotiated and decentered.

Included as part of the *Time* photo-essay "The Look of the Place" is a photograph that depicts a young black boy standing in an alleyway amid a litter of discarded

Figure 1.2. Herbert Randall, *Children*, 1961. Courtesy of the artist.

furniture and other household items (figure 1.3). While the image itself, taken by African American photojournalist Robert W. Cottrol, offers no clear point of view regarding the relationship between the young black boy and his impoverished surroundings, in adding the caption beneath the photograph, "In garbage-fouled courtyards, the young idle away hot summer days and nights," the editors at *Time* provide a moralizing framework for the image by implying that the decrepit conditions in which the boy supposedly lives contribute to his "idleness." In short, the editors use this photograph to illustrate how the destitute conditions of Harlem produce what African American social psychologist Kenneth Clark describes in his Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited (HARYOU) report, "Youth in the Ghetto," issued just before the 1964 Harlem riots, as a form of "institutionalized pathology" that manifests itself in such (bad) behaviors as crime, drug addiction, and patterns of sexual deviance, among others.[26]

The cover story that corresponds to this photo-essay alludes to these pathological effects even more explicitly. Besides mentioning Clark and the work he had done for HARYOU such as getting "toddlers out of fetid tenements,"[27] the article also describes Harlem's children as "frolick[ing] unsupervised far into the night, wearing latchkeys on strings around their necks because there is nobody at home to care for them," and further notes, "Half of Harlem's children under 18 live with only one parent or none, and it is small wonder that the juvenile delinquency rate is more than double New York's or that the venereal disease rate among Harlem's youth is six times higher than in the rest of the city."[28] In juxtaposing a group of children with buildings in various states of dilapidation in his photograph from the "Harlem" portfolio, Randall also appears to allude to these themes of destitute "dark ghettos" and the "pathologies" they breed, themes perpetuated by social scientists such as Clark and popularized in such magazines as *Time*. At the same time, because Randall's image is not circulated in the print media with a caption that regulates its racial meaning, viewers are encouraged to more carefully consider how his framing of the children and the decay that surrounds them serves to disrupt the authority of such associations.

Randall uses the edge of the street to bifurcate his composition into two distinct parts: the foreground where the children play and the background where the deteriorating buildings are located. In contrast to Cottrol's photograph, which the *Time* editors use as transparent visual support for the pathological effects of Harlem's "ghetto" life on its children, this compositional device serves to unravel some of the assumed complicity between the children and the "institutional pathologies" produced by their

Figure 1.3. Robert W. Cottrol, photograph in "The Look of the Place," *Time*, 31 July 1964. Courtesy of the artist.

impoverished surroundings, at the same time encouraging viewers to think about their relationship in relational, as opposed to essentialist, terms. Moreover, because of the interactions of the children—two are in fact facing away from the camera and the other two do not appear to notice it—Randall obscures their immediate racial, gender, and even class identification and also places his own unmediated access to them into question. Consequently, viewers struggle to map adequately onto the children depicted in his picture those ideas about Harlem's "institutional pathologies," which treat poverty—as again supported by the use of Cottrol's photograph in *Time*—as a natural symptom of lower-class African American male "ghetto culture." In so doing, Randall begins to disrupt the power and influence that this body of stereotypes and clichés held over Harlem, African American males, and more specifically himself. While the "sensational photographs depicting the problems, desperation, and poverty in Harlem" that Porter references are integral to this effort, contrary to what the framework of positive/negative images assumes, their function surpasses and exceeds that of "the negro point of view."

The poverty and the pathological behaviors it produces were not the only terms perpetuated in relation to Harlem by the mainstream press. Harlem's "anger," an issue that was posited as directly resulting from the impoverished living conditions existing there, was another popular framework through which the general public learned about Harlem and against which they internalized their attitudes about this community. For example, the 14 July 1963 issue of the *New York Times Magazine* includes a photo-essay entitled "Why Harlem Is Angry."[29] For this photo-essay, the *New York Times* editors pair text with images to persuade readers about the "resentments and stirrings" developing in Harlem. The layout of the photo-essay, which includes ten photographs, printed across a double-page spread, reinforces this reading (figure 1.4). Nine of these images are placed into three rows of equal-sized images. In each row, text immediately below the images directs readers' understanding of them. For instance, even though, none of the photographs in the first row depicts actual dilapidation, the text encourages the reader to interpret their contents in terms of Harlem's horrid "living conditions" and the supposed bitterness resulting from that. Likewise,

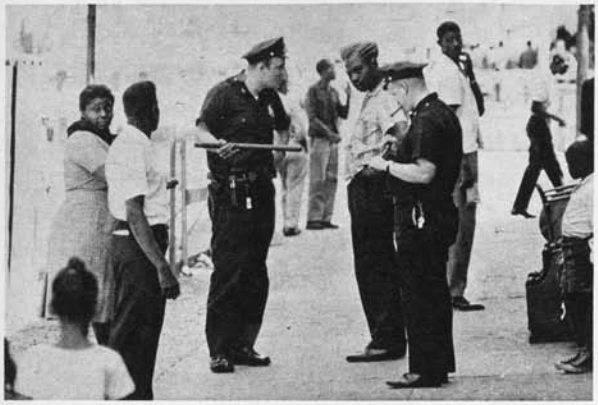
Figure 1.4 (overleaf). "Why Harlem Is Angry," *New York Times Magazine,* 14 July 1963. (captions) From *The New York Times,* 14 July © 1963 The New York Times. All rights reserved. Used by permission and protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States. The printing, copying, redistribution, or retransmission of the Material without express written permission is prohibited. (photographs) Courtesy of the Estate of Richard Saunders.

Why Harlem Is Angry

In Negro parlance, New York City is "The Apple." But, the saying goes, "the man"—the white man—has taken the fruit and left the Negro the core—

LIVING CONDITIONS—The daily Harlem street scene is outwardly prosaic, but it carries constant reminders of bitterness. A fire escape filled with laundry and children is a symbol of conditions within many tenements—stifling summer heat, biting winter cold, rats. The island of poshness offered by Lenox Terrace, above, is limited to a few—actors, teachers and the like—

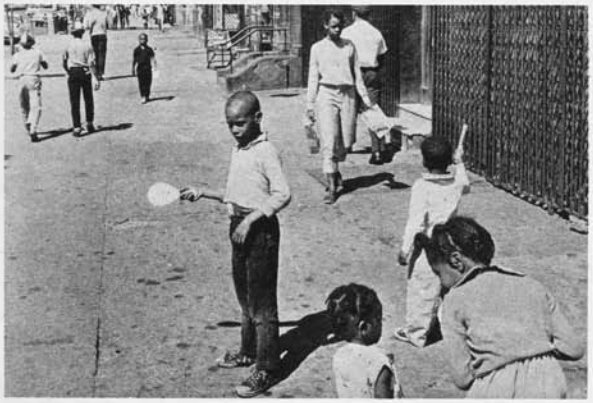
[22]



"THE MAN"—The phrase in Harlem means "the white man" and the tone in which it is spoken suggests a variety of resentments. One is the feeling that an unfair proportion of police in Harlem are whites (left, policemen question a Negro after a disturbance on Lenox Avenue). A key grievance is economic. Harlem's retailers (and pawnbrokers and landlords) are predomi-

REACTIONS—Accumulated grievances find outlets in extremist movements. Above, Malcolm X, East Coast leader of the Black Muslims, addresses a rally at a Harlem housing project. This book display is in the window of a shop in Harlem Square run by the African Nationalists, who preach hatred of whites and the return of Negroes to Africa. Beyond such groups, the civil-rights

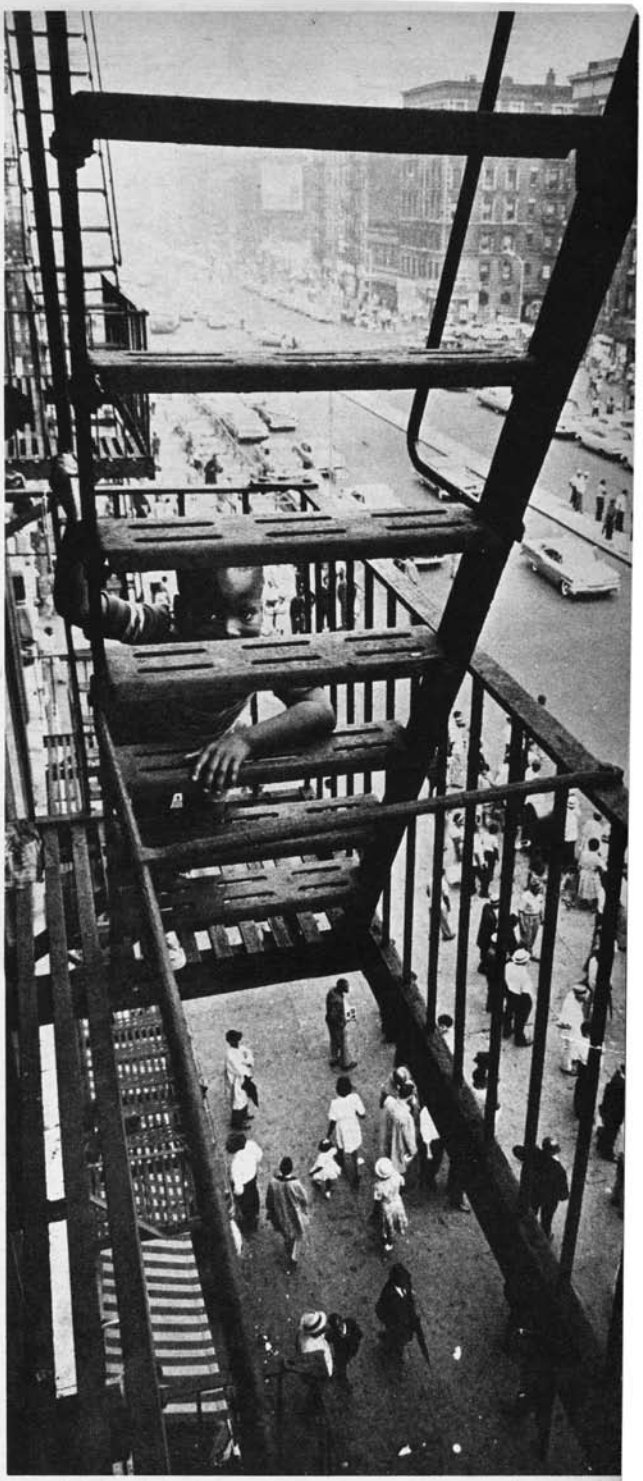
Harlem. This 6.6-square-mile area with 336,000 colored inhabitants is the largest Negro community in the country. Always seething, Harlem now mirrors the excitements and tensions of the civil-rights movement. The pictures on these pages show some of the resentments and stirrings in Harlem.



who pay the same rent per room as Welfare families two blocks away. For most Harlem residents, their children's playgrounds are the street, where one can soon outgrow paddleball.

nantly whites (center, a clothing store on 125th Street), who live elsewhere. Even deliverymen in Harlem are generally whites, a fact noted bitterly by Harlem's unemployed.

struggle in the South has fostered a new feeling of common cause throughout the community. This sign advertising a fund-raising party is in the window of a Harlem bar.



HARLEM SCENE—The fire escape is a focal point of family life in summer. It offers whatever sun and air are to be had—a place to grow a plant; a place to play, safer than the street below.

Photographs by RICHARD SAUNDERS

in the second row, the text draws attention to "the white man" and the resentment that he has produced within this community, especially in his role—as the text explains—as "policeman," "landlord," and "delivery man." Similarly, the text below the third row of images details the "reactions" that have developed in response to these grievances, including, as the images are supposed to signify, black nationalism and the civil rights movement.

In addition to the three rows of images, the photo-essay includes an additional photograph positioned to their right along one-quarter of the two-page spread (figure 1.5). Three times larger than the other images, this photograph depicts a young black boy looking apprehensively out from behind the metal steps of a fire escape. Beneath the picture, the editors append the following caption: "Harlem Scene—The fire escape is a focal point of family life in summer. It offers whatever sun and air are to be had—a place to grow a plant, a place to play, safer than the street below."

Upon first glance this text seems to function, much like the text beneath the first row of images, as a way to draw attention to the impoverished conditions in which Harlem's children must live and play. Yet, a crucial difference remains. Even if the images in the first row do not literally depict Harlem's poverty, the text beneath them posits a direct relationship between the pictures' contents and the resentments that they have produced, thereby fixing the meaning of the images, at least within the context of this article, in terms of Harlem's anger. Though the text beneath the photograph of the boy and the fire escape addresses elements that are evident in the picture—some plants positioned off to the left side of the composition and a distant view of a street—the text fails to adequately explain how its main subject—a timid young black boy placed prominently within the photo-essay's layout—relates to the article's larger focus on "the resentments and stirrings in Harlem." Moreover, beyond stating that his location on the fire escape is safer than the street below, the text does not address why this young boy gazes apprehensively at the camera and, by extension, at the viewer. If the boy is indeed afraid of the street below, why is it not the subject of his gaze, and why do the people congregating on this street and the woman who engages with them from the window behind the boy seem more lively and dynamic than dangerous?

It is conceivable that the *New York Times Magazine* editors do not want readers to resolve this discrepancy because the boy's apprehension is actually meant to mirror the fears and concerns of their predominantly white readers. The text below the

Figure 1.5. Richard Saunders, *View of street from fire escape, Harlem*, c. 1960s. Courtesy of the Estate of Richard Saunders and Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

second row of images and also below the third row of images, depicting the "extremist" black nationalist movements "who preach hatred of whites," serves to corroborate this reading. Here, one could argue that, as film historian Richard Dyer has explained in relation to Toni Morrison's study of whiteness in American literature and Edward Said's writing on the construction of the Orient by the West, "white discourse implacably reduces the non-white subject to being a function of the white subject, not allowing her/him space or autonomy, permitting neither the recognition of similarities nor the acceptance of difference except as a means for knowing the white self."[30] Yet, despite the seductiveness of the reading, the problem with positioning the young black boy depicted in this photograph as a projection of white imaginings is that, much like the binary of positive/negative images, it assumes that the author of this image is white. However, like the photograph by Cottrol published in the *Time* photo-essay discussed earlier, a European American photographer did not take this photograph or any others in the photo-essay. Born in Bermuda and schooled in the United States, their author, Richard Saunders, is black.[31]

As these inconsistencies in the publication of the photographs by Cottrol and Saunders within *Time* and the *New York Times Magazine* suggest, in using the framework of positive/negative images, Porter and others assume that the sensational and often degrading images circulated by the mainstream print media are necessarily the product of "white" photographers, while the authors of "positive, even celebratory counter-images" are "black." Yet, as these examples clearly reveal, not all of the images circulated by the mainstream press, and through which it is assumed the general public formulated their largely negative opinions about Harlem and the people who live there, were taken by European American photographers. Moreover, given the apprehension of the young black boy to Saunders's camera, this photograph reveals that sharing a racial background with one's subjects did not necessarily also guarantee an innate ability to view Harlem from within or, using Porter's terms, "from the negro's point of view."

For Kamoinge member Beuford Smith, who lived in New York's Lower East Side but traveled frequently to photograph in Harlem, such discrepancies in the representation of Harlem were of great interest. This concern is particularly evident in a photograph that Smith took in 1965 of the National Memorial African Bookstore that Porter includes in the Kamoinge Workshop's "Harlem" portfolio in *Camera* (figure 1.6). As with others in this portfolio, in his accompanying text, Porter contrasts images

Figure 1.6. Beuford Smith, *Woman in doorway*, 1965. Courtesy of Beuford Smith/Césaire.

such as this one with the more "sensational" pictures of Harlem circulated by the print media, claiming that the Kamoinge members' intimate knowledge of Harlem gave them uncontested access to depict what Harlem was really like. While the meaning of Smith's photograph indeed depended on this larger field of representation, for Smith, this relationship did not presuppose that his image function as a positive image or that it depict his intimate knowledge of a place that he had never actually inhabited.

Despite the contradictions embedded within the *New York Times Magazine* photo-essay "Harlem is Angry," its focus on the rising protest movements occurring within this community reflected a growing fascination and fear within white America of a potentially explosive and extremist force in the African American struggle for civil rights, namely black nationalism and more particularly Black Muslims. For instance, for their 31 May 1963 issue, the editors at *Life* published a fourteen-page photo-essay about Black Muslims for which African American *Life* staff photographer Gordon Parks not only took the pictures but also contributed a personal account of the meaning of the Muslim movement to "America and to the American Negro—and to myself."[32] Here, in contrast to the editors at *Time* and the *New York Times Magazine*, who failed to disclose the racial background of Cottrol and Saunders for their photo-essays, at *Life* the editors make the racial background of Parks a central aspect of the story, even announcing on the front page of the magazine, "A Negro Photographer Shoots from Inside the Black Muslims."

Foregrounding Parks's race serves several purposes for *Life*'s coverage of the Black Muslims. First, given the separatist philosophy of this movement, it lends the story legitimacy, which a male European American photographer or reporter would be unable to replicate due to the color of his skin. Second, given Parks's assimilation within white America—which helped him to become the first African American staff photographer at *Life*—he could offer a perspective that, while sensitive to Black Muslims, also opposed them fundamentally. "And, I for one," writes Parks, "don't intend to join the Muslims. I sympathize with much of what they say, but I also disagree with much of what they say."[33] For European Americans, uneasy with as well as frightened and even angered by the deep and potentially violent rage of Black Muslims toward white America, Parks's opposition to them would serve to diffuse notions that all African Americans have succumbed to the ideology of black separatism. At the same time, the decidedly personal and self-reflexive nature of Parks's essay would have made it appealing to more than just a white American audience.

Parks's assimilation within white America's cultural and social structures and more specifically *Life* magazine, however, did not make him popular with a number of African American photographers, including members of the Kamoinge Workshop, who felt that he had failed to acknowledge the pervasive discrimination against African American photographers that existed within the mainstream presses, including *Life*.[34] Regardless of the accuracy of these accusations, they reveal some of the isola-

tion that Parks experienced in relation to the African American community. Parks uses his personal account of the Black Muslims in *Life* to explore some of the complexities of this relationship. In his essay, for instance, Parks recalls with extraordinary honesty the mixed emotions that he experienced living as "a Black Man in White Man's Clothing." Parks elucidates: "Eventually I found myself on a plateau of loneliness, not knowing really where I belonged. In one world I was a social oddity. In the other I was almost a stranger."[35] Here Parks articulates his efforts to negotiate the complexity between his singular and collective selves and the contradictory set of emotions that it has produced in him. This complexity included his experiences growing up in poverty in Chicago's infamous Black Belt, his isolation from African American communities like Harlem, and his professional ambitions, uncertainties, and successes within white America. For Parks, more than addressing the meaning of Black Muslims in America, this essay gave him the opportunity to navigate the contradictory relationship that he as an individual shared with the collectivity represented by this movement—"Although I won't allow them to be my keeper, I am, inherently their brother"[36]—and more generally his race.

Like Parks, Beuford Smith was also interested in using black nationalism as a vehicle for exploring the complexity between individual and collective notions of selfhood. But, not having the same access that Parks as a *Life* photographer had to such Black Muslims as Elijah Muhammad or Malcolm X, Smith instead turned, for his photograph, to the community of Harlem and more specifically to one of its centers of black nationalism at that time, Lewis Micheaux's National Memorial African Bookstore.[37] Also known as the "House of Common Sense and Home of Proper Propaganda," this landmark, located on 125th Street and Seventh Avenue in Harlem, served as a frequent meeting and rallying place—both inside as well as outside the store at the intersection called Harlem Square—for Malcolm X and other black nationalist leaders and activists as well as students, scholars, African diplomats, and politicians during the 1960s.[38] The Afro-centric images and posters that lined the facade of this building also made it a popular subject for photographers, with numerous images of this bookstore appearing in a range of mainstream as well as African American publications during the 1960s.[39] While these images served a variety of functions, they all generally used the nationalistic propaganda lining its facade—as is the case of a photograph of the bookstore taken by a United Press International (UPI) photographer in 1964 (figure 1.7)—to signify the unity and homogeneity of Harlem's rising black nationalism.

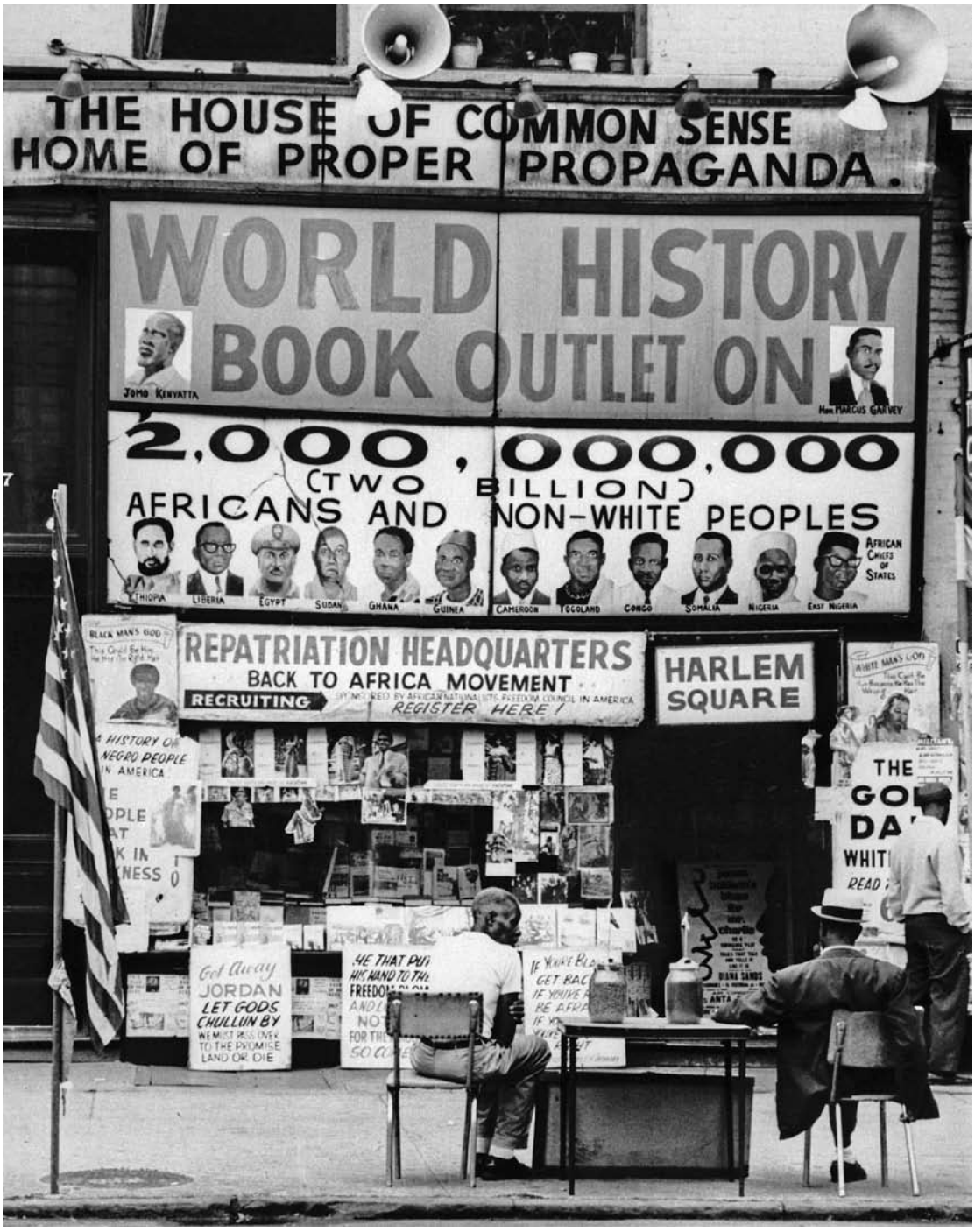


Figure 1.7. House of Common Sense and Home of Proper Propaganda, 24 July 1964. © Bettmann/ CORBIS.

This well-known and frequently reproduced bookstore image also interested Beuford Smith. Yet, in contrast to the UPI photograph in which the bookstore's facade fills the entire frame, only a corner of the building is legible in Smith's composition. As a result of this framing device, the viewer is encouraged to read the bookstore and its facade in relation to an elderly black woman who sits alone in the darkened doorway to the left of the building. The horizontality of Smith's picture adds to this effect. While the verticality of the UPI photograph draws attention away from the figures in the foreground to the stacked blocks of nationalistic images and posters in the background, the horizontality of Smith's image gives the elderly woman and the void in which she sits equal weight to that of the nationalistic imagery surrounding her. This compositional device creates a relationship between the two. Leaning her head against the doorway with her glasses hanging around her neck and a closed book in her lap, the woman in Smith's image appears tired and unenthusiastic, in stark contrast to the energetic assortment of images and texts next to her.

Capitalizing on the bookstore's nationalistic connotations, and particularly those evoked by the posters and images on its facade, Smith uses these associations to elicit meaning in his photograph. Having begun his photographic career as a photojournalist for the *Amsterdam News*, Smith had firsthand experience of some of the limitations of photojournalism and in particular its endorsement of photography's transparency.[40] Building on this experience, Smith considered how he might encourage the viewer to look *at* rather than *through* his photograph.[41] By slightly altering his view of the National Memorial African Bookstore, Smith modifies the viewer's assumptions of what this landmark signifies about black nationalism. While an image like the UPI photograph seems to impartially illustrate the facade of the bookstore and, by extension, the homogeneity of Harlem's black nationalistic community, Smith refocuses the viewer's attention on the discontinuity between the bookstore's collective nationalist agenda and the individuals, especially the community of elders, who also lived in Harlem. Through his juxtaposition of the woman and the bookstore, Smith encourages the viewer to both reconsider terms like black nationalism as a set of relational, as opposed to fixed, associations and to think more carefully about the complex relationship of this movement to Harlem and to the individuals who live as well as travel there, including himself. Larry Neal, one of the major theorists of the Black Arts Movement, offers a contemporary corollary of this understanding of the National Memorial African Bookstore as symbolizing the variability of black nationalism when, on a trip from

Philadelphia to New York City in the early 1960s, he characterized the square in front of Micheaux's bookstore as a place where "One could feel emanating all of the necessary, but conflicting strands of African-American nationalism."[42]

Smith's reliance on widely held assumptions about Harlem and black nationalism circulated by the print media to generate meaning in his photograph is thus quite different than merely substituting a positive image for a negative one. Instead of presenting Harlem, as Porter claims, from "the negro point of view of the negro's life," Smith, in a manner similar to Herbert Randall, uses his photograph to complicate the narrow and frequently judgmental terms through which Harlem and African Americans in general were defined in the print media. Smith explains: "Part of the purpose of my work is to challenge the general public's understanding of black America then as well as currently."[43] By aligning Smith's image as the product of an "insider" whose relationship to Harlem is seamless, Porter overlooks this meaning and dismisses important complexities that Smith explores about Harlem and its relationship to individual and collective notions of selfhood.

Besides "presenting Harlem through the eyes of inhabitants," in his accompanying essay, Porter also claims that the primary aim of the Workshop "was not the publication of their pictures; they wanted to exhibit their work throughout the area and to display it to the people whom it concerned,"[44] namely the people of Harlem. Here Porter assumes that the Kamoinge members worked in a self-imposed isolation from the rest of American society. Yet, as Albert Fennar recalls, the Workshop sought to be more than *just* a voice of the Harlem community: "We wanted to be available but not exclusively for the black community. We were also interested in being seen by the world at large."[45] In this statement, Fennar attests to the Kamoinge members' interest in having their images circulate beyond the confines of the Harlem community.

At the same time, many of the members of Kamoinge felt strong emotional attachments to Harlem, and the Workshop even rented a gallery space there between 1964 and 1965. This gallery, known as the Kamoinge Gallery, was located in a brownstone at 248 West 139th Street in a part of Harlem known as Striver's Row. The Kamoinge members used this space as both a meeting place and an exhibition venue. Yet, while their gallery was located in Harlem, most of the members of the Workshop neither lived there nor photographed exclusively in this neighborhood. Kamoinge member Beuford Smith recalls: "I never lived in Harlem. I lived on the Lower East Side but I wasn't part of any art movement there either. I would just go to Harlem to photograph

but I also took photographs of the Lower East Side."[46] Here Smith suggests that the Workshop did not intend Harlem to function as their only subject matter or as the exclusive audience of their work. The racially mixed group of visitors to the Kamoinge Gallery substantiates this objective. In addition to MoMA photography curator John Szarkowski and photojournalist Henri Cartier-Bresson, South African photojournalist Peter Magubane, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) photojournalist Tamio Wakayama, playwright George Bass, poet and playwright Langston Hughes, and former *Camera* magazine editor Romeo Martinez, among others, are said to have visited the gallery.[47]

In positioning Harlem as the primary audience and singular subject matter of the Kamoinge Workshop, Porter fixes the Kamoinge members' photographs as the product of a collective expression and overlooks the often-contradictory class- and gender-based social relations that actually existed between the individual members and those living in the community of Harlem.[48] For instance, although a number of the Kamoinge members felt an emotional affinity toward Harlem and those who lived there, the mostly white-collar, professional-class community of Striver's Row did not necessarily reciprocate this sentiment. In fact, a number of members from this community actively criticized images displayed at the two exhibitions held at the Kamoinge Gallery.[49] Fennar recalls: "There were a lot of people on that street who were middle class people who belonged to churches. A lot of women [sic]. They were all organized in that block. And they came to the gallery and they took offense at this one photograph."[50] Here Fennar refers to an image of a black nude woman, by Kamoinge member Shawn Walker and on display as part of the Workshop's 1965 exhibition *The Negro Woman*, which a number of members from the Striver's Row community as well as from the Kamoinge Workshop found objectionable. While the exact circumstances surrounding the disagreement over the supposed graphic content of this photograph as well as its contribution to the ensuing closing of the Kamoinge Gallery remain unclear, the controversy generated by this image suggests that the relationship between the members of Kamoinge and the Harlem community was, unlike Porter assumed, neither seamless nor uncomplicated.[51]

This controversy brings up another important yet often unspoken aspect of the Kamoinge Workshop, namely its complex relationship to issues of gender. Even though Porter and others have posited the members of this group as "insiders" who "expound upon their individual themes with sympathy and understanding,"[52] it was

not until the early 1970s that the all-male Kamoinge Workshop had its first female member, Ming Smith (later Murray). According to several members, this exclusion was largely a function of the group not knowing any African American women photographers whom they could invite to join the group.[53] The implicit power relationship embedded within this statement is further substantiated by the male-centered terms through which Smith became the first woman member of the Kamoinge Workshop, namely her relationship with member Anthony Barboza, who introduced her and her work to the group.[54]

At the same time, despite these principally male-dominated early membership practices of the Kamoinge Workshop, gender remained a contested topic within the group. For instance, Kamoinge member Albert Fennar, who studied photography in the late 1950s in Japan while serving a three-year tour of duty for the U.S. Air Force, often used his Japanese wife as the subject of his photographs. This subject matter, however, posed problems for certain members. As Kamoinge member Beuford Smith recalls, "one member was married to a Japanese woman, and should photographs of his wife be in [*The Negro Woman*]? Or should we exclude Al because this is a show about the Negro woman?"[55] Here Smith calls attention to the manner in which gender brought dissention within the group over what it means to be black and to represent "blackness."

The fracturing that gender caused within the Kamoinge Workshop is also apparent in Porter's inclusion of a photograph by Herbert Randall of a cropped torso of a partially nude, black female subject in the Kamoinge Workshop's "Harlem" portfolio in *Camera* (figure 1.8). Besides cropping off her head, Randall depicts his subject with a textured cloth provocatively draped around her body, the patterned weave of which provides an evocative contrast to the woman's sensually highlighted skin. The manner in which this cloth is held loosely under her breast serves at once to draw attention to, yet conceal, the forms of her breasts. Through these compositional devices, Randall heightens the visual appeal of the woman's nude, black body, effectively reducing her to an aestheticized and eroticized object. Given the care that Randall used in his previous photograph of the children and their impoverished surroundings (see figure 1.2) to complicate the manner in which Harlem's poverty had been pigeonholed in racial, gender-, and class-based terms, the overt objectification of this woman seems contradictory.

To some, given the previous subordination of women within the membership

Figure 1.8. Herbert Randall, *Nude*, 1962. Courtesy of the artist.

practices of the Kamoinge Workshop, the "othering" of this black woman by Randall may seem to provide further evidence of the group's sexism. Other forms of subjugation and oppression of African American women taking place at this time would support this reading. For instance, in their August 1966 issue, the editors at the African American magazine *Ebony* published a special issue on the "Negro Woman." While many of the articles in this issue address the historical contributions of African American women to such activities as voting rights, art making, and intellectual and political thought, the editors nonetheless couched these accolades within the past, reminding readers that "the immediate goal of the Negro woman today should be the establishment of a strong family unit in which the father is the dominant person."[56] To visually substantiate this objective, the editors at *Ebony* end this special issue with a full-page photograph by Norman L. Hunter that depicts Lillian Gregory, the wife of African American comedian and activist Dick Gregory, sitting in either a living or family room (an open record player is adjacent to her) with four of her eventual ten children (figure 1.9).[57] On her lap she holds her baby, and surrounding her are three more young children, their arms extended toward her to create a unified whole. The editors use this depiction as visual evidence of the "future" responsibilities of African American women, particularly those in the middle class: "She must help the Negro family become an effective and productive unit so that the Negro can take full advantage of burgeoning opportunities. She must offer wise counsel and guidance to her husband and children and yet remain a wife and mother instead of an iron-handed family boss."[58]

In claiming that her family and husband should be the primary concerns of African American women, the editors at *Ebony* responded to ideas about the pathological nature of the mother-dominated African American family, perpetuated in Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel P. Moynihan's controversial 1965 report, *The Negro Family: A Case Study for National Action*, popularly known as the "Moynihan Report."[59] In this report, widely sensationalized in part because of the manner in which its contents were leaked to certain journalists before being distributed to the press, Moynihan—building on the work of individuals such as E. Franklin Frazier, Stanley Elkins, Thomas Pettigrew, and Kenneth Clark who argued that since slavery, African American males had been denied a stable position in the economic system—posited a causal relationship between the relative educational and professional achievements of African American women and the failure, including criminal behavior and emascula-

Figure 1.9. Photograph of Lillian Gregory, in "For a Better Future," *Ebony*, August 1966.

tion, of African American men. In short, African American women who control and dominate their men essentially became responsible for the instability and ultimate breakdown of the African American family.[60] As Julius Horwitz reports in his article, "The Arithmetic of Delinquency," in the 31 January 1965 issue of the *New York Times Magazine*: "the damage to the [black] infant . . . takes place when the unavailable mother brings her child home from the hospital and realizes she hates him for being alive."[61]

In focusing on the value of black matriarchy to African American history, the editors at *Ebony* use this special issue on the "Negro Woman" to counter the damaging depiction of African American women perpetuated within the Moynihan Report. At the same time, as editors of a magazine that helped to define the values of a black middle-class lifestyle for African Americans, rather than categorically refute black matriarchy, they realigned it so that rather than symbolize the "bad" matriarch in the Moynihan Report, she now symbolized the "good" matriarch whose self-sacrifice and devotion ensured that African American men could become "effective" and "productive" providers for their families.[62] What, of course, those editors failed to realize is that in replacing a so-called negative "white-created" stereotype with a positive "black" one, they merely replicated the unhelpful and controlling binaries of positive/negative and black/white, instead of rethinking the normative sexual politics and power relationships in which terms such as black masculinity and black femininity were constructed and perpetuated.

In depicting his black female subject as an aestheticized nude and not as a mother or wife, Herbert Randall's photograph, while relying on these representations, at the same time offers a different approach to the African American woman than disseminated in either the Moynihan Report or in *Ebony*. One may criticize Randall for diminishing this black woman to an object of aesthetic and erotic pleasure, given the dearth of images of the black female nude in the history of Western art as well as her reduction, especially within the field of photography, to the status of ethnographic object. Nevertheless one could also commend Randall for transforming her into an object of sensual beauty whose nude body transcends contemporary controversies transpiring within the mainstream black and white media about the status of African American women and their place within the African American family.[63] In short, this photograph functions—as noted by art historian Judith Wilson writing about the nudes of Romare Bearden—as a kind of "recuperative project" in which black beauty

and more important black eroticism are reinscribed onto the previously erased, marginalized, and fetishized black female nude body.[64]

For Randall, whose own masculinity was also defined through these controversies over the nature of black matriarchy and its relationship to the African American family, his depiction of this African American woman through the vocabulary of an aestheticized and eroticized nude offered a way for him to transcend contemporary discussions of black manhood that posited his own sense of self in a necessarily antagonistic and controlling relationship to African American women: they are either to blame for the failure of their African American men or they must sacrifice themselves for them. By celebrating the beauty and sensuality of this black female subject, Randall reenvisioned black masculinity as still intimately tied to black matriarchy, but just not in the debilitating terms perpetuated by the mass media and in the social sciences. In short, his photograph of this black female subject allowed Randall a way to move beyond normative premises and prescriptions of black masculinity that were so incapacitating to both African American men and women.

Of course, it is arguable whether in using the vocabulary of the aestheticized and eroticized Western nude, Randall actually escapes these normative depictions of black manhood or whether he further empties this black female subject of her agency and selfhood. Yet, I would argue that it is precisely these multiple even contradictory readings that lend this image its power. Moreover, they again reiterate the extent to which Allan Porter's efforts to look solely to a photographer's race or "insider" status will never sufficiently answer the complex questions about identification and objectification raised by this image. In fact, if anything, Randall's image reveals that the relationships photographers and viewers share with the black subjects of these photographs in the portfolio "Harlem" are neither essential nor uncomplicated and that their racial meanings cannot be separated from the larger social relations and historical context in which they are embedded.

The Self in the World

In using the binary of positive/negative images, Allan Porter thus overlooks the complex ways in which the photographs that he selected for the "Harlem" portfolio engaged and negotiated, rather than contested and replaced, the images and accompanying ideas about race and selfhood that circulated contemporaneously in the mainstream print media. His use of this framework also pigeonholed the authors of these images

relative to the closely related binaries of black/white and insider/outsider. In so doing, Porter failed to realize that by letting go of the question of whether or not an image represents Harlem from the perspective of an emotionally invested, black "insider" or a detached, white "outsider," a different reading emerges, one that begins to take into account the ways in which the racial meanings of an image are formed and transformed according to the complex and even contradictory intersubjective relationships of photographers and their subjects.[65]

To clarify this distinction, it is helpful to return for a moment to Richard Saunders's photograph of the boy and the fire escape and the question of what exactly accounts for the anxiety the boy projects at the camera (see figure 1.5). Looking more carefully at the relationship between photographer and subject offers a different way to think about the racial meaning of this image. A close formal reading of the picture suggests that the young black boy is not cowering from the supposedly dangerous Harlem street below him nor does he serve as a substitute for the fears of his white readers. Instead, the boy's apprehension is a response to Saunders's camera. Conversely, while the boy attempts to hide from Saunders's camera, the manner in which he gazes explicitly at Saunders from in between the steps of the fire escape suggests his attraction to and/or curiosity about being photographed. As a result of this interaction between photographer and subject, this image moves beyond an illustration of the effects of Harlem's anger on either blacks or whites to an exploration of how the shared racial background of photographer and subject complicates the assumed racial meaning of this image. It is precisely the complexity that the dialogical relationship between photographers and subjects brings to the representation of race that the binary interpretative framework of positive/negative images and its correlatives insider/outsider and black/white overlooks.

For Kamoinge member Louis Draper, exploring the nature of the complicated and, at times ambiguous, intersubjective relations between photographers and subjects was a fundamental aspect of his practice. But he used this relationship not only to explore the ways in which the racial meanings of his photographs were shaped and reshaped according to the social dynamics of these interactions, but, more important, to suggest the ways in which his presence as a an African American photographer and the formal choices that he made in composing his images, collided and colluded with this network of social relations as well. To begin to explore this complex set of dynamics, Draper frequently turned his camera on black subjects. While this subject

matter may at first seem to substantiate Porter's efforts to read the Kamoinge members' images as the product of "the negro point of view of the negro's life," for Draper, it was his studies in the late 1950s with European American photographers Harold Feinstein and W. Eugene Smith, more than his race, which initially defined the terms of this approach.

Louis Draper first became interested in photography while attending Virginia State College in the mid-1950s. There he came across a copy of Edward Steichen's 1955 exhibition catalogue *The Family of Man*, whose images, and Robert Frank's photographs in particular, so impressed him that, in lieu of studying for an exam he was due to take the next morning, he stayed up all night perusing the catalogue. Besides inspiring him to pursue a career in photography, Draper's encounter with Steichen's catalogue also provided the impetus for him to leave Virginia State, which did not offer a photography degree, and seek instruction in New York City, where he enrolled in a photography course at the New York Institute of Photography. Yet, dissatisfied with the lack of guidance offered by this course, Draper quickly switched into an independent photography workshop offered by Harold Feinstein.[66]

As part of this workshop, Feinstein encouraged his students to photograph subjects with whom they felt a deep emotional affinity. He explains,

> Where do I go to photograph? This important question is asked me by many students. . . . And, I tell them, you must photograph where you are involved; where you are overwhelmed by what you see before you; where you hold your breath while releasing the shutter, not because you are afraid of jarring the camera, but because you are seeing with your guts wide open to the sweet pain of an image that is part of your life.[67]

The emphasis that Feinstein placed on "photograph[ing] where you are involved" as well as the prominence that he gave to technical skills became foundational in Draper's development as a photographer. Another important resource provided by Feinstein's workshop was the frequency of guest teachers, including Feinstein's friend, the noted photojournalist W. Eugene Smith, who so impressed Draper that in October 1958, he enrolled in a course for working professionals entitled "Photography Made Difficult" that Smith was teaching at the New School for Social Research. Defined by Smith as an "experiment," the class went against the grain of most photographic education. As part of the class, for instance, Smith emphasized the impor-

tance of a photographer's personal point of view. Smith clarifies this intention in his course description: "Photography holds the merest ghost of literality. It is not simple and, as in all the arts, it is the interpreter who determines the depth of its honesty and the degree of significance of its realism."[68]

Believing that photographers are never "objective," Smith, like Feinstein, encouraged his students to let their individual emotions guide their photographic practices. For Draper, this approach necessitated photographing black subjects, a focus Draper has noted that Smith as well as Feinstein supported:

> To their credit, both Gene and Harold were very sympathetic. I did not shy away from bringing black work to either of them because they both believed that one should photograph where your emotions are and that is something that I knew about. I didn't know about Wall Street.[69]

In making this statement about his affinity to black subjects, Draper seems to suggest that as an African American, or, using Porter's terminology, as an "insider," he inherently knew this subject matter best. But, even though Draper, as an African American, felt an emotional infinity toward the black subjects in his photographs, his relationship to these individuals was anything but essential.

In a photograph included in the "Harlem" portfolio, which Porter selected to be reproduced as the cover of the July 1966 issue of *Camera*, Draper arranges the subjects of his composition along a diagonal (figure 1.10). The woman in the left-hand side of Draper's picture holds one arm up to her chin, the seated man in the lower right-hand corner slightly cocks his head while holding a cigarette in his clasped hands, and the standing man in the middle of the composition rests his hands on his lower back as if in anticipation of the shot. The composed qualities of these postures initially suggest a visual affinity with the work of Draper's teacher W. Eugene Smith. Known for immersing himself in the lives of his subjects in order to depict them with honesty and sincerity, Smith also frequently carefully posed his subjects to visually communicate his intimate knowledge of them.[70] For instance, in a picture from his photo-essay "Nurse Midwife: Maude Callen Eases Pain of Birth, Life and Death," which Smith used in his teaching, he moved the bed away from the wall and brought in a kerosene lamp to call attention to the relationship between Callen and her patient as well as the details on the expectant mother's face (figure 1.11).[71] According to Smith, these aesthetic choices attested to the honesty and sincerity with which he

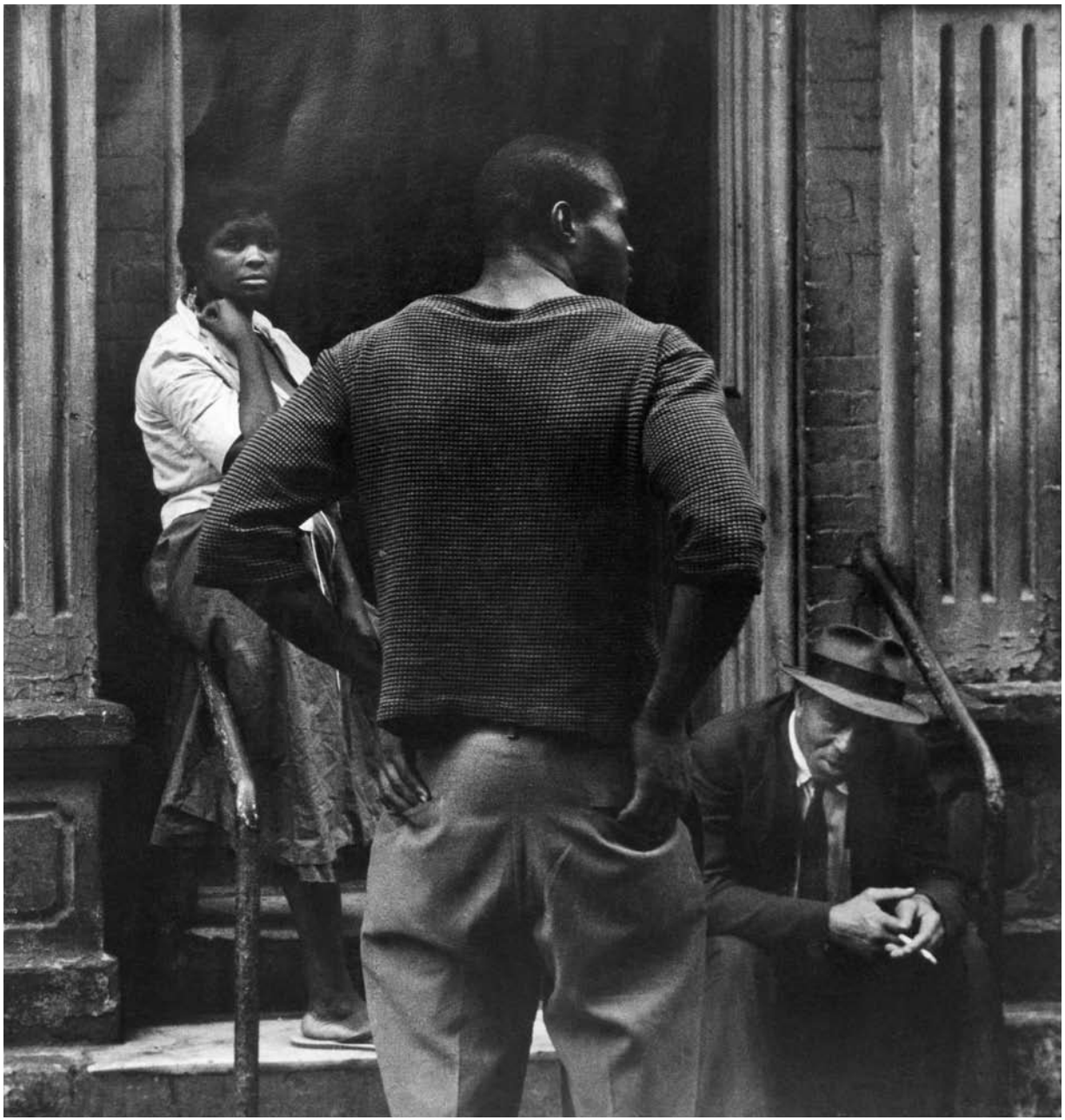


Figure 1.10. Louis Draper, *John Henry*, 1960. Courtesy of Nell Draper-Winston and Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.

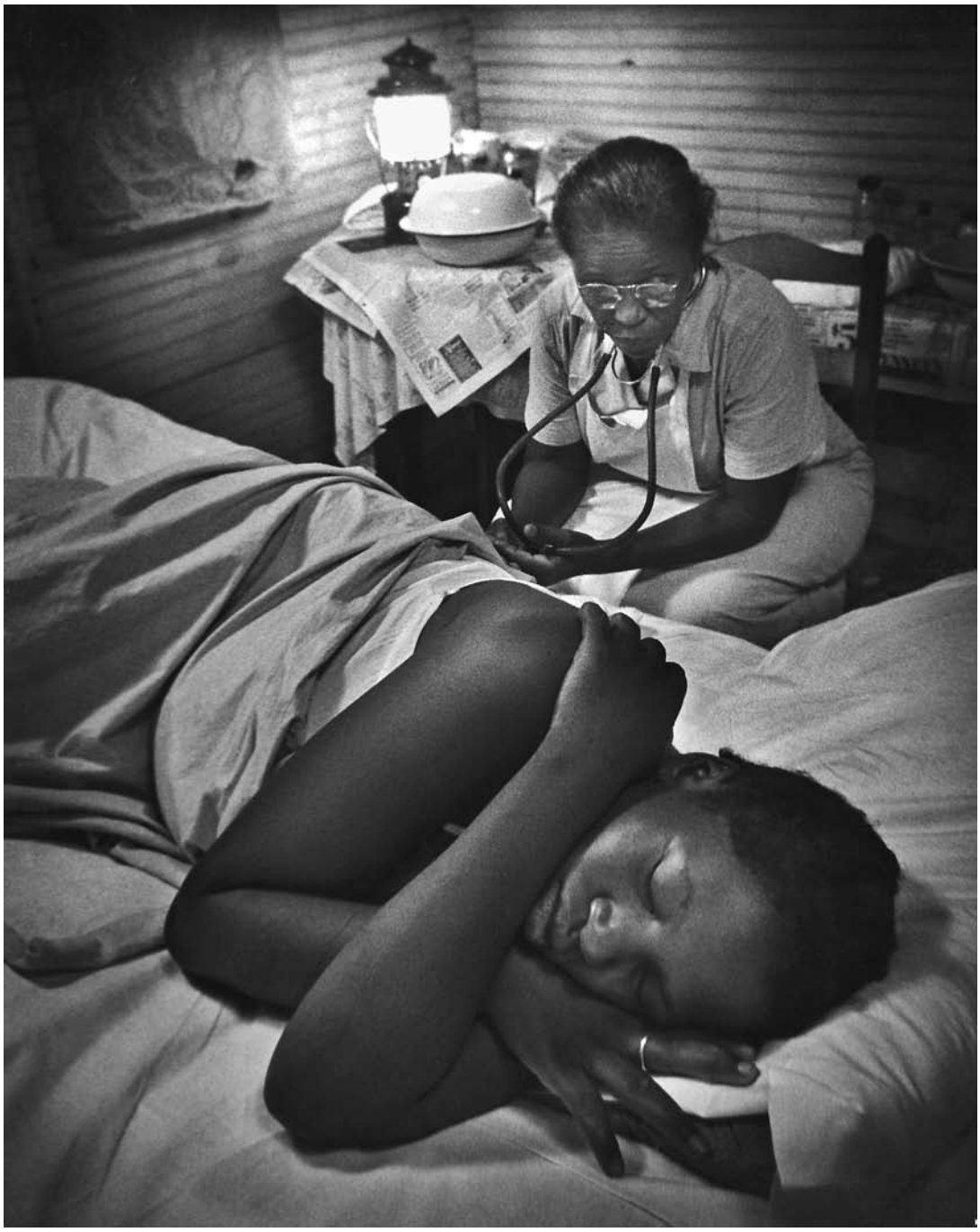


Figure 1.11. W. Eugene Smith, Nurse/midwife Maude Callen attending a woman in labor, 3 December 1951. W. Eugene Smith/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images.

approached his subjects: "I feel that I was less dishonest in interfering in this fashion. I was trying to interpret a situation, and I don't make these moves until I understand enough. I can never say that I was arriving at the truth; I can only say that I am trying to be honest."[72]

Draper, too, was well acquainted with the site where he took his photograph from the "Harlem" portfolio; it was only a few blocks from his home in New York City's Lower East Side. This intimacy, however, did not extend to the individuals in his picture. Even though Draper felt an emotional affinity toward them, he did not personally know any of the individuals whom he depicted,[73] unlike Smith—who for his "Nurse Midwife" photo-essay spent time getting to know Callen and, to acquaint himself with the nurse midwife profession, also read nurses' instruction manuals, spent weeks traveling around South Carolina meeting midwifes, and even enrolled in a course in midwifery. Moreover, Draper recalls feeling a sense of fear, not comfort, when he took the photograph. He explains that the man in the foreground "kind of scared me. I shot him with his back turned. I hoped that the woman would not alert him to turn around and holler at me for having made the picture."[74]

This is not to say that Draper photographed the black subjects in his picture, in Porter's terms, as an "outsider." Adopting a more spontaneous approach than allowed for by the prolonged periods of time that Smith spent with his subjects, Draper instead sought to incorporate his subjects' responses into his picture: "I was more interested in [my subjects'] reactions to the work process . . . I never gave them indication. Most of them were done anonymously. Not because I wanted to expose anything. In fact I was looking for the humanistic elements."[75] Here Draper suggests his interest not only in breaking down the subject/object hierarchy of seeing/being seen that Smith's intimacy establishes between photographers and their subjects, but also in coming to terms with those "humanistic elements," or the ways in which our experiences of our selves and our interactions with others are shaped by the frequently contradictory terms, including the racial dimensions, of these intersubjective relations.

Here, again, Draper diverged substantially from W. Eugene Smith. For Smith, the emotional affinity that he established with his subjects not only permitted him to represent them more honestly but also enabled him to gain their trust, especially when his subjects did not share his racial background. This was the case for his photo-essay on Maude Callen. Smith recalls that "it didn't matter whether I took one camera or five because the shock of *their* seeing a white man with any kind of camera coming

across toward their shack was traumatic." Yet, Smith realized that since "they had such a reverence or love for the midwife," if he had Callen's trust and friendship, she could put those uncertainties at ease by saying, "'This is Mr. Smith. He's a friend of mine. We are working together.'"[76] In using a more spontaneous approach in his photograph than allowed for by the focused emotionality of Smith, Draper sought to explore instead of "put at ease" such racially informed "uncertainties" in the intersubjective relations between himself and his black subjects.

In turning to spontaneity as a means to negotiate his sense of self in the world, Draper looked in particular to the photographic production of Robert Frank. Familiar with Frank's seminal 1959 publication *The Americans*, as well as Frank's earlier photojournalistic work, Draper appreciated Frank's seemingly uninhibited approach to photography:

> Frank works very freely. I liked his use of scattered details and lots of grain, the freedom of his work. He showed me that it doesn't have to be a fine print all the time. You can get messy . . . Frank was such a let it all hang out kind of guy.[77]

This appreciation of the spontaneity and abandon of Frank's approach notwithstanding, Draper still struggled with the problem of how to integrate Frank's lack of restraint with the emotional investment, both personally and aesthetically, that he had learned from Smith: "Frank was for a long time one of my favorite photographers. However, I had difficulty reconciling Frank's approach with Eugene Smith who had been my biggest influence."[78] Here Draper seems to uphold the traditional binary represented by these two photographers.

Because of Frank's lack of restraint and the assumed emotional disinterest that produced it, photography historians and curators also often position him as the precursor of high modernist photography. In contrast, they relegate the emotionality and by extension carefully planned compositions of Smith primarily to discussions of photojournalism.[79] Draper's discussion of Frank also seems to prescribe him as a detached "outsider." However, in using the word "reconcile" to describe his efforts to integrate Frank's approach with that of Smith's, one realizes that Draper sought not to uphold the binary represented by these two photographers but rather to overcome it by assimilating these two seemingly divergent approaches into his single photographic practice. For Draper, then, the emotionality of Smith and the spontaneity of Frank were equally critical to his photographic production and, more particularly, to his in-

terest in using photography's intersubjective potential to understand how his sense of self is negotiated in terms of the social relations of the world.

Draper's decision to photograph black subjects, individuals with whom he identified emotionally, reflected the influence of Smith. At the same time, realizing that his choice and presentation of subject matter is never neutral and that he could not ignore the manner in which his position as a black photographer and the aesthetic choices that he made influenced his representations, Draper, rather than attempt to speak honestly for his black subjects, used them to understand how his presence and intentions influence, and are influenced by, his social interactions in the world. "Expressing yourself is a by-product of expressing your subject," explains Draper, "And in expressing your subject there is the whole coming together of what it is that shapes you, what it is that has caused you to be the kind of person that you are, and select the kind of material to work with that you do."[80] Here Draper alludes to an issue that remained central to his production: how to use photography's dialogical potential to negotiate his sense of self in terms of the social world.

Like Draper, Robert Frank was also interested in using photography's intersubjective potential to explore the personal and social dimensions of his selfhood. In contrast to Draper, however, who retained a fundamental belief in photography as a medium of social communication, Frank became increasingly suspicious of photography's ability to transcend what he assumed to be the nonsocial and nonverbal world of his private self. As Frank famously stated in 1957, "It is always the instantaneous reaction to oneself that produces a photograph."[81] This understanding of photography's inadequacy as a system of intersubjective exchange is also evident in Frank's approach to the black subjects in his photographs from *The Americans*.

A number of scholars have commented on Frank's use of black subjects in *The Americans*.[82] Historian George Cotkin, for instance, argues that for Frank, the marginalized position of African Americans within U.S. society functioned as a symbol of liberation and free will: "Black Americans became for Frank the representation of authenticity and possibility, of freedom; they appeared apart from society but not alienated from themselves, occupying a space that allowed them strong expression of emotions, feelings and spontaneity."[83] Here Cotkin, locating Frank within the Beat-Hipster tradition, asserts that Frank used his representations of black subjects in *The Americans* to express the potential to break free from the constraints and repression of 1950s culture and society.[84]

In situating Frank's photographs of black subjects within the Beat tradition, Cotkin relies on Frank's close friendship with various members of the Beats and his collaborations with Jack Kerouac in particular.[85] Frank's alleged position as an "outsider" also plays a significant role in Cotkin's categorization of Frank as a "kindred spirit" of the Beats.[86] Interestingly, however, unlike most scholars who characterize Frank as an "outsider," Cotkin attributes Frank's marginalization and feelings of alienation to his relationship with the photographic medium and not simply to his position as a Swiss Jewish immigrant. Frank corroborates this association: "That feeling of being a stranger—it has to do with years of photography, where you walk around, you observe, and you walk away."[87] In this statement, like Cotkin, Frank locates his feelings of estrangement in the medium of photography as opposed to his ethnicity or nationality.[88]

In ascribing Frank's alienation as contingent upon his relationship to the photographic medium, Cotkin offers a way of thinking about Frank beyond the usual binary framework of insider/outsider.[89] At the same time, Cotkin never considers the implication of this assertion beyond using it as evidence of Frank's intrinsic ties to the Beats. For instance, Cotkin interprets a photograph from *The Americans* entitled *San Francisco*, in which Frank depicts a black couple who turn their heads to stare angrily at the camera, as evidence of the "strong feelings" of African Americans.[106] Here Cotkin, completely ignoring his previous assertion about the contingency of Frank's estrangement, uses the image as further proof of *The Americans* as "a photographic analogue to the Beat-Hipster vision of America."[91]

Yet, if one places Frank's affinity to the Beats and the issue of his "outsider" status aside for a moment and instead considers *San Francisco* in terms of Frank's relationship to the medium of photography, a different reading emerges. Looking at this photograph in these terms, one notices that Frank is actually trying to communicate with his black subjects intersubjectively. Accordingly, the disturbed gazes of the couple suggest not the supposed "freedom" of African Americans but the inability of Frank to establish any sort of reciprocity between himself and them, as Frank's own response to this image reiterates: "it expressed how it feels to be a photographer and suddenly be confronted with that look of, *You bastard, what are you doing!*"[92] The manner in which the couples' bodies are cut off by the bottom edge of the frame adds to this effect. In contrast to the uniform sky and cityscape depicted in the top half of the picture, the dismembered figures, placed in the bottom quarter of the composition, seem oddly out of place. One wonders, why did Frank choose to include the

nondescript sky in the top portion of his picture and cut off the figures in the bottom? This choice of emphasis and the seeming abandon which one assumes produced it creates disjunction within the composition and serves to intensify the tension, socially, temporally, as well as racially between the white European Frank and his black American subjects.

In using the formal dissonance in *San Francisco* to suggest his position as an unwelcome intruder, Frank calls attention to the limitation of the photographic medium as a vehicle of communication, particularly an intersubjective one. Frank's abrupt rejection of still photography for film after the publication of *The Americans* underscores Frank's distrust of the dialogical potential of photography.[93] The question as to what led Frank to give up still photography in the early 1960s and devote his attention to filmmaking has perplexed many. Some of the conventional responses to this question include that Frank, rattled over his growing popularity, turned to the more challenging medium of filmmaking, or that, having said all that he could through photography, Frank turned to another medium, film.[94] Photographer Tod Papageorge offers a more interesting response. He argues that while Frank intended *The Americans* to function on a social level, in his subsequent films, his art making turned increasingly introspective and personal: "The films [Frank] has made since then support this idea that he is a man with a self, and not a world, to describe."[95] Here Papageorge describes a shift in Frank's work from the social to the private, one already anticipated by Frank's *San Francisco*, in which, rather than speak on behalf of his subjects, he uses them to express his inability to engage in the world on a social level "It's very hard to get away from myself," explains Frank, "It seems, almost, that's all I have."[96] The irritated gazes of the figures in *San Francisco* as well as their literal dismemberment allude to the difficulty that Frank experienced in his efforts to engage the world in social terms. Unable to overcome the camera's implicit aggression or his position as a detached observer, *San Francisco* reveals the futility and accompanying "anguish"—as art historian Blake Stimson argues—that Frank felt in his effort to negotiate the relational space between his private self and the social world. "That reaching across this gap between self and world," writes Stimson, "was anguished for Frank, and therefore his project held onto its subjective moment, its mirror moment, its moment of the experience of inadequacy."[97]

The abandon and supposed immediacy of photographs like *San Francisco* generated much controversy in the photography world, particularly when they were first

reproduced. For example, in his review of *The Americans*, *Popular Photography* editor James Zanutto complains,

> It seems as if [Frank] merely points the camera in the direction he wishes to shoot and doesn't worry about exposure, composition, and less considerations. If you dig out-of-focus pictures, intense and unnecessary grain, converging verticals, a total absence of normal composition, and a relaxed, snapshot quality, then Robert Frank is for you.[98]

Here Zanutto attacks Frank based on the standards of photographic aesthetics as set forth by the high clarity, focus, and balanced compositions of photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson. Ironically, it was precisely the concern for formal issues voiced by Cartier-Bresson that Frank sought to position himself against: "[Cartier-Bresson] traveled all over the goddamned world, and you never felt that he was moved by something that was happening other than the beauty of it, or just the composition."[99] In this passage, Frank criticizes Cartier-Bresson for emphasizing the formal qualities of his pictures, an approach whose aestheticism Frank necessarily associated with indifference and a disassociation from "life." "I'm not interested in taking a beautiful photograph," Frank explains, "I don't believe in it anymore—beauty, aesthetics. . . . To me photography is life. It has to deal with life."[100] Here Frank posits "life" as something that is not structured by established societal rules, standards, or boundaries. In short, in incorporating blur, grain, the use of available light, and the cutting off of objects by the frame, Frank sought to use his photographs to release himself as well as the medium from the world of social determination.

For Louis Draper, removing himself or his photographs from the world of social meaning was simply impossible. This is because, while Frank's alienation from the social world reflected his increased awareness of the inadequacy of photography as a system of intersubjective exchange, Draper still fundamentally believed in photography as a vehicle for understanding his sense of self in terms of the social world. In a second picture included in the Kamoinge Workshop's "Harlem" portfolio in *Camera*, Draper, in a manner similar to Frank in *San Francisco*, explores the dialogical relationship between himself and his subject by photographing the immediate reaction of a black woman as she walks down a street in New York City's Lower East Side (figure 1.12). As in Frank's image, her piercing gaze also suggests agitation at having her picture taken. But while Frank uses his intrusion, including the dismemberment

Figure 1.12. Louis Draper, Woman walking down street, 1962. Courtesy of Nell Draper-Winston and Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.

that its abandon produces, to allude to the futility of establishing any sort of reciprocity between himself and his black subjects and by extension his private self and the social world, Draper, still guided by the emotional investment—both personally and aesthetically—of W. Eugene Smith, takes more care to ensure that the entire body of his subject is centered within his composition. Despite this attention to aesthetics, a small, seemingly inconsequential, part of the woman—her feet—are cut off by the bottom part of the frame. This accidental dismemberment, however, distressed Draper who recalls, "I don't think that it was a very good photograph, I believe that her foot is cut off."[101] This statement suggests that while Draper embraced Frank's spontaneity in order to avoid speaking on behalf of his subject, unlike Frank, he could

not detach this approach or its meanings from such social structures of expression as form and quality.

Even though Draper turned to spontaneity to complicate the subject/object hierarchy implied in W. Eugene Smith's emotional approach to photography, unlike Frank, he did not understand aesthetics as antagonistic to this approach. "I really composed these photographs with a sort of aesthetic integrity," explains Draper. "The frame meant something to me. I didn't always see it. But the point was to incorporate only those things in the frame that needed to be there. To be aware of that. It wasn't random except that sometimes or another I missed something."[102] Here Draper not only emphasizes the importance of aesthetics to his photographic practice but he also suggests his affinity with the very approach that Frank had so derided: Henri Cartier-Bresson's "decisive moment" approach to photography made famous in his 1952 book of the same name.

According to Cartier-Bresson, the "decisive moment" represented not only "the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event" but also the "precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression." He further explains: "If a photograph is to communicate its subjects in all its intensity, the relationship of form must be rigorously established." This emphasis by Cartier-Bresson on the pictorial value of photography was central to Draper, who has cited the importance of *The Decisive Moment* on his practice.[103] At the same time, in advancing the pictorial aspects of his pictures, Draper, unlike Cartier-Bresson, does not posit these features as natural. In contrast to Cartier-Bresson who argues for the instinctual nature of the "decisive moment"—"Composition must be one of our constant preoccupations, but at the moment of shooting it can stem only from our intuition"[104]—Draper understands form as socially determined. A comparison between Draper's photograph of the woman walking down the street (see figure 1.12) and an image that Cartier-Bresson took of a black couple in Harlem (figure 1.13) clarifies this distinction.[105]

In spite of the immediacy and instinctual nature implied by the term "decisive moment," many of the relationships that Cartier-Bresson engaged in as part of his photographic practice were produced by his careful interaction with the subjects of his pictures. For Cartier-Bresson, such relations were necessary, since, as he elaborates in *The Decisive Moment*, "When the subject is in any way uneasy, the personality goes away. Where the camera cannot reach it. There are no systems, for each case is

Figure 1.13. Henri Cartier-Bresson, Easter Sunday, Harlem, New York City, 1947.

individual and demands that we be unobtrusive, though we must be at close range."[106] In this passage Cartier-Bresson suggests that "truthful" representations result from intimate proximities, and, while this viewpoint does not demand that photographers develop an emotional rapport with their subjects such as practiced by W. Eugene Smith, the favorable reactions suggested by the smiles on the couple's faces in Cartier-Bresson's image (see figure 1.13) imply that his depiction of this scene resulted from more than his ability to intuitively give photographic form and structure to those ephemeral moments of human experience. Yet, due to the mystification of the "decisive moment" as immediate and instinctual, the ways in which Cartier-Bresson's formal choices, as well as his position as a white European photographer, influenced the meanings of his representations is often overlooked.

For Draper, it was precisely the influence that his aesthetic intentions, as well as his presence as an African American, had on the meanings of his representations that he sought to explore in his photographic practice. Like Cartier-Bresson, Draper attempted to photograph the woman in his picture (see figure 1.12) spontaneously yet also with care toward establishing the formal integrity of his composition but, as the agitation on her face suggests, he did try to be unobtrusive so that he could intuitively locate some "truth" about her identity or so that, like W. Eugene Smith, he could speak "honestly" for her. Rather than use his camera as a vehicle for revelation, Draper sought to use the intersubjective relationship between himself and the black subject in his picture, and particularly the anxiety that its spontaneity produced in his subject as well as in himself, to come to terms with the complex ways in which his selfhood—including his desire to produce an aesthetically pleasing composition as much as his experience of racial difference—shaped and was shaped by the meanings of his photograph. In short, Draper could not separate himself or his photographs—both their contents and form—from the world of social determination, because he understood that their meanings, the personal, aesthetic, as well as racial, were inescapably intertwined with the complex set of social relations that produced them. It is precisely the multifaceted nature of these intersubjective relationships that such binary categories as black/white and insider/outsider as well as positive/negative images fail to address with any adequacy.

CHAPTER TWO

Bruce Davidson's "American Negro" Photographs in Context

The editors of [The Negro American] *recognized that some qualities such as tenderness, bitterness, and dignity in the face of great adversity form a substantial portion of this exacting examination. They found in the photographs of Bruce Davidson an opportunity to illustrate for the reader those human dimensions that cannot be fully described in the text.*

—A. D. TROTTENBERG, "THE NEGRO AMERICAN"

The Edge of the Frame

In the previous chapter I discuss some of the limitations of approaching photographs from the Kamoinge Workshop's "Harlem" portfolio through the binaries of positive/negative images and their correlatives black/white and insider/outsider. More particularly, I argue that these categories fail to adequately consider how the meanings about race and self embedded within these images collude and collide with the social relations and historical context in which they were produced and received. In this chapter, I adopt a similar strategy for a selection of images by Bruce Davidson that belong to a project known as his "American Negro" photographs.[1]

In 1966, John Szarkowski, who had taken over as director of the Photography Department at MoMA four years earlier, included ten photographs from this project in Davidson's first one-man exhibition at MoMA.[2] Szarkowski used these images in part to suggest a shift in Davidson's photographic production. In the wall label for the exhibition, Szarkowski clarifies this distinction when he writes that in contrast to Davidson's "spontaneous and intuitive" earlier works, these more recent photographs are "reflective and deliberate." According to Szarkowski, this change in Davidson's practice resulted from a more "contemplative way of working," an approach that he believed produced "a collaborative venture between the photographer and the subject."[3] Here Szarkowski seems to interpret Davidson's recent images, including those

Figure 2.1. Bruce Davidson, Selma March, Alabama, 1965. © Bruce Davidson and Magnum Photos.

from his "American Negro" project, in terms of photography's intersubjective potential.

Visually the images that Szarkowski included in Davidson's one-man exhibition also appear to be the product of "a collaborative venture." For example, in one photograph, an elderly black man stands purposely in the center foreground of Davidson's composition staring resolutely at the camera (figure 2.1). Directly in front of and below him stand two young black boys, their heads calculatedly cradled by the elderly man's extended hands. Though these boys stand more relaxed and their gazes less focused, the manner in which the three pose together as a unit suggests that Davidson has taken the time to ask permission to photograph them and perhaps even involved them in the posing. In short, the composed nature of the subjects suggests that Davidson has attempted to establish reciprocity between him and them.

For those who are familiar with John Szarkowski's efforts to construct photography as a distinctly modernist art form, this attention to the dialogical potential of Davidson's photographic practice may seem contradictory. Although handpicked by his predecessor, Edward Steichen, Szarkowski did not replicate Steichen's humanistic approach to photography, as evidenced in his famous 1955 exhibition *The Family of Man* in which he promoted photography as a universal language and as a tool of mass communication. Instead, as photography historian Christopher Phillips explains in his influential essay, "The Judgment Seat of Photography," "he represented an aestheticizing reaction against Steichen's identification of photography with the mass media."[4]

In order to construct photography as a distinctly modernist art form, Szarkowski concerned himself first and foremost with those visual characteristics considered intrinsic to the medium. He laid the groundwork for this formalist agenda in his 1964 exhibition, *The Photographer's Eye*. In the introduction to the 1966 catalogue for this exhibition, Szarkowski explains: "It should be possible to consider the history of the medium in terms of photographers' progressive awareness of characteristics and problems that have seemed inherent in the medium."[5] To emphasize those characteristics unique to photography, Szarkowski organized the pictures in his exhibition under five categories: "The Thing Itself," "The Detail," "The Frame," "Time," and "Vantage Point." He used these five characteristics to establish the discourse of photography as one that is predominantly concerned with formalist issues and not with secondary associations that lay outside the frame: "The central act of photography, the act of choosing and eliminating, forces a concentration on the picture's edge—the

line that separates in from out—and on the shapes that are created by it."[6] Given this emphasis on the aesthetic autonomy of the medium, why then does Szarkowski insist on defining Davidson's practice as a form of "collaboration"?

The answer hinges on Szarkowski's formalist understanding of the role that the subject plays in photography. According to Szarkowski, "most of the literature of art history is based on the assumption that the subject exists independent of, and prior to, the picture." Yet, as Szarkowski further explains, "This idea . . . is especially irrelevant in the case of photography, where the artist's entire effort is directed toward the problem of defining precisely what the subject *is*."[7] Szarkowski clarifies what he means by this assertion in *The Photographer's Eye*: "The subject and the picture [are] not the same thing. . . . It [is] the photographer's problem to see not simply the reality before him but the still invisible picture, and to make his choices in terms of the latter."[8] Uninterested in the specific network of social relations that also inform a photograph's meaning, Szarkowski instead emphasizes what he considers the more important distinction, namely the boundary created between the inside and outside of a picture's frame. In other words, to Szarkowski, a subject is only important as a vehicle to explore the intrinsic properties of the photographic medium. Furthermore, a subject exists solely as a form of representation whose meaning is determined by the picture's edge and not by such lived experiences as race and subjectivity.

In using the word "collaborative" to define Davidson's work, what Szarkowski means is that the subjects of Davidson's photographs exist as objects contained within the formal boundaries of their frames. Davidson's more "contemplative way of working," despite seemingly being the product of collaboration, in Szarkowski's eyes, at least, serves to further embed his subjects within the picture. The man's fixed stance and unyielding stare further strengthen this reading; since, rather than engage the camera intersubjectively, they function as passive receptacles for the gaze and thus encourage what Szarkowski calls in the exhibition's wall label, an "unhurried reciprocity . . . between the print and the viewer." Here, again, Szarkowski addresses the "collaborative" relationship created in Davidson's work as one between viewer and *photograph* not viewer and *subject*.

In establishing the subject of photography within an autonomous realm, Szarkowski believed that his formalist criteria extended across the range of photography's history, including nineteenth-century topographic photography and news photography, among others.[9] Yet what Szarkowski failed to realize is that while he might

regulate the formalist value of these photographs within the white walls of MoMA, it was much more difficult to control how the contents of these pictures reverberated beyond the formal boundaries of the picture frame. This is because, as photographer and critic Victor Burgin explains, "Regardless of how much we may strain to maintain a 'disinterested' aesthetic mode of apprehension, an appreciation of the 'purely visual', when we look at an image it is instantly and irreversibly integrated and collated with the intricate psychic network of our knowledge."[10] Here, evoking the example of Garry Winogrand's infamous photograph of an interracial couple carrying chimpanzees, Burgin contends that photographs are not self-sufficient entities; rather, their meanings and particularly their racial meanings exist and participate in a complex network of social relations. Pushing this idea even further, in this chapter, I argue that, rather than just the representation of race, it is the complex interactions between the racialized subjects in Davidson's photographs and the intersubjective terms of their production and reception that make it impossible to separate the racial meanings of these images from the larger social systems in which they were embedded.[11]

To map, then, not only how photographs from Davidson's "American Negro" project were used and circulated during the 1960s but, more important, how these uses intersected with contemporary discussions about race and subjectivity, I begin this chapter by tracing how an interest in photography's intersubjective potential developed with respect to two photography-related projects. Initiated by Lyndon Baines Johnson's Administration, the projects aimed to humanize governmental programs and more particularly their fight against the War on Poverty. As part of this investigation, I use photographs from Bruce Davidson's "American Negro" project, along with images by other contemporary photographers, to consider how these efforts by Johnson's Administration and other contemporary social scientists to distill the "human face" of a social problem were inescapably intertwined with contemporary debates and discussions about race and more specifically African American poverty, which was frequently the subject of these images. As in the previous chapter, where I use the negotiation between the individual and collective as well as self and the world in photographs produced by members of the Kamoinge Workshop to suggest the sociohistorical contingencies of these racialized depictions, in this chapter, I again turn to the complex intersections between race and subjectivity in postwar America as a way to highlight not only the social, political, and historical forces that informed the meanings of Davidson's "American Negro" photographs but also those more ephemeral

lived experiences and interpersonal relationships that shaped, as well as were shaped by, these representations.

"The Faces Behind the Statistics"

When photography functions as a "human document," "[it] addresses," writes historian William Stott about 1930s documentary photography, "'you,' the 'you' who is we the audience, and exhorts, wheedles, begs us to identify, pity, participate."[12] Roy Stryker, the former head of the Farm Security Administration's (FSA) Historical Section, reiterates the humanist potential of documentary photography when he writes that "a good documentary photograph should not only tell what a place or thing or person *looks* like, but it must also tell the audience what it would *feel* like to be an actual witness to the scene."[13] In these passages, both authors posit a humanist photography as that which promotes an intersubjective exchange between image and audience. During the 1960s, Edward Steichen revitalized this understanding of a humanist photography, when, just before relinquishing his directorship position to John Szarkowski in 1962, he mounted *The Bitter Years, 1935–1941: Rural America as Seen by the Photographers of the Farm Security Administration*. In this exhibition, Steichen not only sought to make the present generation aware of "the endurance and fortitude" of the Great Depression, but he also posited the idea that a government-sponsored photography program could bring the nation together as human beings.[14]

Steichen's dedication to a humanist photography had not always been fundamental to his curatorial or even photographic practice. Steichen began his career working as a painter and Pictorialist photographer and even served with Alfred Stieglitz as one of the founders of the Photo-Secession. After participating as a photographer in both World Wars, however, Steichen's approach to the medium changed significantly. Through his involvement commanding the Photographic Division of the Air Force Service in World War I and the Photographic Division of the U.S. Navy in World War II, Steichen became aware of photography's humanism, or its intersubjective potential: "I wanted to reach into the world, to participate and communicate, and I felt that I would be able to do this best through photography."[15] During World War I, Steichen photographed the war primarily from the distance of an airplane, using the medium as a reconnaissance tool. By World War II, Steichen learned, as Christopher Phillips explains, "that photography, in addition to serving as a simple recorder of facts and faces, could, in the right hands, serve as powerful instrument for distilling the human

meaning of complex events."[16] To convince the Navy of this unique capacity of photography, Steichen encouraged the members of his photographic unit to turn their lenses on the human dimension of the war.

FSA photography from the 1930s also influenced Steichen's newfound interest in the humanistic potential of the medium. Steichen first encountered these images during the spring of 1938 when he visited the International Photography Exposition in New York City.[17] From these photographs, Steichen came to understand that the greatest influence of photography was its ability to humanize a situation and thus ensure the audience's emotional identification with its subjects. "Look into the faces of the men and the women in these pages," Steichen writes in a 1938 review of FSA photography in *U.S. Camera Annual*, "Listen to the story they tell and they will leave with you a feeling of a living experience you won't forget."[18] In this passage, Steichen defines 1930s FSA photography in terms of its ability to distill the human dimension of a situation in a manner that carries emotional resonance for the audience. This enthusiasm for photography's humanistic and hence intersubjective potential would continue throughout Steichen's curatorial career at MoMA, including his 1955 exhibition *The Family of Man*, for which he incorporated "mass media" techniques to create a more integrated exhibition space in which the audience would identify with the images on a human level.[19] For Steichen, then, photography's greatest value lay in its ability to bring people together as human beings. Because, then, as Steichen further declares, "The audiences not only understand this visual presentation, they also participate in it, and identify themselves with the images, as if in corroboration of the words of a Japanese poet, 'When you look into a mirror, you do not see your reflection, your reflection sees you.'"[20]

Steichen was not alone in his interest in restoring a humanist photography during the 1960s. During this period, a number of social scientists also sought to extend the attention that 1930s documentary photography gave to the humanistic aspects and not just the factual basis of an image to social issues and poverty in particular. For instance, in his best-selling 1962 book *The Other America: Poverty in the United States*, political scientist Michael Harrington sought to reestablish the humanistic dimensions of poverty by arguing, "In this book, I have attempted to describe the faces behind the statistics, to tell a little of the 'thickness' of personal life in the other America."[21] Likewise, Kenneth Clark applied this idea to his discussion of the "pathological" nature of African American poverty in his 1965 book *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*.

He used this study "to move, as far as it can, beyond a narrow view of fact, beyond the facts that are quantifiable and are computable, and that distort the actual lives of individual human beings into rigid statistics" and instead "to study the psychological—i. e. the human—significance of the ghetto."[22] In both these examples, the respective authors believe that establishing the human dimension of social problems will necessarily promote reciprocity between the audience and the subjects of their books.

Steichen's belief that photography best communicates intersubjectively also found an enthusiastic audience in President Lyndon Baines Johnson's Administration. For instance, in a 1965 memorandum announcing his newly established photography program for governmental photographers known as "The President's Choice," Johnson declared: "Photography can show with peculiar power that government is personal, that we are concerned with human beings, not statistics."[23] For this program, Johnson asked the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies of his Administration to submit by the first of every month the three photographs taken by photographers in their division "which most powerfully portray the problems of America and the efforts to meet them."[24] To screen these monthly submissions, Johnson appointed a committee that included photographers Ansel Adams, Walker Evans, and W. Eugene Smith as well as John Szarkowski, who served as the group's Executive Director.[25] Based on their recommendations, Johnson then selected one photograph every month as "The President's Choice," with the ultimate objective being the display of these selections in an exhibition and a book that would "capture the spirit of our times."[26]

Given Szarkowski's formalist expectations of the medium, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, it may seem paradoxical that Johnson invited him to serve as the Executive Director of his program's selection committee or that Szarkowski even agreed to participate. In selecting the committee to screen the selections, however, it seems that Szarkowski's ideological beliefs concerning the medium were left largely unexamined by Johnson's Administration who appears to have chosen him based largely on the merit of his institutional affiliation and position as Director of Photography at MoMA. For Szarkowski, on the other hand, accepting this position was consistent with his overall effort to extend his formalist criteria across the range of photography's history, including governmental photographers who worked primarily as photojournalists.

In emphasizing the medium's inherent aesthetic properties, Szarkowski never considered photojournalism and its explicit ties with the external world as a debased

art form. In fact, for Szarkowski, photojournalism offered an "especially rewarding area . . . to study photography in its most basic and unadorned form."[27] Szarkowski first explored the essential qualities of photojournalistic images in his 1965 exhibition *The Photo Essay*, which appeared at MoMA contemporaneously with "The President's Choice." In a wall label for this exhibition, Szarkowski describes a shift that he believed had taken place in the history of the photo essay, whose primary function since World War II had been communication. "Today," Szarkowski explains, "some essay photographers are questioning the premise of the picture story and suggesting that perhaps the picture should be judged for its intrinsic meaning and not just as one element in a unified statement."[28] Here Szarkowski, in a manner similar to his effort to detach Bruce Davidson's "American Negro" photographs from associations that resonated beyond the frame, attempts to establish the aesthetic autonomy of photojournalism over its ability to communicate, particularly intersubjectively.

Szarkowski approached the photographs for Johnson's "The President's Choice" program with similar expectations. For instance, in reference to a May 1965 submission by Agency for International Development photographer Jose Carrera Reza (figure 2.2), Szarkowski makes the following comment: "This picture has considerable purely visual interest and an unexpected sense of scale which makes it simply fun to look at. If a picture is fun to look at, the person will also read the caption and probably remember it."[29] In this passage, Szarkowski praises Reza's photograph foremost for its intrinsic formal appeal, which he argues exists independently, irrespective of its caption or what lies outside the formal boundary of the frame. At the same time, as Szarkowski clarifies, this stipulation did not mean that he understood photographs "as purely abstract constructions that have their meaning enclosed completely within their frame and do not reverberate outside in the rest of the whole world of our knowledge and sensibility."[30] Rather, it was essential to Szarkowski that associations beyond the frame be entertained only after a photograph's self-sufficiency is established, since these connections would ultimately remain speculations and in no way disrupt "the intrinsic or prejudicial capacities of the medium as it is understood at that moment."[31]

For President Johnson, however, it was precisely photography's ability to "reverberate outside in the rest of the world" that attracted him to photography in the first place. In claiming that "Photography can show with peculiar power that government is personal, that we are concerned with human beings, not statistics,"[32] Johnson sug-

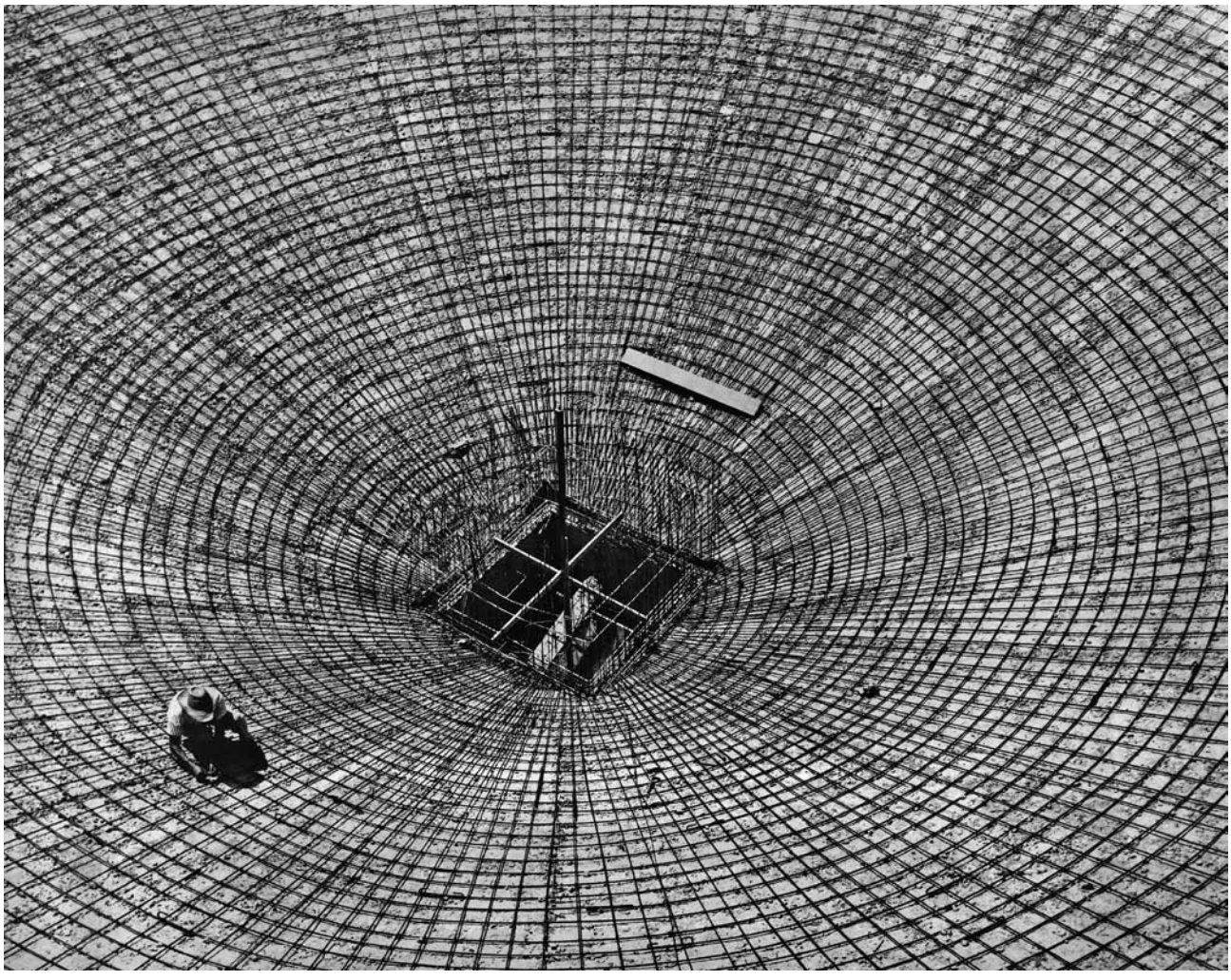


Figure 2.2. Jose Carrera Reza, Concrete and reinforcing rods for a corn silo spin a web-like pattern for progress in Northeast Brazil. Submitted by Agency for International Development mission to Brazil.

gests that he wanted the nominations for "The President's Choice" to be chosen primarily for their ability to depict the human dimension of his Administration. Johnson's general approach to photography supports this reading as well.[33] Ultimately, Johnson cared less about the formal characteristics or aesthetic autonomy of a picture than its ability to communicate with viewers intersubjectively. Johnson's selection of Ken

Heyman to illustrate his 1966 book *This America: A Portrait of a Nation* provides a case in point. For this book, Johnson employed Heyman, a photographer who had previously worked for the United States Information Agency's (USIA) program "The Alliance for Progress" (Alianza).[34] The book itself consists of a text by Johnson, which editor Jerry Mason paired with 208 photographs selected from the 13,000 that Heyman took while traveling across the United States with a shooting script that Mason had prepared, based on Johnson's speeches and other written comments on the Great Society. That the format of *This America* closely resembles the exhibition catalogue to Steichen's *The Family of Man* was not a coincidence; Mason also served as editor for that publication.

Although too young to have been included in *The Family of Man*, Heyman has since compared his photographic approach with the type of work associated with that exhibition: "I'm more from the 'Family of Man' school because I think photographs should have an emotional impact: that's how they can make a difference."[35] Heyman's interest in using his photographs to communicate on a human level is also one that Paul Byers addresses in a 1961 *U.S. Camera* article in which he argues that Heyman's photographs "yield more than a lecture in American sociology because it's an elaborate description of human feelings."[36] The intersubjective potential of Heyman's practice must have also impressed Johnson, as in February 1965, he selected a USIA photograph by Heyman that depicts children drinking milk out of tin cups as the first image to earn the title of "The President's Choice" (figure 2.3).

<<figure 2.3 about here>>

Like Johnson, Vice President Hubert Humphrey was also interested in photography's ability to communicate intersubjectively. Yet, while Johnson used photography to humanize his Administration, Humphrey sought to use the medium to communicate the human dimension of the poor. To accomplish this goal, Humphrey depended in particular on the discourse on the culture of poverty outlined in Michael Harrington's *The Other America*.[37] In this book, Harrington redefined poverty in cultural terms by addressing its distinctive human or psychological traits as opposed to its underlying, structural economic forces. This objective stood in contrast to John Kenneth Galbraith's classic 1958 book *The Affluent Society*, which explained why a redistribution of wealth would alleviate poverty and ensure "social balance." In short, while Galbraith analyzed poverty as a seemingly objective, statistical occurrence, Harrington passionately stressed its psychological components, arguing that poverty is an all-per-

Figure 2.3. Ken Heyman, Peruvian children drinking milk. Submitted by USIA.

vasive culture—"radically different from the one that dominates the society"[38]—that not only robs people of economic opportunity, but, more important, robs people of aspiration as well.

Harrington's emphasis on the psychological aspects of the poor, essentially their "human face," brought about a widespread interest in poverty by scholars, the general public, and even the government.[39] On 20 August 1964, for instance, building on the unconditional "War on Poverty" set forth in his first State of the Union address, Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act. A radical departure from previous solutions to U.S. poverty, which had focused primarily on redistributing existing wealth, in the Act, Johnson described the poor, using Harrington's cultural definition, as alienated from the rest of U.S. society—a "culture" or "world apart"—and in need of

opportunities in order to, in Harrington's words, "destroy the pessimism and fatalism that flourish in the other America."[40]

In his 1964 book *War on Poverty*, Humphrey also draws heavily on Harrington's cultural definition of the poor:

> To most of us the poor inhabit a sector of society that we hardly recognize. They may come to do the laundry or fix the garden, but we barely see them as we speed by on the freeways or ride the commuter specials to and from the cities. For most of us the only poor man we notice is the fellow posted for non-payment of bills at the country club.[41]

To deal with this problem of anonymity, Humphrey believed that mainstream Americans needed to "see" the poor so that they would in turn identify with them on a human level and by extension intersubjectively:

> We must capture the real meaning of poverty and experience what it is like to be an internal alien in the America that is taken for granted by the rest of us. Only then will the plight of the poor be seen in detail and the impact of their terrible condition arouse the public as no statistical exhortation could possibly do.[42]

In this statement, Humphrey addresses the limitation of statistics, particularly with regard to their ability to distill the human dimensions of poverty emotionally. Harrington makes a similar claim in *The Other America*: "The poor are increasingly isolated from contact with, or sight of, anyone else. The very development of the American city has removed poverty from the living, emotional experience."[43]

To supplement the raw material of statistics with the feelings and emotions provided by a human perspective, in his *War on Poverty*, Humphrey defined the poor in terms of a "story" by using the anecdotal narratives of his own experiences or of the experiences of others. Humphrey uses these "stories" to humanize the poor, "whose plight," he explains, "is never fully realized unless you see the hopelessness on their faces and the plea in their eyes."[44] Besides personal narratives, Humphrey also believed that pictorial representations could help to convey poverty in human or intersubjective terms:

> It seems to me if I were a Congressman wanting to visualize the problem, there is no better way of doing it than to see the pictures and to get a sense of the depth

> and scope of the problem not only by the written word but by the pictorial exhibit . . . I think it would be helpful to kind of get a picture of [the problem] not only statistically, which is somewhat helpful, but pictorially. . . .[45]

Again, Humphrey, while not denying the usefulness of statistics, asserts that pictures can visualize a problem in depth, by which he implies that they can render a problem human.

To put this strategy to work, on 17 March 1965, Humphrey sent a memo to Sargent Shriver, Johnson's appointed head of the "War on Poverty" and director of the newly established Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO),[46] suggesting that his office mount a photography exhibition on poverty in which "the emphasis should be upon children, young people, and the elderly. We can tie in our programs such as head start, job corps, aid to the elderly."[47] In choosing to spotlight these groups, Humphrey sought more than merely to render "visible" the human dimensions of the poor. For Humphrey, these individuals also provided a means to suggest that poverty was an inherited psychological trait whose insidiousness could only be defeated through the intervention of governmental programming. This objective again relied on Harrington's cultural definition of the poor: "An enormous concentration of young people, who if they do not receive immediate help, may well be the source of a kind of hereditary poverty new to American society."[48]

In applying Harrington's cultural definition to the poor, Humphrey thus depended on two interrelated ideas central to *The Other America*. The first centered on poverty's psychological consequences, or the idea that the poor have a distinctive language or culture characterized by such character traits as hopelessness, passivity, and resignation: "The new poverty is constructed so as to destroy aspiration; it is a system impervious to hope."[49] Here Harrington, again detaching poverty from the language of income distribution, class, and racial inequality, posits poverty as a set of (bad) behaviors and attitudes. The second idea, building on the notion of poverty as a collection of readily apparent personality traits, distinguishes poverty as familial and intergenerational, whereby generations bequeathed poverty to their offspring, creating what Harrington defines as a "hereditary underclass." For the poor to break out of this "vicious cycle of poverty," Humphrey, like Harrington, believed that the government needed to provide the poor, and particularly the children of the poor, with "opportunities" to improve their position and become part of the coveted mainstream, as

exemplified in the model of the two-parent, middle-class nuclear family. Harrington corroborates this point in *The Other America*: "In any case there is no argument, for there is only one realistic possibility: only the Federal Government has the power to abolish poverty."[50]

The idea that children represented one of the keys to breaking down the "cycle of poverty" also formed a central component of Johnson's "War on Poverty": "Let us deny no one the chance to develop and use his native talents to the full. *Let us, above all, open wide the exits from poverty to the children of the poor.*"[51] In this statement, taken from Johnson's First Economic Report, Johnson uses children to suggest that the insidiousness of poverty can be broken through a series of coordinated public policies. According to Johnson, governmental programming such as VISTA (a domestic Peace Corps) and Head Start had the potential to mold children's values and models of behaviors away from the ones set forth by their poverty-stricken parents and impoverished life styles.[52] Humphrey intended the photographs in OEO's exhibition to visually and hence emotionally reinforce this claim: "We must break the cycle of poverty. We must free millions of Americans from the bondage of that tragic equation which often decrees that the poor shall beget poor and ignorance shall beget misery."[53]

OEO complied with Humphrey's suggestion, and, on 12 May 1965, *Profile of Poverty* opened on the first floor of the Smithsonian's new Museum of History and Technology building. Assembled in fewer than eight weeks under the coordination of Judith Friedberg, a New York-based consultant and former Senior Editor at *Show* magazine, the exhibition consisted of 540 prints by 102 photographers.[54] Besides "historic" images of poverty taken by such FSA photographers as Arthur Rothstein, Dorothea Lange, and Walker Evans, the exhibition also included images by contemporary photographers, including Bruce Davidson and Bob Adelman, among others, as well as photographs documenting workers at such governmental agencies as VISTA and Head Start. Through this selection of images, OEO sought to control the viewer's intersubjective understanding of poverty both in terms of "the effects of privation and the efforts being mounted against it in the War on Poverty."[55]

OEO used the installation design to influence how viewers experienced the images in relation to the discourse on the culture of poverty. Designed primarily by OEO's art director Peter Masters, the photographs were placed next to descriptive texts about poverty by contemporary governmental figures such as Johnson, Humphrey, and Shriver, as well as individuals like Harrington, Ben Bagdikian, and Edgar

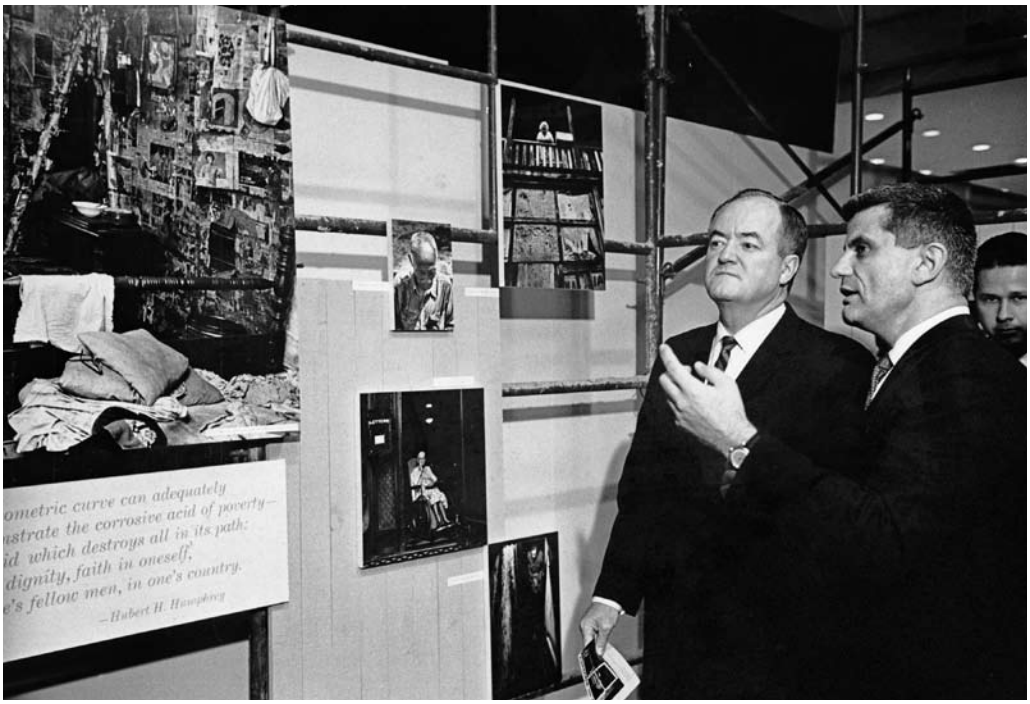


Figure 2.4. Installation view of *Profile of Poverty*, with Vice President Humphrey and exhibition designer Peter Masters at the exhibition opening, Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, 12 May 1965.

May who had all written extensively about the poor (figure 2.4). To further direct the viewer's understanding of the images in relation to the culture of poverty, arrows indicating the direction that the viewer should follow were placed throughout the exhibition to ensure that the images were read both in terms of the distinctive character traits of the poor and of what the government was doing to break the destructive "cycle of poverty" (figure 2.5). In using text and arrows to guide the viewer through the installation, OEO attempted to control the viewer's intersubjective relationship with the subjects in the photographs so that she or he would believe in the destructiveness of poverty as well as in the need for governmental intervention to bring an end to the damaged personalities that poverty produced.

One of the images included in *Profile of Poverty* was an enlarged photograph by Bruce Davidson of a black woman holding a child (figure 2.6) that he had taken as part of his "American Negro" project. Directly below the photograph, OEO placed the

Figure 2.5. Installation view of *Profile of Poverty*, with the Chief Justice at the exhibition opening, Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, 12 May 1965.

following statement by Humphrey: "No geometric curve can adequately demonstrate the corrosive acid of poverty—an acid which destroys all in its path: hope, dignity, faith in oneself, and in one's fellow men, in one's country." Through this juxtaposition, OEO used Humphrey's text to amplify the meaning of Davidson's image. In reading about the damaging effects of poverty in Humphrey's text, the viewer, at least in the viewing scenario intended by OEO, is led to believe that the woman and her child, shabbily dressed and positioned in the far background of a dark and dingy room, are without "hope, dignity, or faith in oneself." Furthermore, like the impoverished conditions that literally engulf them, poverty will obliterate the mother and child as well as any aspirations they might have.

To overcome the destructive nature of poverty, or, as Humphrey explains, its "corrosive acid," the viewer, if accepting the structure of the exhibition laid out by OEO, would follow the arrows until she or he came to photographs illustrating those

Figure 2.6. Bruce Davidson, Alabama, 1965. © Bruce Davidson and Magnum Photos.

governmental agencies specifically set up to attack the "War on Poverty" (figure 2.7). OEO intended that these images of "poor children learning and playing in preschool centers" and "VISTA volunteers helping hard-pressed families,"[56] among other scenes, evoke a contrast with photographs such as the one by Davidson that depicted the damaging "effects of privation." Such a response would then visually and hence emotionally validate the need for governmental programming to provide the poor and children in particular with "opportunities" to overcome their impoverished situations and begin to function as active, as opposed to passive, members in mainstream society.[57]

The arrangement of photographs in *Profile of Poverty* also served to direct the

Figure 2.7. Installation view of *Profile of Poverty*, presented by Office of Economic Opportunity at the Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, 1965.

viewer's reading of the selected images in terms of the culture of poverty. Instead of hanging the photographs uniformly framed on white walls, as was increasingly the practice of John Szarkowski at MoMA, Masters printed the pictures in a range of sizes which he then mounted in groups on rusty scaffoldings, weather-beaten gray boards, and metal wire screens that, as one reviewer remarked, suggested "the outside wall of a miner's shack in Appalachia"[58] (figure 2.8). This highly stylized design was intended to make the intersubjective exchange between viewer and the poor represented in the images even more palpable, an association aptly noted by one exhibition visitor: "The purposefully unlovely, rusty background . . . is an instructional device to show the tragedy of poverty to those of us who have no real contact with it."[59] In amplify-

Figure 2.8. Installation view of *Profile of Poverty*, presented by Office of Economic Opportunity at the Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, 1965.

ing the political agenda of *Profile of Poverty* through such a multifaceted installation design, Masters recalled the approach used ten years earlier by Edward Steichen and Paul Rudolph for *The Family of Man* at MoMA. Although Steichen and Rudolph did not attempt to evoke an environment of poverty per se, like Masters, they used their installation design—enlarged photographs mounted on panels, a many-sided "merry-go-round" stand displaying photographs, transparent support structures, and dark- and light-colored walls, among other techniques—to enhance the viewer's emotional experience of the exhibition's overall message about the "essential oneness of man throughout the world."[60]

The exhibitions shared other parallels as several contemporary reviewers also noted.[61] Both included a large selection of photographs: *Profile of Poverty* contained 540 photographs as compared to the 503 photographs in *The Family of Man*. Both drew a record number of visitors, and both were transformed into multiple versions that circulated on multi-city, and in the case of *The Family of Man*, multi-country tours.[62] The manner in which the organizers used the installation design to guide their respective viewers' intersubjective relationships with the subjects of their exhibitions' photographs was also similar. For *The Family of Man*, for instance, Rudolph's installation design was intended to make the viewer feel as if she or he were part of a global family. "The deep interest in this show was based on a kind of audience participation," explains Steichen. "The people in the audience looked at the pictures and the people in the pictures looked back at them. They recognized each other."[63]

This ostensible intersubjective exchange began even before visitors entered the gallery space of Steichen's exhibition. Attached to the walls outside the entrance doorway to *The Family of Man* was a photomural of a crowd of people whose faces became interchangeable with those who passed through the entranceway. This message of an inclusive family or the "oneness of mankind" was also reiterated in the installation of certain photographs. In almost the center of the galleries, for instance, four photographs were suspended from the ceiling (figure 2.9). Printed double-sided and enlarged to over life-size, these images encouraged visitors to come face-to-face with families from four parts of the world: the United States, Bechuanaland, Japan, and Sicily. To ensure that viewers felt humanly connected to these "families of man," the images were captioned with the following text: "With all beings and all things we shall be as relatives — Sioux Indian."

OEO, on the other hand, used the emotions aroused by the representation of the plight of the poor to promote reciprocity between the audience and the subjects depicted in their exhibition's pictures. For instance, for the exhibition's "theme" picture, OEO selected a photograph by Ken Heyman that depicts a small child dressed in a dirty and oversized striped shirt, peering out of a window from which several panes are broken out. Besides accompanying all press releases, including the invitation for the opening reception (figure 2.10), this photograph, in a manner similar to the four suspended "family" photographs in *The Family of Man*, was reproduced on four sides of a fenced-in tower-like structure placed in an open area in the center of the exhibition.[64] Through their repetition of this image, OEO also sought for the viewer to con-

Figure 2.9. Installation view of *The Family of Man* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1955. Photograph by Ezra Stoller.

nect to Heyman's photograph intersubjectively and by extension identify this child as well as other impoverished children as the innocent victims of the culture of poverty. Heyman's positioning of the boy kneeling with his hands clasped, staring vulnerably at the camera, underscores this intention, since it encourages the viewer to identify emotionally with his plight as well as the disintegration that poverty has brought to the U.S. family.

What OEO failed to realize about this strategy, however, is that, as John G. Morris points out in his review of *Profile of Poverty* in the *Washington Post*, the "exhibition

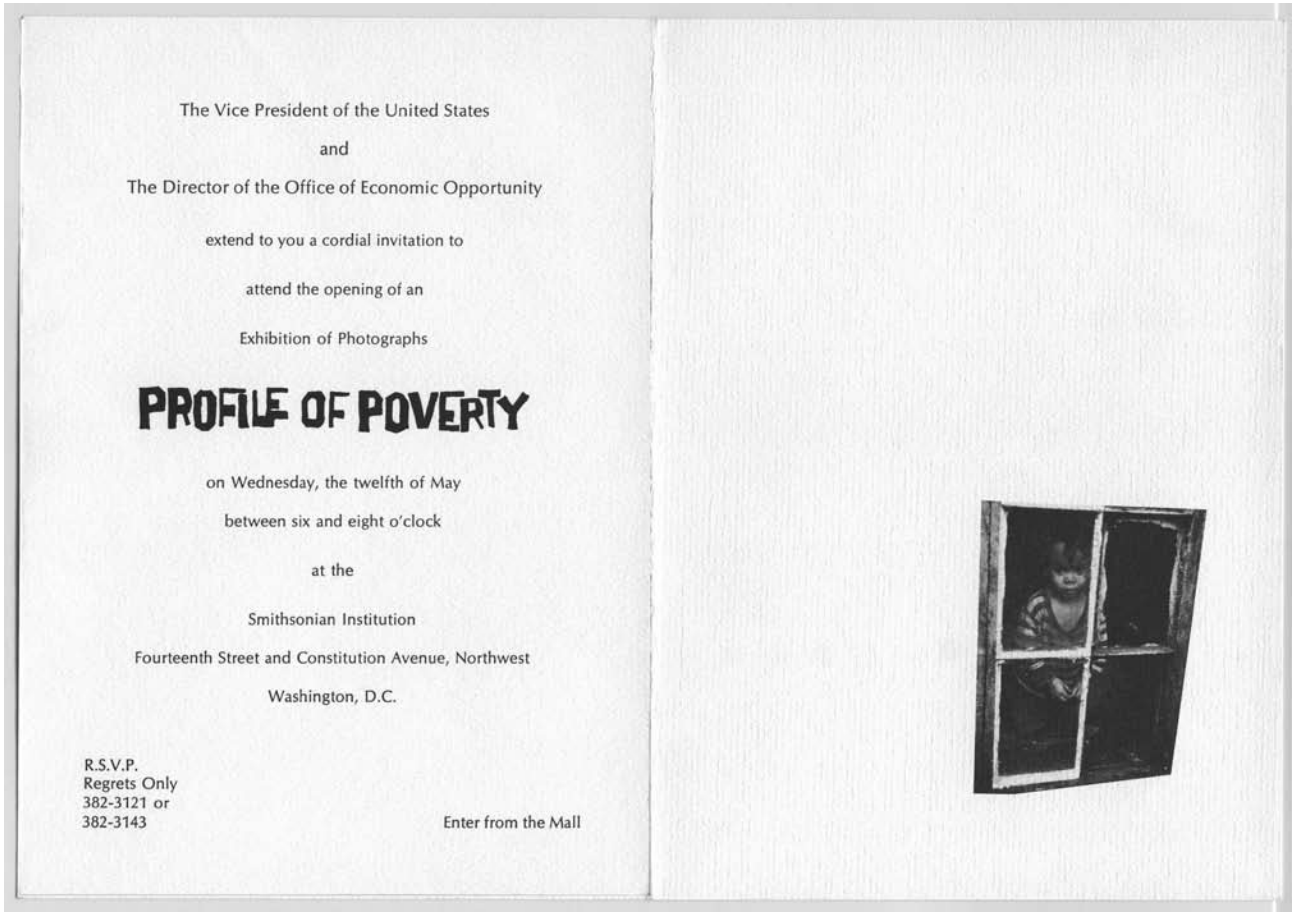


Figure 2.10. Invitation to the opening of *Profile of Poverty* at the Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, 12 May 1965.

encourages little understanding beyond sympathy."[65] In encouraging an intersubjective exchange between viewers and the poor, the exhibition did little to break down the alleged cultural differences between the poor and mainstream society, since, as one visitor ardently observed, "The really poor are not going to see that show and it is not meant for them."[66] This meant that within the context of *Profile of Poverty*, the poor remained, as Harrington had initially described them, "a culture that is radically different." The highly stylized manner in which OEO installed the photographs also prohibited any type of sustained reciprocity with the poor represented in the im-

ages. Two reviews of *Profile of Poverty* address this inadequacy. In *The Washington Post*, Elisabeth Stevens describes the installation design as "a distracting artsy-craftsy maze" that detracts from the pictures' "dignity."[67] John Durniak makes a similar observation in his review in *Popular Photography*.[68] According to Durniak, due to the inconsistent sizes of the individual pictures in *Profile of Poverty*, the viewer, in order to see the pictures in their entirety, is forced to continually move back and forth. This approach diminishes a unified visual appreciation of them, an effect that promotes confusion instead of reciprocity: "In this Madison-Avenue-oriented age, sometimes the clever 'design concept' of a show gets fatally in the way of what the photographs themselves are saying."[69]

Another problem that Durniak raises is the discontinuity between the response that the OEO designers aimed the installation design to evoke and the one that he actually experiences. For instance, although Masters hung the photographs on rusty scaffolding and weather-beaten boards to suggest an atmosphere of poverty, for Durniak, this effect only produced "confusion," since upon entering the Smithsonian "one is seized with the initial impression that they are painting the ceiling."[70] Durniak found a similar problem with OEO's use of photographic representations of governmental agencies such as VISTA and Head Start to suggest what the government is doing to alleviate the problem of poverty. In using these photographs to signify "solutions" to the poverty crisis, OEO assumes that viewers will necessarily read these images in terms of the government's ability to eradicate poverty by providing the poor represented in the earlier pictures with "opportunities" to become participating members of mainstream society. For Durniak, however, this strategy of suggesting "poverty and its cure" was inherently problematic, since he found "the photographs of the problem . . . more interesting than those of the solution."[71] In calling attention to these inconsistencies in the exhibition's message and design, Durniak reveals an underlying flaw in *Profile of Poverty*, namely the assumption that the photographs are equivalent and interchangeable blank screens upon which one can project universally recognizable character traits about the poor that viewers will instinctively identify with intersubjectively or on a human level.

Although labeled as the "most ambitious photographic exhibition . . . since 'The Family of Man,'" *Profile of Poverty*, at least in terms of its promotion of an intersubjective exchange between audience and depicted subjects, seems to have fallen short of its predecessor.[72] Some may attribute the haste in which *Profile of Poverty* was assembled

as a primary reason for this breakdown. Certainly, eight weeks pales in comparison to the three years that Steichen, along with his chief assistant Wayne Miller, spent culling images and organizing them into a coherent and seamless narrative. These ardent efforts notwithstanding, in the end, the photographs in *The Family of Man* also did little to encourage any substantial reciprocity between the so-called families of man. Even though Steichen was more sophisticated in terms of how he used his installation design and selected images to encourage viewers to feel as if they were part of a global family, like OEO, he too assumed that the representation of "family" in his exhibition's selected images and the feelings and emotions that these supposed humanistic depictions evoked were universal as well as transparent.[73] Phoebe Lou Adams alludes to this assumption in a contemporary review of *The Family of Man* in the *Atlantic*:

> If Mr. Steichen's well-intentioned spell doesn't work, it can only be because he has been so intent on the physical similarities that unite 'The Family of Man' that he has neglected to conjure the intangible beliefs and preferences that divide men into countries and parties and clans. And he has utterly forgotten that a family quarrel can be as fierce as any other kind.[74]

In her critique, Adams reveals a fundamental flaw in the alleged humanism or intersubjectivity of Steichen's *The Family of Man*, namely the belief that an image's meaning can be separated from the variety of individual perspectives and interpersonal relations depicted in it as well as brought to bear on it, including such "intangible beliefs or preferences"—or what cultural historian Raymond Williams calls "structures of feeling"—as personal taste and lived experiences.[75] This oversight also extended to the organizers of *Profile of Poverty*, who, like Steichen, believed that the photographic medium has an intrinsic emotional immediacy, or humanism, understood by all. In their attempt to use photography to evoke an emotional identification with the culture of poverty, OEO, like Steichen, never considered the historically specific frameworks that informed the feelings and emotions that they intended their exhibition to elicit between the audience and the subjects of the photographs. In so doing, OEO merely fixed the poor represented in these pictures as the product of a set of readily apparent and necessarily bad behavior traits—loss of dignity, hatred of self, passive and resigned personalities—whose prevention and eventual destruction through governmental intervention they naively assumed photography could intersubjectively convey in a direct and unmediated manner.

The Face of Blackness

In their attempt to humanize the poor in *Profile of Poverty*, OEO failed to take into account the specific social relations and particularly the "structures of feeling" that also informed the meanings of their selected photographs. Another societal force that OEO also overlooks is race. This indifference to the complexity through which race shaped and was shaped by the meanings of the photographs in their exhibition was largely a product of OEO's attempt to posit the culture of poverty as extending beyond issues of race, class, gender, and nation to describe those universal traits common to all poor people. As exhibition coordinator Judith Friedberg explains: "Poverty is no respecter of race nor is it restricted to a specific area or age group."[76] Yet, given the outcry and extended controversy over Moynihan's controversial public policy paper *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* discussed in Chapter 1, it would seem impossible for OEO to ignore in their selected photographs what *Newsweek*, directly citing the Moynihan Report, referred to as "America's 'most dangerous social problem': the explosive cycle of poverty and frustration in the growing black cores of the nation's great cities."[77]

In all fairness, when *Profile of Poverty* opened in May 1965 at the Smithsonian Museum, the Moynihan Report, completed in March 1965, had only been distributed to a few persons within the Department of Labor and the White House. It was not until 4 June 1965, when President Johnson spoke at a Howard University commencement, that Moynihan's ideas about the pathological nature of African American poverty would first become public knowledge, and even then it was only between mid-July and early August that the first full summaries of the Report were made publicly available.[78] Furthermore, the close alignment between *Profile of Poverty* and Michael Harrington's cultural definition of the poor, which posited poverty as the product of a set of inherited characteristic traits as opposed to such structural divides as race and class, also accounts for OEO's efforts to render poverty universal and not race-specific. At the same time, in using photography to represent this universalizing claim, OEO presumed, much like MoMA curator John Szarkowski, that the images in *Profile of Poverty* are autonomous entities whose contents do not resonate beyond the confines of their frames. In short, even though Davidson's image of the woman and her child visibly represents individuals of African descent (see figure 2.6), OEO nevertheless attempted to suppress the specific associations evoked by the image's representation of poverty *and* racial difference.

But like Szarkowski's failed efforts to regulate the formalist value of photography, including images from Bruce Davidson's "American Negro" project within the white walls of MoMA, it was impossible for OEO to keep the subject of poverty depicted in the photographs in *Profile of Poverty* from colliding and colluding with contemporary discussions about race. This is because, as social scientist Elliot Liebow would contend in his classic 1967 urban ethnography *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*: "[Poverty] is in continuous, intimate contact with the larger society—indeed, is an integral part of it—and is no more impervious to the values, sentiments, and beliefs of the larger society."[79] Here Liebow, arguing from a "situational" point of view, posits that rather than being inherited, the behavior traits of Washington, D.C.'s African American "street corner" men were the product of racial discrimination and unemployment. Likewise, building on the work of social anthropologist Allison Davis, 1960s "situational" sociologists Herbert Gans and Lee Rainwater also criticized "culture of poverty" theorists such as Harrington for equating culture with a set of inherited characteristic traits. To counter these associations, they argued that poverty and particularly African American poverty was "situational," by which they meant that the behaviors of the poor directly resulted from the limited opportunities offered to them by society.[80]

The conditions surrounding the making of Bruce Davidson's photograph of the woman and her child attest to the impossibility of isolating the poor from the specificity of their social relations and lived experiences, including race. As discussed earlier, within the context of *Profile of Poverty*, OEO placed this image next to Hubert Humphrey's statement about the "corrosive acid of poverty" so that viewers would identify on an emotional level with the culture of poverty and its destruction of the aspirations of the poor (see figure 2.6). Davidson, however, did not take this photograph to document the pathologies of the poor; instead, it was taken during one of the eight trips that he made from New York City to the South as part of his "American Negro" photographic project. For this particular trip, Davidson traveled to the South in March 1965 to join civil rights marchers on their historic, four-day, 54-mile march from Selma to Montgomery.[81] When the editors at the *Saturday Evening Post* discovered that Davidson was photographing the march, they commissioned him to take additional pictures in the area. Barely two months after the march, eight photographs by Davidson, including the one of the woman and her child, accompanied an article titled "The Meaning of the Selma March: Great Day at Trickem Fork."[82] Written by

W. C. Heinz and Bard Lindeman, the article—published ten days after the opening of *Profile of Poverty* at the Smithsonian—evaluates the long-term effects of the Selma to Montgomery march on voting rights in Lowndes County, Alabama, and particularly on the African American communities at Trickem Fork and Hayneville, Alabama.

Unlike many photographs of the Selma to Montgomery march taken by individuals such as James Karales, Moneta Sleet, and Charles Moore, only four of Davidson's eight "American Negro" photographs reproduced in the *Saturday Evening Post* represent actual marchers.[83] The other four depict individuals, like the woman and her child, living in or near Trickem Fork and Hayneville, Alabama. This emphasis parallels the article's aim of assessing the significance of the march on the individuals who actually lived in these rural areas of the South. Less interested in recording the difficulties or triumphs encountered by the marchers or in providing visual documentation of those who participated, the *Saturday Evening Post* editors used the article, along with Davidson's photographs, to suggest how the march encouraged African Americans living in impoverished communities in Alabama to change their situation and, by extension, empower themselves by registering to vote.

In placing Davidson's photograph within the context of an article on the effects of the Selma to Montgomery march—a historical event directly related to the racial discrimination experienced by African American voters in Alabama—the *Saturday Evening Post* editors situate the depressed conditions in which Davidson depicts this mother and her child as dependent on such structural forces as racial inequality, class, and income distribution. As a result, they encourage readers to understand the impoverished surroundings in which this woman and her child live, not in terms of the psychological effects of the culture of poverty, but as situational and adaptable. This contingent relationship between poverty and race is one that OEO fails to address with any complexity in *Profile of Poverty*. For instance, instead of considering how problems such as racial discrimination, or even suburbanization and economics, contributed to the impoverished conditions in which many of the individuals depicted in the exhibition's photographs lived, OEO sought to control viewers' intersubjective relationship with these subjects of these pictures in term of the causal relationship between poverty and psychological failings, which were necessarily passed on to one's children.

Another photograph included in *Profile of Poverty* depicts daily activities transpiring along Lexington Avenue in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn

Figure 2.11. Bob Adelman, Lexington Avenue, the Bedford-Stuyvesant ghetto, Brooklyn, New York City, 1963.
© Bob Adelman.

(figure 2.11). Taken by Bob Adelman, this image, in a manner similar to the one reproduced in *Time's* photo-essay, "The Look of the Place," discussed in Chapter 1, includes no overt signs of poverty; in fact, one might even describe his depiction of children playing on the sidewalk and individuals congregating on the front steps of neighborhood stoops as a depiction of working-class urban life. Yet, through its placement in the context of *Profile of Poverty*, OEO directs viewers' intersubjective exchange with this image with regard to emotions that visually endorse assumptions central to the discourse on the culture of poverty. The caption that accompanies Adelman's image in its publication in an article in *U.S. Camera & Travel* about the exhibition reinforces

this association. The text, "City slums breed crime, narcotics addiction and a host of ills that eliminate hope for the majority of inhabitants. It's an ugly picture but reflects conditions that exist," anchors the meaning of Adelman's image so that irrespective of what it actually depicts, viewers identify with the photograph in terms of such readily apparent character traits, such as loss of hope, which OEO posits are intrinsic to the poor.[84]

Like Davidson's picture of the woman and her child, Adelman did not take this photograph to emotionally convince viewers of the poor's passive and resigned behavioral traits. Adelman's photograph first appeared in the 17 December 1963 issue of *Look* as part of an article entitled "Through a Black Man's Eyes." For this article, the editors rely on the personal account of Bedford-Stuyvesant resident Grady Starks to substantiate the racial and economic discrimination experienced by those living in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn known as the "Box." To provide visual support for the social and economic hardships experienced by African Americans living in this area, the *Look* editors use Adelman's picture to illustrate the tenements that Starks describes in the accompanying text as sold to African Americans at inflated prices: "They are just janitors"—referring to the landlords who unlawfully cram their houses, while building inspectors look the other way—"They will be collecting the rent and paying it to the banks the rest of their lives."[85] Here, the editors use Starks's firsthand description along with Adelman's photograph to situate the poverty-stricken conditions experienced by African American residents in this area as the product of income distribution, class, and racial inequality.

At the same time, the *Look* editors do not totally ignore the psychological effects that racial discrimination produces in the residents of Bedford-Stuyvesant, or, in short how it intervenes in an individual's personal and emotional life. The fact that in middle-class, white areas of Brooklyn, tenants pay around the same amount of rent as those living in Bedford-Stuyvesant produces a self-hating personality, as Starks personally attests: "I've been conditioned to being discriminated against."[86] In including this statement in their article, the editors, while not denying the contingency between racial discrimination and poverty, also encourage their readers to identify African American poverty as the product of damaged personalities that are both internalized and self-perpetuating.

The authors of the *Saturday Evening Post* article rely on a similar set of psychologically determined characteristics to describe the woman depicted in Davidson's

picture. In the caption accompanying the photograph, the authors explain that when they asked this woman, given the fictitious name of Ella Mae Williams, if she knew why the marchers had come, Williams replied, "No sir, I don't know why they march." This text, along with the description of Williams as an unmarried, forty-two-year-old mother of nine children, who wears mismatched socks and cannot read, encourages the reader to understand Williams as without aspiration. Unaware of what is going on in the world around her and uninterested in her physical appearance, this text, like the picture's circulation in *Profile of Poverty*, anchors Williams as passive and defeated by her impoverished situation.

The treatment of African American poverty as both situational and psychologically determined also formed a central assumption in Kenneth Clark's 1965 book *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*. In this book, Clark recognizes racism's intrinsic ties to issues of institutional power and the need for increased social, economic, and political opportunities for African Americans, particularly those living in Harlem. At the same time, he also endorses the idea that "the dark ghetto is institutionalized pathology; it is chronic, self-perpetuating pathology."[87] To call attention to these "pathologies of American ghettos," in his book, Clark describes "what happens to human beings who are confined to depressed areas and whose access to the normal channels of economic mobility and opportunity is blocked."[88] Clark uses the authority of his own experiences, and particularly his position as an African American who had spent forty years living as "a prisoner of the ghetto," to legitimize these findings. Believing that his personal history allowed him to move beyond representing the "facts" of Harlem ghetto life to investigate nonquantifiable data such the fears, struggles, and aspirations of its people, Clark intended *Dark Ghetto* "to move, as far as it can, beyond a narrow view of fact, beyond the facts that are quantifiable and are computable, and that distort the actual lives of individual human beings into rigid statistics." Here Clark, like Hubert Humphrey, Michael Harrington, and Johnson's Administration, addresses the limitations of statistics, arguing that these "facts" overlook the "human" dimensions of the people who live in Harlem as well as the audience's ability to identify intersubjectively with the situations that they face there.

In using his personal experiences to make an emotional appeal on behalf of Harlem's ghetto inhabitants, Clark assumed a role not unlike the one that President Johnson and OEO intended the photographs to serve respectively in "The President's Choice" and in *Profile of Poverty*. Like Johnson and OEO, Clark believed that, in

contrast to the impersonal and empirically driven statistics, his intimate connection to Harlem enabled him to represent what it actually feels like to live there. Yet, while Clark embraced the intersubjective potential of his analysis, in the end he could never actually transcend his position as a successful social scientist who had not lived in Harlem for the past fifteen years: "It is the cry of a social psychologist, controlled in part by the concepts and language of social science, and as such can never express the pure authenticity of folk spontaneity or the poetic symbolism of the artist."[89] In acknowledging the restrictions that his background as a social scientist necessarily imposes on his representation of Harlem, Clark alludes to some of the difficulty—even for those who share an emotional and racially specific tie to Harlem—of communicating intersubjectively with the individuals who live there.

While Clark is forthcoming about some of the limitations that his experiences, including his field of employment, impose on his analysis, instead of embracing these differences, he quickly passes over them and posits himself and the residents of Harlem as belonging to the same cohesive and uncomplicated group. For instance, in *Dark Ghetto*, Clark defines himself as well as Harlem's inhabitants in terms of a self-perpetuating pathology that breeds damaged, self-hating personalities: "Not only is the pathology of the ghetto self-perpetuating, but one kind of pathology breeds another."[90] In so doing, Clark, in a manner similar to OEO, reduces the specificity of his social relations and lived experiences, as well as those of individuals actually living in Harlem, to collective and generalized statements about the pathological nature of African American ghetto life.

Clark's configuration of himself as well as Harlem in terms of African American self-imaging and psychological damage developed in part from two articles that he and his wife Mamie Clark co-published in the late 1940s and early 1950s on the effects of racism and segregation on the behavioral development of African American children.[91] Through this work, Clark aligned himself with a series of studies dating back to the 1930s addressing the relationship between culture, psychology, and the African American personality.[92] Of these studies the one to gain the most widespread attention was the six-year, 1,500-page study *An American Dilemma*, prepared under the direction of Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal, for which Clark served as a research assistant.[93] Responding in part to the rising numbers of African American urban poor brought about because of the Great Migration, in this study, Myrdal defined racial inequality, and by extension African American poverty, as the product of Euro-

pean American prejudice. According to Myrdal, European Americans had used racial difference to oppress African Americans since slavery. This continual inferiorization and exploitation had inflicted psychological damage upon African Americans, causing them to become instable, pathological, and trapped within a "vicious circle" of poverty and disorganization.[94]

Despite the severity of these findings, Myrdal remained optimistic about the prospect for change. In positioning racial discrimination as the product of behavior and psychology—essentially a set of human beliefs—Myrdal interpreted them as capable of modification through intervention and education. These findings became the foundation for many subsequent studies on African American people and culture, including a project on the topic of the "Negro American," for which Clark eventually became a co-editor.[95] Initially begun in 1963 as private conversations, a small planning group started to meet at the House of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in April 1964 to consider the direction and scope that a study on the "Negro American" should take. As a result of this meeting, the planning group sent invitations to twenty-four authors requesting them to contribute, and, in May 1965, these authors presented draft versions of their essays at a two-day American Academy conference on the "Negro American." Their revised essays, along with a select number of additional commissioned ones, were subsequently published in the Fall 1965 and Winter 1966 issues of *Dædalus*, along with a complete transcription of the two-day conference.[96]

In 1966, Houghton Mifflin republished these essays under the title *The Negro American*. Co-edited by Clark and sociologist Talcott Parsons, with a foreword by President Johnson, the book, as Parsons explains in his Introduction, "constitutes the most comprehensive survey on the problems and status of the Negro in American society since *An American Dilemma*."[97] Like Myrdal's study, a number of essayists in *The Negro American* focused on the psychological conditions or "human" dimensions of racial prejudice. At the same time, the contributors distinguished themselves from Myrdal in their emphasis on such social structures as power relations. While Myrdal had addressed racial inequality solely as a humanistic and hence moral dilemma, many of the essayists in *The Negro American* considered U.S. racism from the perspective of structural forces and psychology. Clark explains:

> The fact is that man has never effectively resolved the issue of power versus ideals, or of power as an instrument of the maintenance of ideals, or of ideals them-

selves as a form of power, or of fundamental emotions, such as love and hatred, as primary sources of power. The American racial dilemma is merely one of the more recent manifestations of this prolonged confusion of man.[98]

To further bring Myrdal's study up to date, a number of the contributors to *The Negro American* addressed those changes that had occurred in U.S. race relations since the publication of Myrdal's study and the extent to which Myrdal's predictions and particularly his emphasis on the "American Creed"—which he defined as a belief in human equality, individual rights, and equal opportunity for all—had held up in response to these changes. While a few of the essayists argued that Myrdal's emphasis on morals no longer had relevance, most of the authors believed that a combination of "power" and "ideals" would generate social change: "The status of the Negro American has now become so much more than 'only' a moral issue. Our emphasis is on the 'more than.' It surely is just as much a moral issue now as it was in the 1930s and 1940s."[99] Here Parsons calls attention to the newfound structural and political power that African Americans had achieved, particularly as a result of the civil rights movement. At the same time, Parsons also recognized the extent to which many of the authors in *The Negro American* still defined African Americans in terms of the psychological characteristics and behavior traits that had informed Myrdal's study. In other words, like Harrington's cultural definition of poverty, an emphasis on the "human face" still informed many of the essayists' arguments about African Americans.

This point of view certainly must have influenced the publication of thirty-two of Bruce Davidson's "American Negro" photographs within the context of *The Negro American*. In an introductory essay that accompanies Davidson's photographs, Arthur Trottenberg states, "*The Negro American* is not a 'reformist' book designed to shock the reader into a state of guilt and horror about the plight of the Negro in America."[100] Instead, evoking the example of the "strong written-visual statement" in James Agee's and Walker Evans's documentary book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Trottenberg argues that Davidson's photographs are intended to humanize the African Americans discussed in this text. In using Davidson's "American Negro" photographs in this manner, Trottenberg, much like Johnson's Administration, assumes that these images are equivalent and interchangeable blank screens upon which he can project universally recognizable character traits about African Americans that viewers will instinctively identify with on an emotional level.

Within *The Negro American*, Trottenberg arranges Davidson's photographs into four groups of eight images. Each group is intended to describe a different aspect of African American people and culture: What they look like, the conditions under which they live, how they make a living, and their involvement in the civil rights movement. In the first section of photographs, Trottenberg uses the same photograph by Davidson of an elderly man and two young boys (see figure 2.1) that Szarkowski exhibited in Davidson's one-man exhibition at MoMA, and which also circulated as part of OEO's *Profile of Poverty* and in the *Saturday Evening Post* article about the Selma March, to introduce readers to the "faces, gestures, and postures" of African Americans. Trottenberg explains: "Here are bitterness, defiance, resignation expressed in the simplest visual terms: the hand of a father on a child's head, the fixed defiant glare of an octogenarian."[101] In this statement, Trottenberg, in a manner similar to OEO's approach to this image in *Profile of Poverty*, dismisses the specific circumstances under which this image was actually taken and instead directs viewers to identify the gesture of a hand and the look of a gaze with such readily apparent human character traits as "bitterness," "defiance," and "resignation."[102]

In the last grouping, Trottenberg assumes a different tone in relation to Davidson's images. In contrast to the previous three sections in which he encouraged viewers to identify emotionally with the depicted individuals in terms of seemingly self-evident pathological behavioral traits, Trottenberg discusses the images in this last group in relation to the newfound force and single-minded resolve that African Americans have supposedly acquired through their involvement in the struggle for civil rights: "The strength of the movement is expressed in the bold visual forms of the arrested, the defiant and the determined single Negro, as well as the massing of thousands before the Washington Monument."[103] To substantiate this claim, Trottenberg includes a photograph by Davidson that depicts a black woman protestor who has been arrested and is presumably waiting inside the back of a police van to be taken to jail (figure 2.12). While in Davidson's photograph of the man and the two boys—ironically also taken as part of the civil rights movement—Trottenberg encouraged viewers to identify their sullen faces and impoverished appearances as visual signs of their "bitterness" and "resignation," in the image of the woman protestor, Trottenberg claims that her disregard for the camera, neat appearance, and composed posture will allow viewers to feel her "strength" and "determination." Here, even though Trottenberg no longer defines the relationship between viewers and the black subjects in Davidson's

Figure 2.12. Bruce Davidson, Birmingham, Alabama, 1963. © Bruce Davidson and Magnum Photos.

pictures in terms of pathologically driven behavioral traits, he still assumes that viewers will understand Davidson's images in terms of readily apparent human character traits, namely the newfound sense of power and feelings of self-confidence which the civil rights movement has naturally instilled in all African Americans.

Placing Davidson's photograph within the larger historical context of the civil rights movement reveals some of the limitations of Trottenberg's argument. In a contemporary photograph, Bob Adelman depicts the same woman protestor seated in the back of the van that Davidson also represents in his image (figure 2.13). In contrast to Davidson's photograph of the woman at a moment when she is unaware of the camera, or, using Trottenberg's terminology, staring "defiantly" away, in Adelman's photograph

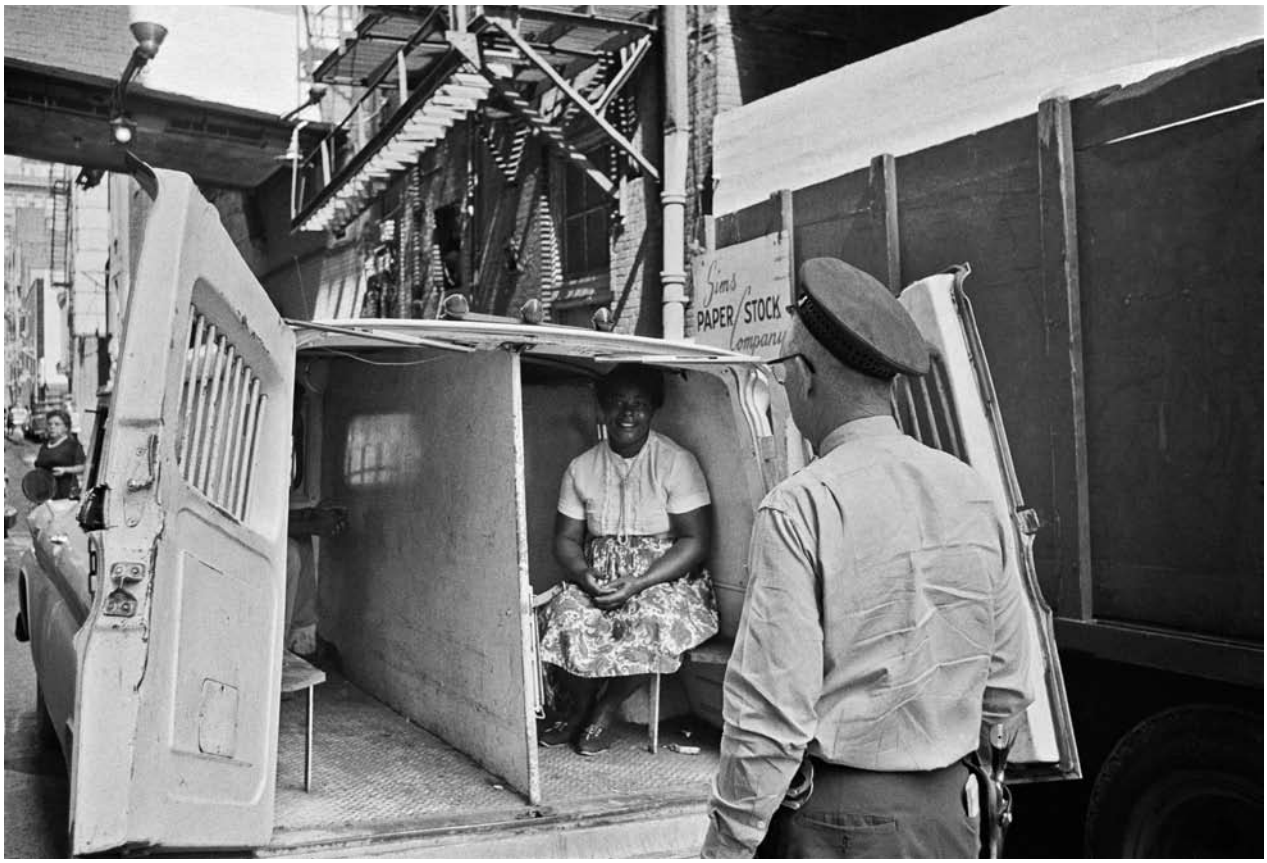


Figure 2.13. Bob Adelman, Picketer under arrest behind Loveman's department store, where the protest concerned unfair hiring practices, Birmingham, Alabama, Spring 1963. © Bob Adelman.

she gazes directly at the camera with a smile on her face. This facial expression seems particularly inconsistent, especially when considered in relation to the insubordination that Trottenberg encourages viewers to feel in relation to her. Her smile is not a "jeer" directed to the police officer standing in front of her; it is a candid response to Adelman's camera and by extension the viewer. This expression distinguishes Adelman's photograph, not only from the "defiance" and "strength" that Trottenberg posits as intrinsic to this African American civil rights activist, but also from the set of feelings, which I will return to in Chapter 3, that viewers are so often encouraged to experience in relation to civil rights photography, both then as well as today.

In a different context, the subject matter of a woman smiling for a camera would

probably seem uninteresting and commonplace; however, within the context of civil rights photography, including the picture by Davidson of the same subject, Adelman's photograph calls attention to the many complexities overlooked by Trottenberg's analysis. This is not to say that Trottenberg is wrong to encourage viewers to identify with this civil rights activist in terms of such character traits as "defiance" and "strength," or that the reaction depicted in Adelman's photograph is a more accurate representation of her. But, if considered side by side, Adelman's and Davidson's photographs reveal that those psychological character traits that social scientists sought to establish as essential to African Americans in general, and to the civil rights movement in particular, were neither transparent nor uncomplicated. In using Davidson's "American Negro" photographs to substantiate the newfound political power and personal feelings of self-confidence that African American have gained through their involvement with the civil rights movement, Trottenberg overlooks the complexity of the actual social relations and lived experiences between the subjects, viewers, and authors of these photographs, including such unpredictable and varied "structures of feeling," as reflected in the varied expressions depicted on this woman's face.

In spite of Trottenberg's, as well as OEO's, efforts to define the nature of the intersubjective relationship between viewers and the black subjects depicted in Bruce Davidson's "American Negro" photographs, like John Szarkowski, they could not control, much less anticipate, the sociohistorical contexts in which these photographs would in turn be used and circulated or the manner in which they would continue to intersect with contemporary discussions about race. For instance, for their 27 June 1967 issue, the editors at *Look* published a selection of images from Davidson's "American Negro" project, including ones that circulated in *Profile of Poverty* and *The Negro American* as well as in Szarkowski's exhibition at MoMA, as part of a photo-essay entitled "The Power of Blackness." For this photo-essay, the editors paired text written by Claude Brown, author of the critically acclaimed 1965 book *Manchild in the Promised Land*, with Davidson's photographs. Known for having escaped a criminal and drug-filled adolescence in Harlem to eventually graduate from Howard University, Brown uses his text in *Look*, in a manner similar to the function of the narrator Sonny in his book (who is largely based on Brown's own personal experiences), to encourage viewers to identify emotionally with the subjects in Davidson's images relative to the "unique ability" of African Americans "to overcome the chain, the lash, the demoralizing racial abuses of this country and all other things that would have long ago subdued a lesser

man."[104] In so doing, Brown's accompanying text again transformed the racial meanings of Davidson's "American Negro" photographs.

Within the context of *Look*, Brown encouraged readers to identify with the subjects in these photographs, particularly the black male ones, in terms of a radicalized African American manhood that was becoming increasingly popularized in the mainstream press both through the civil rights movement as well as the "long, hot summers" of racial strife taking place across major U.S. cities during the mid- to late 1960s.[105] Such behavioral traits contested those prescribed in sociological studies, particularly on the pathological nature of the matriarchal African American family that I also address in Chapter 1.

In these studies, made famous by the Moynihan Report, African American males were effectively emasculated as well as rendered psychologically and interpersonally impotent, as attested by the following passage by the executive director of the National Urban League Whitney Young that Moynihan cites in his Report: "Both as a husband and as a father the Negro male is made to feel inadequate. . . . To this situation he may react with withdrawal, bitterness toward society, aggression both within the family and racial group, self-hatred, or crime."[106] Yet, at the same time that Brown's text in *Look* serves to refute these demeaning representations of African American manhood that were perpetuated in contemporary racial discourse as well as in OEO's and Trottenberg's use of Davidson's photographs, ultimately his positive readings of these images are fundamentally not that different from these so-called negative portrayals. Both portrayals attempt to fix the humanistic or intersubjective potential of Davidson's photographs in terms of naturalized and normativized conventions of race instead of embracing the different and even conflicting ways in which their racial meanings were formed, shifted, and even reconstituted according to the social relations and historical context in which they were embedded. In the end, as these divergent uses and meanings of Davidson's "American Negro" photographs attest, the ideas about race and the self embedded in these images cannot be so easily pinned down. And, while there remain some major limitations regarding these uses of Davidson's "American Negro" photographs, especially with respect to the assumptions that are made about the black subjects depicted in them, they nonetheless attest to the impossibility of isolating the meanings, and more specifically the racial meanings, of Davidson's images from the social and historical terms of their production and reception.

CHAPTER THREE

Getting Down to the Feeling

Bruce Davidson, Roy DeCarava, and the Civil Rights Movement

Although I never wanted to change the world with photography, I did want to change myself, and I used it as a vehicle to uncover feelings that were buried deep within me.

—BRUCE DAVIDSON, "VOYAGES OF SELF-DISCOVERY: UNKNOWN WORLDS CLOSE TO HOME"

Feeling Through Photography

In the previous chapter, I address some of the conflicting uses and meanings of Bruce Davidson's "American Negro" photographs. As part of this discussion, I attempt to contextualize these photographs in terms of the social relations and historical conditions of their making and circulation. In this chapter, I expand this analysis by considering not only the social and historically specific terms under which Davidson's "American Negro" photographs were produced and received, but more important, the complex set of feelings that Davidson experienced in relation to these images. I am interested in Davidson's private responses to these photographs not because I want to lionize these images in terms of personal expression. Instead, as in my previous chapters, my concern is how Davidson's attempt to use the feelings that the black subjects of these photographs evoked in him intersect with, and are complicated by, contemporary discussions of race and more particularly the function of violence within the civil rights movement.

Davidson's "American Negro" project originated from a commercial assignment that he received in May 1961 to cover the Freedom Riders on their trip from Montgomery, Alabama, to Jackson, Mississippi. When Davidson embarked on this assignment, he was experiencing a great deal of personal anxiety in relation to his

photographic practice. Due largely to positive responses generated from the recent publication of his photographs in *Esquire*, Alexander Liberman had given Davidson a job working as a fashion photographer at *Vogue*.[1] Davidson was initially excited by this prospect; but these fashion photographs ultimately left him feeling "empty" and "removed from the world." He longed for the type of emotional affinity that he had experienced in relation to the subjects of earlier photographic projects. The violence that Davidson witnessed in the South provided such a connection. Davidson explains:

> These people were moving somebody and they were moving with tremendous courage. It would take somebody with tremendous courage who would lose everything—possibly even his life to attend a meeting, to walk down a road, to carry a sign. Even though I was very frightened—the photographs took me, the situations took me.[2]

In short, in the brutality of the civil rights movement and the fear that it produced in him, Davidson found a "way back to [him]self."[3]

In fact, Davidson felt such strong feelings in response to the subject matter of these photographs that between 1961 and 1965, he returned to the South seven more times, using financial support from a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship as well as from other commercial assignments that he acquired through his membership in the photography collective, Magnum Photos, to continue to photograph civil rights activities there. Most of the images that Davidson took as part of this four-year project depict aspects of the civil rights movement, both those that attracted international attention as well as smaller ones otherwise overlooked by the print media.[4] At the same time, Davidson never intended these images to function as transparent instruments of social activism and reform or as historical documents of the movement itself. Instead, for Davidson, the feelings elicited by these photographs served a decidedly personal function: "The pictures, and my relationship to the subject of the pictures, are about the same thing: the continuous struggle to find myself."[5]

This use stands in contrast to most civil rights photographs, especially those produced as part of SNCC Photo or the Southern Documentary Project, which enlisted and helped train dozens of photographers whose images, in turn, the Project circulated in newspapers and magazines as well as in exhibitions, pamphlets, and posters, to help secure public sympathy as well as political and financial support for the movement.[6] In August 1962, for example, Danny Lyon, who served as SNCC's first staff photogra-

pher, photographed Freedom Rider and SNCC Field Secretary John Lewis kneeling in prayer with fellow protestors at a civil rights demonstration outside a segregated swimming pool in Cairo, Illinois (figure 3.1). For SNCC, Lyon's image offered an important activist tool in their organization's struggle for civil rights. "SNCC's idea of photography was functional," recalls SNCC's Communications Director Julian Bond, "it was to provide pictures for SNCC's propaganda and for press releases to those papers that would print them, and it was used to illustrate fund-raising brochures and to document the movement."[7] Accordingly, a year after Lyon took his photograph of Lewis, Mark Suckle at the Atlanta SNCC office circulated a cropped version of the image as a poster with the following text inscribed in bold along the bottom on the image: "Come Let Us Build a New World Together. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee." Ten thousand copies of the poster were sold primarily in the North for one dollar each; the proceeds were used to fund the work of SNCC.[8]

In using photography to acquire support and recognition for their organization's civil rights efforts, SNCC depended on the assumed legibility of the content in Lyon's photograph as well as the capacity of this subject matter to affect social change. In short, for SNCC, ensuring that viewers recognize the subjects depicted in Lyon's image as members of SNCC participating in nonviolent activities was of greater significance than knowing either who took the picture or the photographer's personal feelings about these subjects. As the poster's caption "Come Let Us Build a New World Together" as well as the incorporation of their organization's title in lieu of Lyon's name suggests, it was imperative for SNCC that the image clearly identify their organization and its use of nonviolent tactics. Lyon largely concurred with this intention: "To the watching world, SNCC was faceless . . . my photographs . . . were used to help create a public image for SNCC."[9]

This emphasis on the social value of Lyon's image represents the standard approach to civil rights photography during the 1960s and even today. Typically, these pictures are valued for their legible social content, their capacity to affect social change, and as historical evidence. In short, their function as social documents is emphasized over their status as personal or even aesthetic representations.[10] The decision of SNCC Photo to model their organization on the tradition of social documentary photography made famous by FSA photographers during the 1930s corroborates this bias: "SNCC Photo also documents the rural life of the South in a continuation of the work begun by Walker Evans and others under the Farm Security Administration pro-

Figure 3.1. Danny Lyon, Cairo, Illinois, 1962. © Danny Lyon and Magnum Photos.

gram in the 1930s."[11] The Southern Documentary Project, which photographer Matt Herron founded during the summer of 1964, subscribed to the same goal: "Insofar as I understood how the FSA worked, I tried to work that same way."[12]

Yet, not all civil rights photographs were taken as transparent instruments of social activism and reform. A number of photographers working during this period sought to move beyond documenting social injustices in the South to convey their feelings about these events. As a non-Movement photographer who came to the South, at least after his initial visit, on his own accord, Davidson was not obligated to follow the model of social documentary photography endorsed by the photographers of SNCC

Photo and the Southern Documentary Project. Instead, using the financial assistance provided through his affiliation with Magnum Photos as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship, Davidson was able to use his "American Negro" photographs and the feelings that they produced in him as vehicles of self-exploration.

It is precisely Davidson's commitment to personal expression in his "American Negro" photographs that led Cornell Capa to include a selection of these images in an audiovisual library series that he produced in collaboration with Scholastic Magazines in 1972. Entitled *Images of Man: Scholastic's Concerned Photographer Program*, this series, conceived as a combination of "sound and sight," included images—available either as sets of slides in a carousel tray or as filmstrips—by Bruce Davidson, Robert Capa, W. Eugene Smith, and Don McCullin—as well as spoken narration by each photographer in the form of audio cassette tapes or records.[13] By including personal statements about the images in the form of the photographer's own voices, *Images of Man* calls attention to the centrality of a photographer's feelings about the practice of "concerned photography." This focus was especially true for the section on Davidson entitled "Voyages of Self-Discovery: Unknown Worlds Close to Home."[14] In his introduction to this section, Capa reiterates the importance of feelings to Davidson's pictures: "Bruce got into all the relevant issues of our past decade in a highly personal manner." For Capa, though, it was not just Davidson's distinctly personal approach to the medium that distinguished him as a "concerned photographer"; more important, it was the universality of his point of view: "Whatever he gets into is of great interest to him. It is fortunate that how he sees it is of great interest to us as well."[15] Here Capa assumes that the self-referential nature of Davidson's pictures and the feelings that they evoke in him are both self-evident and universal.

For one group of students who used this series, Davidson's feelings, at least as they were reflected in his pictures, were not as obvious as Capa or even Davidson assumed. In a response to a questionnaire sent out by *Images of Man* editor Sheila Turner, Sister Leah Caliri from St. Mary's High School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, describes her use of this series in the classroom. Initially, she showed her students the filmstrip of Davidson's images without the accompanying soundtrack so as to determine what the students thought Davidson was trying to communicate in his pictures. After a discussion of these responses, she then showed the filmstrip again, this time with Davidson's personal narration. In her report, she notes how surprised the students were to discover how the largely negative reactions that they had experienced

in relation to the images differed from the more affirming personal reading offered by Davidson.

According to Sister Caliri, this discrepancy between the feelings that Davidson assumed his photographs evoked and how they were actually interpreted offered an excellent "demonstration in point of view!"[16] Here Sister Caliri offers a more complicated understanding of the relationship of feelings to the practice of "concerned photography," one that extends beyond intentionality to consider the multifaceted relationship of readership. In emphasizing the universality of "concerned photography," Capa largely overlooks this important context. While committed to emphasizing the importance of feelings to the practice of Davidson's "concerned photography," Capa assumes that these feelings are fixed and resolute. In reality, as the responses to the *Images of Man* by Sister Caliri's students attest, their meanings are determined as much by the people who read the images as by the points of view of those who make them.

In this chapter, I consider how a similar set of assumptions about the unmediated relationship between feelings and photography informed Davidson's approach to the black subjects of his "American Negro" project. To better understand the nature of this relationship and the extent to which it intersected with and was complicated by race, I first trace the development of Davidson's self-referential approach to photography by means of a series of images that he took in the late 1950s of white teenage members of a Brooklyn gang calling themselves "the Jokers." While their decidedly personal function is what concerns me most about these photographs, I again do not use them to elevate the aestheticized authorial voice of Davidson. Instead, I attempt to use the emptiness that the white subjects of these photographs produced in Davidson to contextualize his subsequent exploration of selfhood in relation to the black subjects in his "American Negro" photographs. To put it differently, even though Davidson posits his photographs of the gang members as serving an entirely private function, I argue that the feelings that they, as well as later his "American Negro" photographs, produced in him were socially and historically determined. To further address the social dimensions of these feelings, I contextualize photographs from Davidson's "American Negro" project and the feelings that they elicited in relation both to ideological debates about the function of violence within the civil rights movement and to a selection of "personal" as well as "commercial" photographs taken by Davidson's contemporary, Roy DeCarava. In so doing, my aim, as in my previous chapters, is to

use this analysis of the relationship between feelings and photography to advance the book's larger argument about the complex ways in which postwar photographic representations of race, including those that attempted to depict one's most private inner feelings, remained embedded within the social systems in which they were produced and received.

"The Continuous Struggle to Find Myself"

Born in Chicago in 1933 to a Jewish family of Polish origins, Bruce Davidson developed an early interest in photography. By the age of ten, he owned a brownie camera and had a rudimentary darkroom. Davidson continued to pursue photography during high school, and later studied it as an undergraduate at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and as a graduate student at Yale University. Throughout this time, what interested Davidson most about the medium was its self-referential potential. Unlike other photographers who sought to impartially record the world around them, Davidson used his camera in a more self-reflective and distinctly personal manner.

The question of how to use the seemingly objective medium of photography to explore and communicate these inner feelings posed a serious challenge for Davidson. Like Kamoinge member Louis Draper, Davidson initially found inspiration in W. Eugene Smith's compassionate approach to photography. Yet, while the emotionality of Smith had encouraged Draper to photograph black subjects, Davidson was inspired to seek out a photojournalistic position at *Life*.[17] After securing a freelance position with the magazine in 1957, however, disillusionment quickly replaced Davidson's idealism: "I was disappointed in my work; it seemed trite and empty. I felt the need to belong when I took pictures—to discover something inside myself while making an emotional connection to my subjects."[18]

Part of Davidson's dissatisfaction with photojournalism, and Smith's approach in particular, was their confidence in the photographer's ability to serve as a witness. Even though Smith acknowledged that reportage is never entirely impartial—"Honest—yes! Objective—no!"—he strongly believed that photojournalists held certain responsibilities both to their audiences and to their subjects: "It is important that the photographer-journalist have (besides the essential mastery of his tools) a strong sense of integrity and the intelligence to understand and present his subject matter accordingly."[19] Thus, in reporting a situation, Smith, much like Edward Steichen, believed that it was essential for photojournalists to honestly re-create for the

viewer the closest thing attainable to the actual event as well as the feelings associated with it. A contemporary corollary is found in the 1952 book *Words and Pictures: An Introduction to Photojournalism*, written by *Life*'s former Executive Editor Wilson Hicks: "It is the sensitivity to the emotions of others, and to the moods and atmospheres of their environments, that photojournalism requires of the photographers."[20]

Photographing subjects from such an intimate perspective required extensive preparation. Accordingly, Smith neither depicted his subjects spontaneously nor was he "content to accept images which 'just happen' before him." Instead, he would spend weeks researching the lives of his subjects, believing that such familiarization would help him to better understand them and in turn to produce more "truthful" representations of them: "Much journalistic vision depends upon the kind of research and associations that can lead to perceptive understandings."[21] In addition to immersing himself in the lives of his subjects, for Smith, designing the layout of his photo-essays played an equally important role in his compassionate representation of them. He thus spent as much time and emotional energy on the printing, arrangement, and sequencing of his photo-essays as he did on getting to know his subjects or even photographing them. It was through such immersion—both prior to and after the shot—that Smith believed he could most sincerely re-create the feelings of his subjects for the viewer.[22]

Like Smith, Davidson also frequently immersed himself in the lives of his subjects, photographing them for extended periods of time. Yet, instead of using this approach to form an intimate relationship with his subjects and hence represent them more honestly, Davidson adopted this perspective largely as a means to understand himself: "I look at people with my camera, but as much to find out what's inside me—to reflect my own emotional state, the struggles, the states of consciousness, and to discover who the person was who took the picture."[23] Here Davidson suggests that he is more interested in representing the feelings that his subjects produced in him than in re-creating for the viewer what his subjects felt. In sum, while Smith used his camera to explain the world, Davidson photographed the world to understand himself.

Finding assignments that allowed Davidson to adopt such a personal approach was not as easy a task. To overcome this problem, in 1958, Davidson submitted a portfolio of images to the international photography cooperative known as Magnum Photos, and, with the approval of a majority of its members, Davidson became an associate member and a year later a full member of Magnum.[24] One of the benefits of

working for Magnum was that photographers could choose their own assignments, as Magnum founder David ("Chim") Seymour explains: "Magnum was founded to give its members the opportunity to organize their own photographic life in accordance with individual desires."[25] This autonomy was essential to Davidson in his effort to use his photographs as vehicles of self-discovery.

Davidson began the first of these "personal" assignments in 1958 after a co-worker at Magnum told him about a circus set up at the Palisades Amusement Park in New Jersey. There, Davidson spent numerous days photographing the performers and later traveled with the troupe for several weeks, taking extensive pictures of a dwarf named Jimmy. Likewise, in 1958 and 1959, Davidson spent eleven months photographing "the Jokers," whose "rumbles" frequently appeared in the headlines of the local newspapers. In both projects, Davidson found subjects—the dwarf and the gang members—with whom he felt an "emotional connection." As Davidson reiterates, "I never felt a separation between myself and what I was photographing because I was really down to the feeling."[26]

In using his photographs to establish an "emotional connection" between himself and his subjects, Davidson relied in particular on the instruction provided by photographer Ralph Hattersley at RIT. As part of his undergraduate class "Creative Illustration," Hattersley introduced Davidson to the work of numerous photographers, including Smith, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and Robert Frank, among others. While all three of these photographers impacted Davidson's practice, in the end, Cartier-Bresson's book *The Decisive Moment* made the greatest impression.[27] A co-production between the French publishers Teriade and the American Simon and Schuster, *The Decisive Moment*, originally published in France as *Images à la Sauvette*, came out in 1952 with some one hundred photographs by Cartier-Bresson taken throughout the United States, Europe, and various emerging nations. The pictures in this book greatly impressed Davidson; yet it was the book's accompanying text, in which Cartier-Bresson outlined his widely emulated philosophy of photography known as the "decisive moment," that truly revolutionized Davidson's thinking about himself in relation to the medium.

As I also discuss in Chapter 1, according to Cartier-Bresson, the "decisive moment" represents "the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression."[28] In this statement, Cartier-Bresson renders photography, in

contrast to the previsualization demanded by Smith, into an instinctual act in which the eye, body, and mind of a photographer come together to intuitively recognize moments of formal and psychological consequence. Besides a subject revealing its essence to a photographer, for Cartier-Bresson the "decisive moment" also signified the moment when a photographer discovers herself or himself in a picture:

> The discovery of oneself is made concurrently with the discovery of the world around us which can mold us, but which can also be affected by us. A balance must be established between these two worlds—the one inside us and the one outside us. As the result of a constant reciprocal process, both these worlds come together to form a single one.[29]

Here, Cartier-Bresson posits the "decisive moment" as a coming together of what the photographer sees on the inside as well as the outside: "As I photograph with my little Leica, I have the feeling that there is something so right about it: with one eye that is closed one looks within. With the other eye that is open one looks without."[30]

Davidson approached the subjects of his dwarf and gang photographs with a similar binary vision. For instance, even though Davidson spent eleven months photographing the daily activities of "the Jokers," he did not try to develop the kind of intimate relationship advocated by W. Eugene Smith. In fact, when asked about the nature of the gang's acceptance of him, Davidson replied: "It never occurred to me that they had to accept me. I didn't try to be one of them, nor did I expect them to be like me."[31] Here Davidson again distinguishes himself from the involved participation of Smith, who argued that "to photograph [subjects] as they must be seen means that I must understand enough to know what it is I have to see."[32] Smith believed that knowing his subjects intimately allowed him to represent them with honesty and integrity. Davidson, in contrast, approached his subjects more spontaneously so as to better understand himself: "I went into the world of those kids not knowing why, really. That's a very important part of my photography—not knowing why—being attracted to a world, exploring it, finding myself, finding truth, and finding meaning inside a world I didn't know."[33] In the end, even though Davidson sympathized with his subjects and their marginalized status in particular, he was less interested in imparting this understanding than in using his subjects to explore himself.

This focus on personal feelings, however, made it difficult for Davidson to find suitable venues for the publication of his dwarf and gang photographs. Having pub-

lished previously with *Life*, Davidson initially submitted a selection of these photographs to this magazine, but they were turned down. Davidson subsequently submitted these photographs to *Esquire* where they were published respectively in the January and June issues of 1960.[34] Their acceptance at *Esquire* came about largely because of efforts at the magazine to change the editorial and visual content from "fiction to reporting the contemporary scene." As Thomas W. Southall further explains: "*Esquire*'s shift . . . inspired the magazine to seek out young photographers whose work embodied a personal viewpoint."[35] Thus, with the publication of his images at *Esquire*, Davidson joined the ranks of photographers such as Robert Frank and Diane Arbus, whose personal "visions" were also featured on the pages of this magazine in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Though the "personal viewpoint" of Davidson's images appealed to the editors at *Esquire*, they did not, as they would for Arbus, encourage Davidson to write the accompanying text. Instead, when Davidson's gang photographs were published as part of the photo-essay "Brooklyn Minority Report" in the June 1960 issue of *Esquire*, the editors hired Norman Mailer to write the text. Mailer approached this assignment in a manner similar to his provocative essay "The White Negro," which was originally published in 1957 in *Dissent* and then subsequently reprinted that same year as a paperback by City Lights Books, and then again in 1959 in Mailer's *Advertisements for Myself*. In this essay, Mailer identifies the now-famous "American existentialist" or "hipster," whom he describes as "the man" who "divorce[s] [him]self from society, [exists] without roots, [sets] out on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self."[36] To attain this status, Mailer argues that the "hipster" (who in Mailer's analysis is male as well as white) has to wed the "Negro." This is because, according to Mailer, African Americans and especially their music, as theatre historian David Savran explains, "embody an ecstatic, orgasmic, and utopian wholeness and plenitude that have been lost in white, bourgeois American culture."[37] In positioning the white "hipster" as black, Mailer, while essentializing African American men in terms of nature and the primitive, also uses them to fracture contemporary notions of European American homogeneity and, more important, to destabilize the model of the middle-class nuclear white family in which "the American male," according to sociologist Morris Zelditch, "by definition, *must* 'provide' for his family. He is *responsible* for the support of his wife and children . . . and his *primary* function in the family is to supply an 'income,' to be the 'breadwinner.'"[38]

For Mailer, however, African Americans were not the only individuals who could release white "hipsters" from the restraints and conformity of normative 1950s masculinity. Other models of rebellion included juvenile delinquents, such as depicted in Davidson's photographs of "the Jokers."[39] Mailer alludes to the oppositional potential of these gang members in his accompanying essay in *Esquire* where he assigns their (bad) behaviors, not to such structural factors as "broken homes, submarginal housing, overcrowding in the schools and cultural starvation," but to "one disease, the national disease—it is boredom." Here Mailer seeks to dispel the influx of government, sociological, and media studies during the 1950s, including a seven-part front-page series in the *New York Times* that ascribed juvenile delinquency as "pitiful, tragic, dangerous."[40] Mailer clarifies this point,

> If we are to speak of shadows which haunt America today, the great shadow is that there is a place for everybody in our country who is willing to live the way others want him to, and talk the way others want him to, with our big, new, thick, leaden vocabulary of political, psychological, and sociological verbiage.[41]

For Mailer, then, like the "Negro," the juvenile delinquent is a dissident subject whose very refusal to "talk the way others want him" serves to expose widespread anxieties about the insufficiencies of normative masculinities during the 1950s.

What is interesting about Mailer's conceptualization of the "hipster" and the juvenile delinquent is that, even though their status as rebels is contingent upon their withdrawal from the social world, his definition of them necessarily depends on their relationship to the values and morals set forth by middle-class white America. Davidson's photographs of "the Jokers" function in a similar manner. Like Mailer, Davidson also sought to separate his photographs from the editorializing, in his case, documentary or photojournalistic studies on juvenile delinquency. Davidson explains: "Actually the teenage gang essay is really a personal reflection. It's not a clinical study of a teenage gang. It's my exposure and my seeing myself inside their world."[42] In this passage, he distinguishes his work from such "clinical studies" as found in the *New York Times*'s seven-part series on New York's youth gangs—which sought to help readers "understand the teen-age gang and to comprehend its significance" as well as some of its underlying structural causes—so as to emphasize the decidedly private function of his photographs. Yet, while Davidson may posit his relationship to his gang photographs as personal and individual, in actuality, like the "hipster" and juvenile

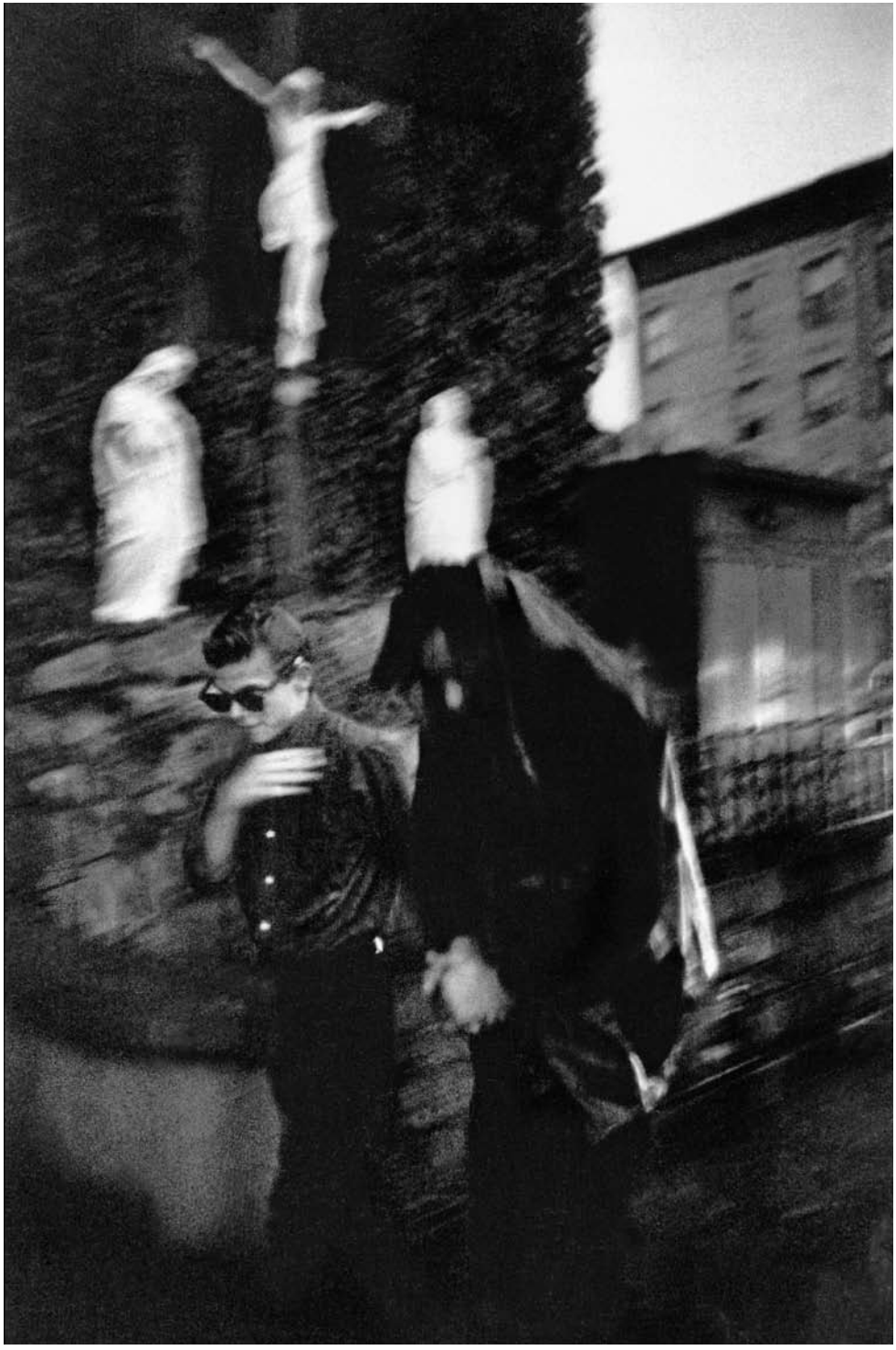


Figure 3.2. Bruce Davidson, Brooklyn gang, New York City, 1959. © Bruce Davidson and Magnum Photos.

delinquent whom Mailer constitutes relationally in terms of normative, white, middle-class masculinity, the feelings that Davidson experienced in relation to the subjects of his gang photographs were also socially and historically determined.

Unlike his mentor, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Davidson did not meet the members of "the Jokers" by chance on the street. Instead, due to the widespread attention given to the problems of juvenile delinquency during the 1950s Davidson read about "the Jokers" in the newspaper. He subsequently contacted a worker for the New York City Youth Board, who introduced Davidson to the gang.[43] But it was not just Davidson's prior knowledge about gangs or the manner in which he met "the Jokers" that shaped the feelings that he experienced while photographing them. Davidson's whiteness was also unavoidably intertwined with the complex set of feelings that these subjects evoked in him. For instance, even though Davidson shared the same race as the subjects of his gang photographs and was even relatively close to their age, he nevertheless remembers being "very scared" of the "unpredictable" nature of these gang members. "I was never sure," recalls Davidson, "if their anger was going to focus on me."[44] This statement not only attests to the danger and aggression so frequently evoked in relation to the masculinity of gang culture but, more important, it also reveals Davidson's apprehension of what he had assumed was their shared whiteness.[45] The particularity of Davidson's Jewish whiteness—which he would explore more explicitly in the early 1970s in relation to a project on the Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer and residents of the Lower East Side—in comparison with the Irish and Italian Catholic whiteness of the gang members would have only compounded these feelings of anxiety.[46]

A photograph by Bruce Davidson of two gang members walking in front of the Roman Catholic Holy Name Church in Brooklyn, and published as part of "The Brooklyn Minority Report" in *Esquire*, offers a visual corollary (figure 3.2).[47] According to art historian Patricia Vettel Tom (later Vettel-Becker) in this image, Davidson, in a manner similar to Mailer's "hipster," elevates the depicted juvenile delinquents to sainted heroes "who can lead the way out of a repressive postwar society through the restoration of the instinctual" (represented in this case by the mysticism of Catholicism).[48] While Mailer's writings may well suggest such an interpretation, this reading largely assigns Davidson's photograph an illustrative function. In so doing, it also overlooks important tensions in the formal construction of Davidson's photograph—a feature underscored by its reproduction as a full-page print in *Esquire*—that serve, in a manner analogous to the fracturing of normative masculinities

by Mailer's "hipster" and the juvenile delinquent, to complicate unified or stable notions of whiteness.

In his photograph, Davidson depicts two gang members walking briskly past the Roman Catholic Holy Name Church at a moment when the glowing white bodies of a crucified Christ and two saints, including the Blessed Mother Mary, hover above them. Given that it is raining, the boys initially do not seem to pay much attention to these religious figures. The boy on the right has pulled his jacket over his head, obscuring his view of them, while the other boy, who wears sunglasses, gazes downward, suggesting his indifference to his surroundings. Still, given the relative darkness of the image, one cannot help but notice those elements of whiteness within the composition. Besides the glowing statues, the boys' hands are also prominently lit. Given the dreary weather, one might easily read the clutched hand of the boy on the left as keeping the rain from penetrating his shirt. Yet, the hand gesture of the boy on the right is more difficult to interpret. Instead of using his hands to keep hold of his jacket, which is draped over his head, he clasps them together at his waist. A retrospective statement by Robert (Bengie) Powers, the boy depicted on the left, helps to explain this discrepancy. He recalls,

> We were all Catholic school kids. Some of us got thrown out, but it didn't stop our families. We still had to go to Mass on Sunday. And the statue with the Christ on the cross and the Blessed Mother, every time we passed that, no matter what, we would bless ourselves.[49]

According to this passage, then, the boy on the right is actually clasping his hands in response to the holy figures that he passes. Likewise, this passage also suggests that the boy on the left is not clutching his shirt in protection from the rain, rather he is crossing himself. In short, though neither gang member stops to pray to these white statues, their Catholicism is nonetheless made palpable by their prominently lit hand gestures as well as their positions directly under these dutiful, glowing white holy figures.

In photographing the boys at this particular moment and under these lighting conditions, Davidson thus at once links their whiteness to Catholicism and in turn dissociates it from his own (Jewish) whiteness. The manner in which the boys walk past Davidson without acknowledging his presence offers further evidence of the detachment between photographer and his subjects. But, while this distance may in-

deed support the private function of these photographs, it fails to account for the "emotional connection" that Davidson previously noted in relation to these subjects. Though Davidson may have remained detached from these gang members, a feeling heightened by his Jewishness, the "emotional connection" that he also experienced in response to them would have served to remind Davidson of the unattainability of whiteness itself. This contradiction, of course, is the paradox of whiteness. As Richard Dyer explains:

> In sum, white as a skin colour is just as unstable, unbounded a category as white as a hue, and therein lies its strength. It enables whiteness to be presented as an apparently attainable, flexible, varied category, while setting an always movable criterion of inclusion, the ascribed whiteness of your skin.[50]

In short, in the particularity of the gang members' Catholic whiteness, Davidson realized what his own Jewish whiteness was not and could never be.

In his "struggle" to find himself through his photographs of "the Jokers," Davidson, while establishing an "emotional connection" with his European American subjects, also came to realize the "unstable" and "unbounded" nature of his white selfhood: "In staying close to them, I uncovered my own feelings of failure, frustration, and rage."[51] I would argue that it was the anxiety produced by these feelings of emptiness more so than his fashion photography that caused Davidson to seek out the black subjects in his "American Negro" photographs. Even though Davidson sought to separate himself from the "involved participation" of W. Eugene Smith, he was not ready, as Richard Dyer further writes about the ideal of whiteness, to be "nothing in particular, the representative human, the subject without properties."[52] Yet ironically, in turning to the black subjects in his "American Negro" photographs to escape these feelings of emptiness, he failed to remember what it means to be different and instead presumed that his white selfhood was once more, using the words of Dyer, "unmarked, unspecific, and universal."[53]

When Davidson began his "American Negro" project in May 1961 to cover the Freedom Riders, part of his assignment included photographing civil rights activist John Lewis (figure 3.3), who was also the subject of Danny Lyon's photograph for SNCC (see figure 3.1). In contrast to Lyon who depicts Lewis frontally as he kneels in a moment of prayer, Davidson photographs him from the back so that only his head and part of his back are visible. In photographing Lewis from this angle, Davidson em-

Figure 3.3. Bruce Davidson, Freedom Rides, Montgomery, Alabama, 1961. © Bruce Davidson and Magnum Photos.

phasizes a white bandage on the back of Lewis's head, covering a wound that he had received three days earlier after being beaten by an angry mob at the Montgomery bus depot.[54] Because Davidson places this wound directly in the center of his composition, he encourages the viewer to read the image in terms of the brutality already sustained by Lewis as part of the Freedom Rides. For Davidson, this focus on the violence of the Rides was imperative in his effort to use these images to understand himself. But while Davidson may well posit these feelings about the violence of the civil rights as unique to himself, like the fear that he initially experienced in relation to the whiteness of the subjects of his gang photographs, their personal meanings could not be detached from the ideological structures of the social world.

Figure 3.4. Photograph in "Bi-Racial Riders Decide to Go On," *New York Times*, 24 May 1961. AP/Wide World Photos.

On 4 May 1961, John Lewis, a student at the American Baptist Theological Institute in Nashville as well as a member of SNCC, joined a group of thirteen racially mixed Freedom Riders as they boarded two buses in Washington, D.C. to protest outdated Jim Crow laws and the South's noncompliance with a three-year-old U.S. Supreme Court decision that prohibited segregation in all interstate public transportation facilities.[55] Lewis became the first casualty of the Rides after being attacked

while trying to enter the waiting room during a stop at the Greyhound terminal in Rock Hill, South Carolina. On 20 May, Lewis was attacked and beaten again by pro-segregationists after arriving at the Montgomery bus depot on a subsequent Freedom Ride from Birmingham, Alabama. Three days after this second attack, Lewis, along with Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer, and Reverend Ralph Abernathy, spoke about the future of the Rides at a press conference in Montgomery. Davidson took his photograph of Lewis at this event, ostensibly while on assignment for the *New York Times*.[56] The image, however, never appeared in that newspaper.[57] Instead, on 24 May 1961, the *Times* reproduced a photograph of Lewis at the same press conference taken by an Associated Press (AP) photographer, alongside an article by Claude Sitton entitled "Bi-Racial Riders Decide to Go On" (figure 3.4).[58] While the circumstances surrounding this substitution remain unclear, a comparison of the two images addresses the distinctly personal perspective from which Davidson photographed the Rides.

As noted earlier, due to the centrality of Lewis's bandaged head in Davidson's composition, the viewer is encouraged to read his image in terms of the violence that Lewis had already sustained as part of the Freedom Rides. In the AP photograph that connection is obscured largely because, in contrast to the two panelists represented in Davidson's image, all four of the panelists appear within the picture's tightly cropped composition. This framing device serves to draw attention away from the bandage on Lewis's head, which is positioned slightly above the composition's center, and onto the faces of the three panelists who appear in a diagonal line that extends from the middle to the background of the composition. This focus differs from Davidson's image. Instead of waiting for the other two panelists to lean forward, Davidson photographs them at a moment when they are almost completely hidden behind King's body. Besides accentuating the bandaged wound on Lewis's head, this choice of framing draws attention to the pose and facial expression of King. In the AP picture, King appears in a conventional profile position, gazing straight ahead and without any emotion. In contrast, Davidson depicts King at a moment when he pivots his shoulders slightly to the left and clenches his right hand under his cocked chin, as if he were about to pontificate. As a result of this contained action, Davidson adds an emotional intensity to the scene missing from the AP photograph.

Some may argue that the selection of a more emotionally reserved image by the *New York Times* editors serves to guarantee the objectivity of their news reporting.

After all, because of his choice of framing and vantage point, Davidson not only amplifies the dramatic impact of his picture but also makes explicit his point of view regarding the violence of the Rides. Lacking such nuances, the AP photograph appears to have naturally selected itself. Yet, while the AP photograph may seem "authorless," as Stuart Hall points out, "these operational values are not, in the end, neutral values."[59] According to Hall, even the most ostensibly neutral news photographs "operate as a foreground structure with a hidden 'deep structure,'" which, as he further explains, "continually play against the set of on-going beliefs and constructions about the world which most of its readers share."[60] Thus, although the AP photograph may appear neutral and objective, it too has an ideological structure.

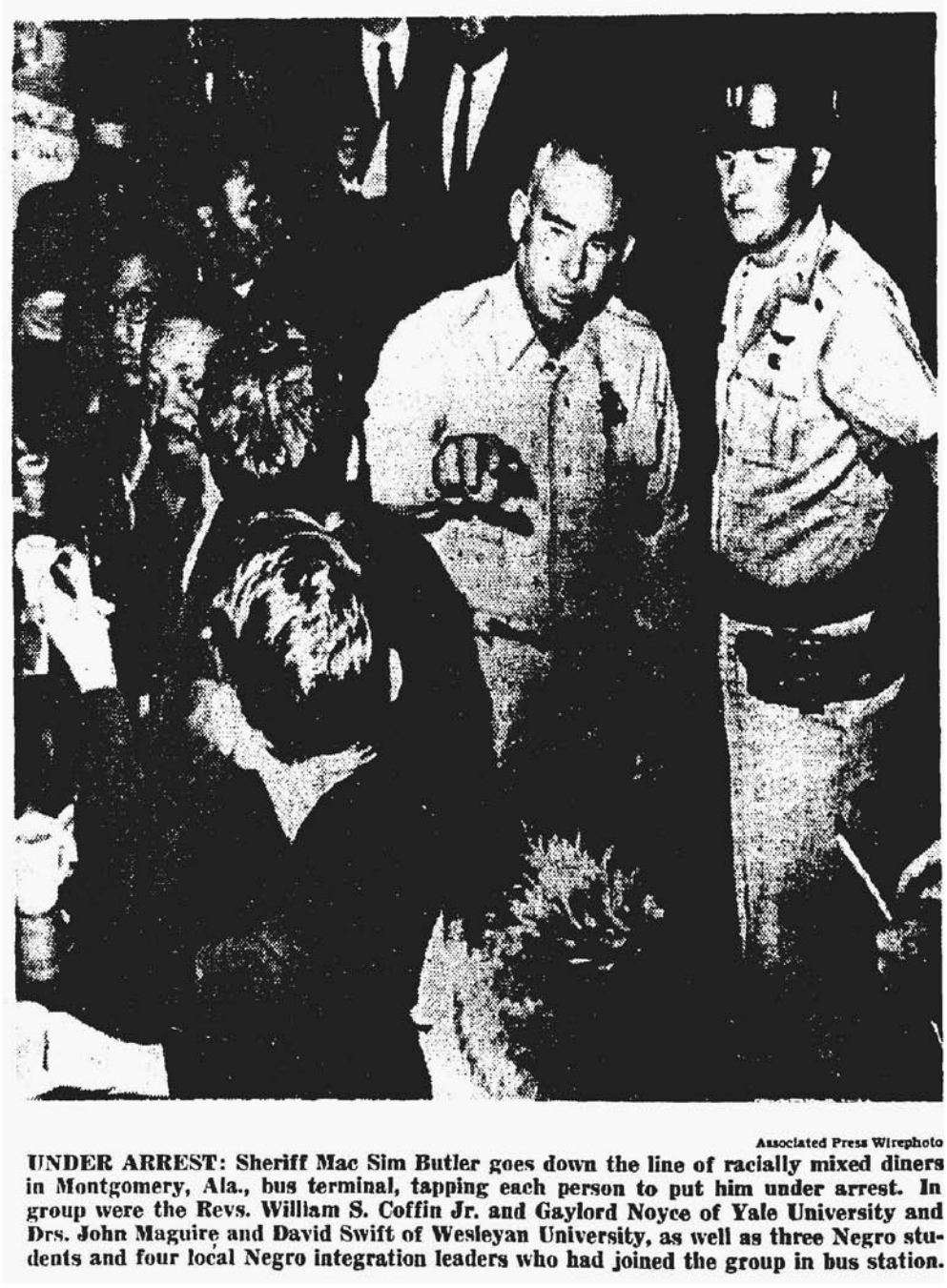
In the article accompanying the AP photograph, King makes the following statement about the decision of the Freedom Riders to continue, despite imminent violence, their journey across the South: "These students are willing to face death if necessary."[61] In appending a photograph that depicts its subjects in a largely detached and indifferent manner, the *Times* editors deflate the emotional intensity of King's words and also discourage readers from thinking about the violence that the Freedom Riders had already incurred. Since the attacks on the initial two Freedom Buses, numerous articles about the violence encountered by Riders such as John Lewis, as well as photographs graphically documenting this brutality, had circulated—often as front-page news stories—in the national and international print media, including the *Times*.[62] In selecting an image in which attention is diverted away from the bandaged wound on Lewis's head, the *Times* editors attempt to sever their readers' associations with these previous events. In so doing, an ideological shift in their coverage of the Freedom Rides is revealed.

On 21 May, one day after Lewis was brutally beaten at the Montgomery bus depot and two days prior the press conference responding to this event, the *Times* published an article by Sitton in which he discusses at length the technique and purpose of passive resistance in the civil rights movement.[63] Unlike much of the previous coverage of nonviolent resistance, no images accompany this article. Instead, appended to the article is a map illustrating "Sit-ins and Negro Concentrations in the South." Like the use of the emotionless depiction of the panelists in the AP photograph, this choice reflects the efforts of the *Times* to discourage public support for the Freedom Rides. The overall focus of the article supports this intent as well. Even though Sitton sympathizes with the use of nonviolence as an anti-segregation weapon, in the article

he focuses most of his attention on the limitations and dangers of this strategy: "The rising racial tension and the fact that the demonstrators, as well as their assailants, are often in violation of some state law have raised some serious questions over the technique in the minds of moderates and a few liberals."[64]

The uncertainty that Sitton raises in this article about the use of passive resistance calls into question the seeming objectivity of the subsequent AP photograph of the press conference. In pairing an emotionally reserved image with Sitton's article about the announcement of the continuation of the Freedom Rides, the *Times* editors neutralize the dramatic impact of this decision in relation both to the violence associated with the Rides and to the Riders' willingness to die for this cause. In so doing, the *Times* editors, as well as Sitton, clearly position themselves within the increased controversy that was beginning to develop regarding the effectiveness of nonviolence in the civil rights movement.[65] The last full-page story on the Freedom Rides, written by Sitton and published in the *Times* on 26 May 1961, two days after his article on the press conference, substantiates this bias. While his two previous articles had included opinions from both supporters and opponents of the Rides, in the opening sentence of his final article entitled, "Dr. King Refuses to End Bus Test," Sitton makes his and the *Times* allegiances explicit: "Some liberal Southerners of both races joined moderates and others today in asserting that the Freedom Riders should be halted."[66]

The photograph that accompanies Sitton's last article on the Rides amplifies this position (figure 3.5). Like the AP photograph of the panelists, this image also contains a strong diagonal line. In the photograph of the panelists, however, the diagonal serves a descriptive function, allowing for the inclusion of all the individuals within the frame. In this second picture, the diagonal separates the recently arrived Riders seated at the Montgomery bus depot lunch counter from Sheriff Mac Sim Butler and another police officer, who are in the process of placing the Riders under arrest. The visual prominence given to Sheriff Butler also distinguishes this picture from the image of the panelists. In contrast to King's expressionless face, it is Butler, lifting his right hand to signal those under arrest, who commands the most visual attention in the composition. This animation instills the picture and the accompanying article about the failure of the Rides with a dramatic intensity not unlike Davidson's depiction of Lewis and King, and suggests that the decision to append an unemotional depiction of the press conference to the previous *Times* article by Sitton was not that disinterested after all.



Associated Press Wirephoto

UNDER ARREST: Sheriff Mac Sim Butler goes down the line of racially mixed diners in Montgomery, Ala., bus terminal, tapping each person to put him under arrest. In group were the Revs. William S. Coffin Jr. and Gaylord Noyce of Yale University and Drs. John Maguire and David Swift of Wesleyan University, as well as three Negro students and four local Negro integration leaders who had joined the group in bus station.

Figure 3.5. "Dr. King Refuses to End Bus Test," *New York Times*, 26 May 1961. From *The New York Times*, 24 May ©1961. The New York Times. All rights reserved. Used by permission and protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States. The printing, copying, redistribution, or retransmission of the Material without express written permission is prohibited.

Figure 3.6. Bruce Davidson, Freedom Riders, Montgomery, Alabama, 1961. © Bruce Davidson and Magnum Photos.

While the *Times* editors played down the violence associated with the Freedom Rides in order to minimize moral encouragement for them, for Davidson it was the brutality associated with these Rides and the civil rights movement in general with which he felt the greatest emotional affinity: "The violence of the South had reached into me deeper than my personal pain."[67] Davidson experienced a similar feeling while on board the Montgomery to Jackson Freedom Ride. In response to the brutality that had broken out during the two previous Freedom Rides, including the beating of the Justice Department's John Siegenthaler and members of the press, as well as the declaration of martial law in Montgomery, President John F. Kennedy, against the wishes of the state officials of Alabama, sent 800 federal marshals to Montgomery to protect

the Freedom Riders.[68] Infuriated by the accusation that he had failed to protect the Riders from an armed mob, Alabama Governor John Patterson was determined to prove that his state could provide them with adequate protection. Accordingly, he stationed twelve Guardsmen inside the two Freedom Ride buses, plus seventeen highway patrol cars, three planes, and two helicopters on the outside. Once over the state border, the state of Mississippi did the same, issuing its own patrol of Guardsmen, also with fixed bayonets, to escort the Riders on the remainder of their journey.[69]

For Davidson, this situation was deeply unsettling: "During the hours that we traveled the deserted tree-lined highway, there was fear that snipers might fire on the bus. The riders quietly sang freedom songs to dispel their fears."[70] To portray this sense of fear, Davidson turned to the reactions of two of its Riders. In a photograph taken during the trip, Davidson depicts Riders Julia Aaron and David Dennis under the watchful eyes and bayonets of two Mississippi Guardsmen stationed onboard the bus to ensure the Riders' safety (figure 3.6). In photographing the Riders sitting next to the Guardsmen, Davidson attempts to reflect some of the terror that he personally experienced during this trip. One can read the contrast created by the juxtaposition of the Guardsmen and the Riders as visual support of this intent. Unlike the Guardsmen who stand attentively, in full military dress firmly grasping their bayonets, Davidson depicts the Riders sitting down, gazing apprehensively out the window of the bus. This juxtaposition serves to reinforce the power of the Guardsmen as opposed to the vulnerability of the Riders, a relationship that in turn supports Davidson's trepidation. The comments of forty-one-year-old Rider James Farmer, who rode on a second bus to Jackson, further substantiates the apprehension that Davidson depicts: "I don't think any of us thought that we were going to get to Jackson, Mississippi, really. I know I didn't. I was scared and I am sure the kids were scared."[71]

Not all of the Riders, however, shared Davidson and Farmer's fear. For instance, Dennis, a twenty-one-year-old Rider depicted by Davidson, recollects a readiness for death:

> When the group left Montgomery, the first busload to go into Jackson, Mississippi, everyone on that bus was prepared to die. Now what happened there was a very strange scene. . . . We were just arrested and put in jail. Well, everyone was prepared to die. One girl in particular just started pulling hands full of hair out. She just started screaming. Nothing happened, and there was the

> cold shock. . . . *We didn't die*. . . . It was just that right then and there everyone wanted to die. They had been willing to give up their lives.

Here Dennis asserts his and the other Riders' willingness to die as well as the distress and guilt that ensued when nothing happened: "I always began to feel as if maybe some way . . . this sounds crazy, but like as if I've been cheated. I mean, nothing ever happened. You begin to find that you feel guilty about it, because you want to know why him, or why her, not me?"[72]

In this passage, Dennis suggests a completely different response to the Montgomery to Jackson Freedom Ride than the one that Davidson attempts to convey in his photograph or that Farmer recalls. Davidson has responded to such discrepancies with the following claim: "I don't set out to communicate to someone else. Maybe I'm too selfish to do that—or too stupid. But I do set out to see for myself and then that product is available to anybody."[73] Again, not sharing the goals of photographers like W. Eugene Smith, Davidson has repeatedly argued that he is more interested in representing the emotions that his subjects produced in him than in re-creating for the viewer what his subjects felt. Yet, regardless of how personal Davidson's feelings may seem to him, their meanings are not entirely private. Just as the photographs of the Rides that circulated in the *New York Times* "continually play against the set of on-going beliefs and constructions about the world,"[74] so too are Davidson's feelings socially and historically determined.

In depicting this Ride solely in terms of the personal fear that it evoked in him, Davidson obscures the complex and at times contradictory relationship that the discourse on violence occupied in relation to the Freedom Rides and to the civil rights movement in particular. As part of the training to become a Freedom Rider, the participants, including those on the trip to Jackson, were taught to react passively to the brutality that many assumed would take place during the Rides. When the Riders climbed on board the bus to Jackson, many of them felt frustrated by the armed guards who had been stationed on board for their safety. Reverend Jim Lawson, a thirty-two-year-old Freedom Rider, explains: "We appreciate the Government's concern, but protection does not solve the problem of segregation."[75] Here Lawson reveals his aggravation at encountering the armed guard, a sentiment corroborated by Rider Bernard Lafayette: "This isn't a Freedom Ride, it's a military operation."[76] Rider Julia Aaron echoes this feeling when, upon seeing the armed guards, she exclaimed,

Figure 3.7. Paul Schutzer, Freedom Riders Julia Aaron and David Dennis sitting on board interstate bus as they and twenty-five others are escorted by two Mississippi National Guardsmen holding bayonets, on way from Montgomery, Ala., to Jackson, Miss., 1 May 1961. Paul Schutzer/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images.

"Oh no, this is ridiculous."[77] The experiences recounted in these passages suggest that, while the Freedom Riders had without question been unjustly brutalized, they were by no means passive or uninformed victims. Rather, they intended the Rides—which a number of Southerners resented as "a coldly calculated attempt to speed up integration by goading the South, forcing the Southern extremists to explode their tempers"[78]—to serve as deliberate acts of nonviolent civil disobedience, providing the civil rights movement with the means to bring national attention to those unlawful racial barriers still existing in the South. For many of the Riders, the placement of the armed guards aboard the bus represented a serious impediment to those efforts.

The representation of the Riders as knowing subjects would have been a familiar concept to 1960s U.S. viewers. In the article "Asking for Trouble—and Getting It: The Ride for Rights," published in the 2 June 1961 issue of *Life*, a photograph by Paul Schutzer depicts Riders Dennis and Aaron seated next to two Mississippi National Guardsmen (figure 3.7). Schutzer's photograph, taken from a comparable point of view and distance to Davidson's image, is remarkably similar, both in terms of form and content. However, there is one crucial distinction. Unlike Davidson's picture, the Riders in Schutzer's image do not apprehensively focus their attention on something occurring outside the window. Instead, while Aaron stares resolutely ahead, Dennis gazes suspiciously at the National Guardsman standing to his left. Here, in contrast to the vulnerability that Davidson evokes, Schutzer alludes to Dennis's dissatisfaction with the Guardsmen. The picture's caption, which characterizes Dennis as looking "warily" at the bayonets of the Guardsmen, substantiates this reading. Rather than portray the riders as courageous victims in need of protection, Schutzer depicts them as determined nonviolent activists, a rendering reiterated in the article's emphasis on the deliberate and carefully planned nonviolent tactics of the Freedom Riders.

In comparing Schutzer's photograph with that of Davidson, I do not mean to imply that one provides a more "truthful" or "realistic" account of the Montgomery to Jackson Freedom Ride than the other. After all, while Schutzer renders Dennis and Aaron more active participants, he still offers little suggestion of those feelings both Riders described in the aforementioned passages: Dennis's willingness to die, the ensuing feelings of guilt, or Aaron's sense of frustration. Instead, like the responses to Davidson's photographs by Sister Caliri's students, this comparison suggests that the relationship between feelings and photography is not unmediated or universal. On their own, neither Schutzer's nor Davidson's photographs nor the statements made by the various riders adequately reflects the complex set of feelings produced by this trip. It is only by juxtaposing these conflicting representations that one can begin to explore some of the contradictory feelings that this ride evoked and their relationship to ongoing ideological debates about the function of violence within the civil rights movement.

The Personal and Commercial

For Bruce Davidson, the personal feelings that he experienced in relation to his "American Negro" photographs were not only universal; he also assumed that their

meanings, particularly their racial meanings, would be readily understood regardless of who read them or how they were circulated in the world. For Davidson's contemporary, Roy DeCarava, such assumptions were more problematic. This is because DeCarava, who was equally interested in using the seemingly objective medium of photography to communicate his inner feelings, understood that the representation of feelings in photography was not only determined by the point of view of the person taking the image, but also by the people who read that image and the contexts in which that image was circulated. To come to terms with some of the ways in which the representation of feelings in photography, and especially the racial aspect of such feelings, is complicated by issues of readership and circulation, I turn now to a selection of photographs by DeCarava, including several images that he took in response to the civil rights movement.

Like Davidson, Roy DeCarava has sought to use his photographs to understand himself and to make that personal experience available to others: "My photographs are subjective and personal—they're intended to be accessible, to relate to people's lives, to communicate my feelings about the world."[79] But, in contrast to Davidson, who rarely differentiates between his personal and commercial assignments provided that he could establish an emotional affinity between himself and his subjects, DeCarava has attempted to create and maintain steadfast distinctions between those two realms of his production. For instance, from 1958 until he joined the faculty at Hunter College in 1975, DeCarava earned his living largely through freelance photography, working for such diverse clients as *Newsweek*, *Good Housekeeping*, and *Scientific American* magazines as well as Columbia Records, Grey Advertising, the National Urban League, and, from 1968 to 1975, as a contract photographer for *Sports Illustrated*.[80] In exhibitions and catalogues of his work, however, the images that DeCarava produced for these contexts are conspicuously absent.

Several critics have reproached DeCarava for making such rigid divisions in his photographic practice, claiming that in so doing DeCarava denies the viewer access to his position as an artist and as a social activist. Photography historian Melissa Rachleff, for example, argues in reference to the omission of DeCarava's commercial work from his 1994 retrospective at MoMA: "This omission is double-edged: it reinforces DeCarava's seriousness about photography as art, a stance he has maintained throughout his career, but it also denies viewers access to another side of the photographer, one of an engaged Civil Rights activist."[81] Peter Galassi, who succeeded John Szarkowski

as Director of the Photography Department at MoMA in 1991, has responded to such criticism by arguing that DeCarava's commercial photographs, while satisfactory as description, lack a personal element: "The photographs [DeCarava] made while [on assignment] are perfectly adequate as reportage, but they fail to move us."[82]

Galassi uses a pair of photographs taken by DeCarava in response to the historic March on Washington in 1963 to support his argument. In one photograph, which DeCarava took for reportage purposes and while on assignment for a commercial magazine, DeCarava stands at a distance from the marchers, documenting their collectivity as well as the signs of their protest. Conversely, in a personal work of the same subject matter, entitled *Mississippi freedom marcher, Washington, D.C.*, DeCarava moves dramatically inward to focus on the face of one of the freedom marchers.[83] Although this personal image is still centered within a group of protesters, DeCarava removes and obscures the faces and bodies of the surrounding marchers so that the single freedom marcher's determined stare becomes the focal point of the composition. As a result, Galassi argues that in *Mississippi freedom marcher*, DeCarava transcends the historical specificity of the March on Washington that he impartially documents in his commercial assignment to make a timeless personal statement about the march: "*Mississippi freedom marcher*, which adheres so closely to DeCarava's artistic instincts that it might have been made almost anywhere at almost any time, embodies the spirit of the march."[84]

DeCarava seems to corroborate Galassi's argument in the following account of the making of this image: "I wanted to make a statement about human beings, about any human being who was involved in what I believed in."[85] Like Galassi, DeCarava speaks about this picture in terms of its ability to penetrate beneath the historical specificity of the march and to convey something personal about it. At the same time, in addressing this photograph in subjective terms, DeCarava, unlike Galassi, does not assume that these personal feelings are essential to his images' categorization as art: "But as to whether one was art or not or good art really depends on societal values as well as individual choices."[86] Here DeCarava suggests that the difference between his personal and commercial photographs has less to do with their categories as images than how their signification is dependent upon the modes of their circulation as well as the social systems brought to bear on them.

To some, however, this explanation may appear to overlook formal differences between DeCarava's personal and commercial work. For instance, one might argue

that DeCarava's use of framing and the close-up in *Mississippi freedom marcher* encourages the viewer to read the image as personal expression, while the distance from which he photographs the subjects of his commercial work promotes a reading of the image as objective and factual. In spite of DeCarava's ostensible reliance on these stylistic choices in this comparison, the distinction between his personal work and commercial assignments cannot be reduced to issues of form, content, or even approach.

In August 1964, *Look* commissioned DeCarava to photograph the aftermath of rioting in Rochester, New York, which began on 24 July with the arrest of an allegedly drunk and disorderly African American man at a street dance and ended two nights later after Governor Rockefeller called in the National Guard. As part of this assignment, DeCarava documented the extensive destruction that occurred as a result of the rioting in Rochester, including trashing, looted property, and bullet-pocked buildings.[87] Like a number of images that circulated in the print media in response to the onslaught of these and other riots from the "long, hot summer" of 1964, the subject matter of many of DeCarava's photographs allude to the violence of the racial conflict in Rochester.[88]

At the same time, given DeCarava's apparent interest in documenting the physical destruction caused by the Rochester riots, it seems unusual that a substantial number of photographs from this assignment depict storefronts and shop windows in Rochester. In these images, DeCarava depicts the multiple representations and layers of rich tonal surfaces created by the reflections in them. On the surface, this content seems to have little to do with the riots per se; yet, if placed within the historical framework of DeCarava's larger production and his interest in using his photographs to explore concepts of race and self in particular, the meaning of these images changes significantly.

Since he began his first photographic project on Harlem in the early 1950s, which I address more extensively in Chapter 4, DeCarava has repeatedly explored the array of meanings that arise from the depiction of reflections. One of his earliest works to focus on this issue is a 1950 photograph entitled *Gittel*, which includes the storefront window of an insurance broker on the right side of the composition. In speaking about this work, DeCarava has singled it out as "one of the first pictures that brought me beyond the factual and the photographic and became something else."[89] Here DeCarava speaks about *Gittel* in terms of his effort, as he later explains, "to [break] through a kind of literalness in photography."[90] The layered readings produced by the super-

imposition of lettering that appears on the storefront window, the contents on view inside this window, and the street reflected within it are integral to this effort. "There are so many different symbolic elements in it," DeCarava explains, "each one containing multiple meanings, overlapping and interconnecting; it seems to reverberate."[91]

For DeCarava, reflections such as found in *Gittel* were important formal tools with which he could begin to approach photography as a system of image making that functions in a metaphorical as opposed to a literal manner. In short, they allowed him to see photography beyond the "physical act of making an image," which for DeCarava also necessitated "allow[ing] one's personality to dominate the process rather than have the process dominate one's personality."[92] This interest in photography as a symbolic language that is formed in dialogue with one's sense of self is fundamental to an image entitled *Atomic Energy* that DeCarava took in 1963, the year before his Rochester assignment. At first glance, this picture seems to plainly depict a well-dressed, middle-aged white subject looking out of the glass facade of an office building in which the sign "Atomic Energy in Action" is displayed. Upon further inspection, however, one realizes that this image is anything but the unmediated depiction of a singular subject. The photograph instead consists of a myriad of superimposed reflections, including among them DeCarava standing across the street taking the picture.

In positioning his reflection slightly to the right of the suited man so that the two bodies almost converge into one, DeCarava renders himself central to the photograph's densely packed and layered meanings. At the same time, in allowing his "personality" to take over, DeCarava did not intend for his self to prescribe the picture's meaning. The visual dissonance created in between the suited man and DeCarava's reflection addresses this distinction. In overlapping his reflection with that of a white subject looking out of the window, DeCarava forces the viewer to shuttle in between these two images in an effort to distinguish them from one another. Yet, due to the transparent nature of the glass window, separating the two bodies ultimately proves futile, thereby suggesting the extent to which their subjectivities, including their racial identities, are not fixed or stable but constituted in relation to one another. For DeCarava, who recognized that "I am not the same person I was 40 years ago, 4 hours ago, 4 minutes ago,"[93] including his reflection within this composition allowed him to transcend the literalism of photography and to begin to explore the medium's metaphorical potential which contained, among other things, its complex relationship to race and subjectivity.

The photographs of storefronts and shop windows that DeCarava took in Rochester form an important part of this exploration. Even though these pictures were taken as part of a commercial assignment, DeCarava could not separate his selfhood from their making, or by extension their making as well as their viewing from his selfhood. For instance, in a photograph that DeCarava took of a shop window filled with broken mannequins, one notices that the shadow reflected in the center of the composition is actually DeCarava. In a manner similar to *Atomic Energy*, DeCarava has superimposed his reflection on top of the body of a person inside the store. This formal strategy, while rendering DeCarava explicit to the work, also serves to implicate the viewer in the production of meaning, since, in the very act of looking at the reflections as well as the reflective surface of the print and the manner in which none of these images actually lines up, the viewer becomes an active participant in the representation. But again, if this commercial work is really no different from *Atomic Energy* in its form, content, or approach, why then has DeCarava insisted in keeping these two practices separate? The subsequent distribution of his photographs, and the manner in which these uses limit their metaphorical as well as intersubjective potential, is fundamental to answering this question.

Since producing his Harlem photographs, DeCarava has been perplexed by how his images are circulated. At the same time, wanting his images to be circulated as widely as possible, DeCarava has realized that certain compromises are required. This meant that, at least in terms of his Harlem photographs, DeCarava agreed to their publication in *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* (1955) alongside a text by Langston Hughes that, in the case of many of his images, including *Gittel*, largely "literalized" them.[94] Because the photographs that DeCarava took for *Look* were ultimately never published, the relationship between their production and reception did not have the same impact on DeCarava. A photograph taken for *Newsweek*, a month prior to his *Look* assignment, posed a different set of problems.

In July 1964, *Newsweek* commissioned DeCarava to photograph the racial disturbances in Harlem, which began on 16 July in response to the fatal shooting of a fifteen-year-old African American boy in Yorkville by an off-duty European American police lieutenant, and which raged for three nights before spreading to Bedford-Stuyvesant. In a photograph taken in response to these disturbances, DeCarava elected to focus on the faces of three African American men in lieu of the turmoil, brutality, or bloodshed that had actually taken place. This choice in framing shares

parallels with his personal work *Mississippi freedom marcher*, which according to DeCarava, he took to honor those who participated in the March on Washington: "They marched thousands of miles over a period of time to be part of a great movement and to express a desire for justice, for change. To me this was a symbolic and profound gesture, and I wanted to commemorate it."[95] At the same time, aspiring "to make it even more than that," DeCarava includes no contextual evidence to situate the subjects of this photograph within the historical specificity of the March on Washington. Like his use of reflections in *Gittel* and *Atomic Energy*, this formal strategy enables *Mississippi freedom marcher* to function in a metaphorical as opposed to literal manner.

The close proximity from which DeCarava photographs the subjects in this image serves to engage the viewer first and foremost on visual terms. With only blurred fragments of clothes and bodies to contextualize these marchers, the viewer keeps returning to their faces, which DeCarava depicts in excruciating detail and with utmost attention to their aesthetic properties. While some might argue that this attention encourages a voyeuristic relationship between viewer and subjects, for DeCarava this formal admiration is central to his effort to transcend photography's literalism. He further explains: "I think that there has to be this surface that is in itself beautiful, that compels you to look, and that gives you pleasure even just to look at it, irrespective of my intentions."[96] Here DeCarava addresses how he uses the formal beauty of these subjects' faces not to prescribe what he feels about them or their involvement with the March on Washington, but as a way of implicating the viewer in the production of the work's meaning.

Due to its formal parallels with *Mississippi freedom marcher*, it would seem that DeCarava intended a photograph that he took in response to the Harlem riots to function in an analogous manner (figure 3.8). Yet, reading this photograph as anything but "literal" is challenging at best. This difficulty results largely from the image's circulation as the cover image for the 3 August 1964 issue of *Newsweek*, where it appeared with the caption, "Harlem: Hatred in the Streets." This caption, along with the magazine's cover story about the riots that describes Harlem as "an explosion waiting for a time to go off" and those who lived there as "knots of jobless, aimless, hopeless men slouched on their tenement stoops in the clinging summer heat with little to do but talk bitterly about 'Whitey,'"[97] encourages readers to interpret this picture as grounded in fact and objectivity and not as the product of a particular point of view—despite there being no contextual evidence within the picture to situate the subjects as part of the riots

or the violence that occurred during the previous week in Harlem. Stuart Hall clarifies this paradox: "By appearing literally to reproduce the event as it *really* happened, news photos suppress their selective/interpretive/ideological function. They seek a warrant in that ever pre-given, neutral structure, which is beyond question, beyond interpretation: the 'real world.'"[98] Here Hall, building on what Roland Barthes defines as the "having been there" of photography, suggests how the ideological dimensions of news photographs are masked by their seeming *actuality*.

For DeCarava, the notion that photographs, and more specifically news photographs, appear to have "naturally" selected themselves was particularly problematic. Again, this is not because such an association would preclude his *Newsweek* cover photograph from being interpreted as "art." What troubled DeCarava is the manner in which this image provided a means through which the general public learned about African Americans and formulated their largely "negative" opinions about them. Because of the text beneath the men's faces as well as the cover story inside the magazine that directs readers to a meaning already chosen in advance—to provide visual support for the pathological damage, bitterness, and even violence that Harlem's impoverished social conditions produce in African American men—the individual identities of the subjects depicted in his photograph are exchanged for that of a collective one. Such a reading, in turn, shaped how the general public perceived African American men in particular and Harlem in general. The findings of the 1967 presidentially appointed National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, popularly known by the name of its chairman, Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois, mirrors DeCarava's concerns:

> Events of these past few years—the Watts riot, other disorders, and the growing momentum of the civil rights movement—conditioned the responses of readers and viewers and heightened their reactions. What the public saw and read last summer thus produced emotional reactions and left vivid impressions not wholly attributable to the material itself.[99]

To complicate matters further, for the *Newsweek* cover image DeCarava solicited three of his friends to pose for the shot. From left to right the *Newsweek* cover depicts Shawn Walker, Ray Francis, and Louis Draper—all photographers whom DeCarava knew through his involvement with the Kamoinge Workshop—and none of whom, incidentally, were participants in the riots. Although this information was not disclosed in the publication, this circumstance would have certainly heightened

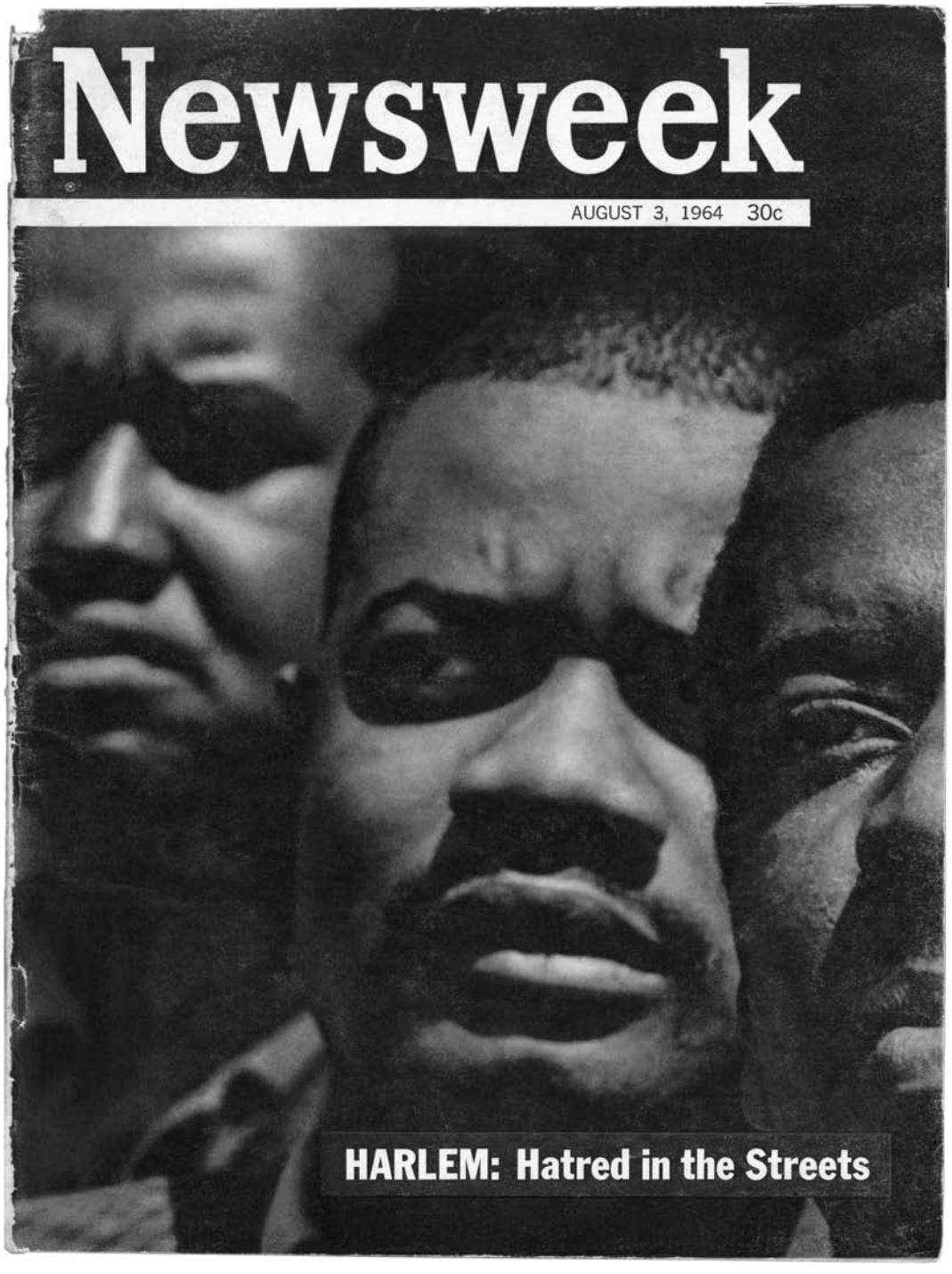


Figure 3.8. Roy DeCarava, cover of *Newsweek*, 3 August 1964. From Newsweek, 3 August © 1964 Newsweek, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission and protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States. The printing, copying, redistribution, or retransmission of the Material without express written permission is prohibited.

DeCarava's growing concerns about the relationship between what he depicted and in turn how this content was circulated and used. If viewed on its own terms, knowing the actual identities of the men in DeCarava's Harlem riot photograph would be far less problematical, since the meaning of this picture, while related to these men, would not be contingent upon them. Yet, due to the seeming actuality of news photography, when placed on the cover of *Newsweek*, the identities of these men can never be separated from the "real world."[100] It is precisely this inability of news photography to transcend its "literalness" that has led DeCarava to insist on these steadfast distinctions between his personal work and his commercial assignments.

DeCarava took his 1964 personal photograph *Five Men* the same year as his cover photograph for *Newsweek*. As with *Mississippi freedom marcher*, these two pictures also share a number of formal similarities. In both pictures, DeCarava uses framing and close-up to emphasize the faces of his subjects at the expense of the specificity of their sociohistorical or political contexts. Yet, while the accompanying caption and its circulation as the cover of a news magazine "literalizes" the meaning of DeCarava's *Newsweek* photograph, in the case of *Five Men*, this meaning remains open. In fact, it is only in reading the artist's statement about the work that one even learns that DeCarava took the picture in response to the dynamiting of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, on 15 September 1963, which killed four African American schoolgirls.[101]

The bombing of this Birmingham church, which occurred less than two weeks after the historic March on Washington, received worldwide coverage in the print media.[102] Learning about it through these sources, DeCarava sought to convey his personal response to it: "The motivation at that moment was my political understanding of the treatment of black people and their response to injustice."[103] At the same time, he elected not to have these feelings authenticated by presenting himself as an eyewitness or through the circulation of his image in the print media. To express the feelings that the killing of the four Birmingham girls evoked in him, DeCarava instead photographed five black men whom he encountered coming out of a memorial service that took place in a church in Harlem.

In using the men as the subject of his photograph, DeCarava believed that he could transcend the historical and political specificity of the killings and make a distinctly personal statement: "With social issues, I want to say, 'This is what I know, this is what I feel, and this is what I believe.'" Here DeCarava appears to again adopt a

perspective remarkably similar to that of Bruce Davidson, who also sought to move beyond documenting social injustices in the South to convey his feelings about these events. The next sentence suggests how he and Davidson differ: "However, I try not to make it just that."[104] In this subsequent statement, DeCarava evokes a more self-reflective understanding of the relationship between photography and subjectivity. While in his Freedom Ride photograph, Davidson uses the fear that he experienced to define the nature of this Ride, the feelings that DeCarava attempts to evoke in *Five Men*, while related to the ones that he personally experienced in relation to the Birmingham bombing, are not synonymous with them. DeCarava clarifies this distinction in the following statement:

> Everyone has a unique point of visual perspective and everyone is not going to like everything I do. It's as simple as that, and I accept that. In fact, that doesn't bother me at all. I don't feel that I would want to convince anybody. I want them to come to it on their own level. That's the only way they're going to enjoy it.[105]

For DeCarava, *Five Men* represented more than a personal document of the Birmingham bombing; it offered a means through which he could come to terms with his selfhood, which including his complicated feelings about this event and their representation in photography. In order for DeCarava to explore the relational nature of these feelings, it was essential that he involve the viewer in the production of the work's meaning. DeCarava uses several strategies to accomplish this task. First, as in *Mississippi freedom marcher* and his *Newsweek* cover photograph, he severely crops his composition so that the faces, as opposed to the sociohistorical or political circumstances of the subjects, serve as the focal point of his picture. He also titles his work with the deliberately vague description *Five Men*.[106] Both of these actions render the social, historical, or political purpose of his work secondary. Instead of prescribing for viewers what to experience or even how he himself feels, as in *Mississippi freedom marcher*, DeCarava encourages viewers first to approach the work aesthetically: "I think the beauty of it depends also on the tonalities, the faces themselves and their placement, the way it's arranged in an abstract way yet in a very close, personal way."[107] At the same time, in advancing the pictorial aspects of his pictures, DeCarava, in a manner similar to his friend and subject Louis Draper, understands that his use of form remains inescapably intertwined in the social structures that constitute the culture and society in which he and his viewers exist.

DeCarava's inclusion of a severely cropped fifth head, barely discernable in the right-hand corner of *Five Men*, clarifies this understanding in visual terms. By extending his image into the space of the viewers and thus making them implicit in his work's formal meaning, DeCarava suggests that his representation of the Birmingham bombing could not be separated from the larger network of social relations—including aesthetics—in which his understanding of this event and his feelings about it and himself were embedded: "I just try to deal with the facets of myself, the political, the social, the personal, and the beautiful."[108]

In order for DeCarava to explore this complex set of feelings evoked by the civil rights movement, it was essential that *Five Men* transcend its literalness, or, in other words, be received as art. While some may criticize this stipulation as a naive endorsement of romantic notions of authorial creativity, for DeCarava this stipulation provided a means to reiterate photography as a representational system whose relationship to race and subjectivity is neither transparent nor uncomplicated. In so doing, DeCarava reminds us that no matter how heartfelt or genuine the feelings evoked by civil rights photographs may appear, they remain representations whose meanings, forms, and structures vary according to the social and historical contexts in which they are used and circulated as well as to the points of view of those who read and make them.

CHAPTER FOUR

Roy DeCarava, Harlem, and the Psychic Self

You should be able to look at me and see my work. You should be able to look at my work and see me.

—ROY DECARAVA, *Thru Black Eyes*

A Harlem Photographer

In the previous chapter, I argued that Roy DeCarava's insistence on maintaining a separation between his personal and commercial photographs has less to do with their categories as images than how their signification is dependent upon the modes of their circulation as well as the social systems brought to bear on them. In short, what concerns DeCarava is not whether his commercial images are "art" or not, but how their "literalness," or the extent to which their content is considered "real," prohibits viewers from approaching them in a metaphoric as opposed to a literal manner. DeCarava has also struggled to transcend the assumed literalness of photography—more particularly the understanding of documentary photography as a portent of the "real"—in relation to a series of photographs that he took in Harlem. Because many suppose that the subject matter of these photographs has only a documentary value and that, as an African American who was born and raised in Harlem, DeCarava shares an unmediated relationship with this content, his efforts to use these photographs of Harlem to explore concepts of race and self—including those childhood memories, fears, and desires that made up his inner, psychic life—have frequently been overlooked.

Formally trained as a painter and printmaker, DeCarava first turned to photography in the 1940s as a means of conceptualizing ideas for his paintings and prints. The pictures that DeCarava took with his Argus A camera soon became more than just sketches, and, by the late 1940s, DeCarava abandoned painting and printmaking altogether to focus exclusively on the medium of photography.[1] In these early works, and continuing through the publication of his 1955 book, *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*, co-authored with Langston Hughes, DeCarava photographed Harlem, its people and its landmarks. In turning to this content, DeCarava joined an assortment

of photographers, including European American photographers Bruce Davidson and Aaron Siskind—whose work I will address more specifically during the course of this chapter—who have also spent a considerable amount of time photographing Harlem and the people who live there. Yet, unlike many of these photographers, this content has pigeonholed DeCarava as a "Harlem Photographer."[2] This is because many assume, as *New York Times* art critic Jacob Deschin writes in his 1955 review of *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*, that DeCarava's "sympathetic photographs of Harlem life" are "told with subtle affection by [one] who know[s] it well."[3] Such characterizations are apparent even today, as Peter Galassi remarks in the catalogue for DeCarava's 1994 retrospective at MoMA: "DeCarava was an insider; he had only to be himself to see Harlem from within."[4] While such readings call attention to the centrality of Harlem to DeCarava's photographs, they also conflate DeCarava's subjectivity with that of his racial background. In so doing, they presume that Harlem is a unified place filled only with African Americans—all of whom DeCarava knew intimately—and overlook the actual dislocation that DeCarava felt growing up in and around Harlem and his efforts to use the anxiety produced by this displacement to explore the nature of his selfhood and its complex relationship to issues of race.

Raised largely by his widowed mother, DeCarava repeatedly moved around Harlem as a child, living in neighborhoods that were often more Hispanic, Irish, and Italian than African American.[5] DeCarava recalls:

> We never stayed in any one place too long. We had to move frequently—existing as we did on the rim of financial disaster. . . . So I was always the new kid on the block. I never had a chance to take roots where there does exist, in poor areas, a history—a tradition. My nomadic mother and I never 'belonged' to the area we moved into.[6]

In this passage, DeCarava speaks about this sense of dislocation and the longing for a sense of community that it produced in him. These emotions only intensified during his education at the predominantly white downtown Textile High School and Cooper Union School of Art. As one of the only African American students, DeCarava felt culturally deprived and "out of it," and, in 1940, he quit the program at Cooper Union to finish his art education at the WPA-sponsored Harlem Art Center.

At the Harlem Art Center and later at the George Washington Carver School, DeCarava began to experience a sense of belonging that had eluded him during his

youth. There he formed important friendships with a number of African American artists and for the first time felt connected to a community.[7] This same desire to locate himself within a community motivated DeCarava, beginning in the late 1940s, to photograph Harlem, its people and its landmarks. "This intense period of work on the daily life of family and community," explains art historian Sherry Turner DeCarava, "served to reconnect [DeCarava] to a milieu he had experienced as a youth only incompletely."[8] For DeCarava, his photographs of Harlem represented more than his intimate knowledge of Harlem or the people who live there; they offered a means to explore the nature and complexity of his longing for a relationship with racially specific notions of family, community, and history.

Yet, exploring the psychic dimensions of his selfhood through the medium of photography posed a unique challenge for DeCarava. In particular, he struggled with how his photographs might document the specificity of Harlem while at the same time reflect some of the complex, even ambivalent feelings toward Harlem that made up his inner, psychic life. A photograph that DeCarava took in 1953 entitled *Hallway* signaled a turning point in these efforts. In this image, DeCarava turned his camera on a dark, gloomy hallway precisely because of its rich associative values. More particularly, this hallway—which he discovered in a tenement building one night while walking home—provided DeCarava with the means to gain access to childhood memories, fears, and desires that made up that inner, psychic life. "That picture," notes DeCarava, "with its lack of space and light, expressed what I felt as a six-year-old but was not able to express then."[9] In this passage, DeCarava suggests that rather than literally represent the exact hallway in which he grew up, he sought to use his representation of this corridor to assimilate his past, again not to fix it, but to allow it to generate new meanings both in his present and future.

DeCarava's decision to photograph the hallway only with the available light adds to this effect. As does his use of a tripod—a departure from his usual hand-held camera—and a long exposure, which allow him to allude to those more elusive and ephemeral feelings and desires that the hallway's darkness and obscurity evoked in him both as a child and as an adult. DeCarava clarifies this intent:

> It's about a hallway that I know I must have experienced as a child. Not just one hallway; it was all the hallways that I grew up in. They were poor, poor tenements, badly lit, narrow and confining. . . . It just brought back all those things

> that I had experienced as a child in these hallways. It was frightening, it was scary. . . . And it was depressing. And yet, here I am an adult, years and years and ages and ages later, looking at the same hallway and finding it beautiful.[10]

By removing the specificity of this corridor, DeCarava uses this representation to mediate between his past and present. In so doing, his past feelings are brought to bear witness to the present, thus allowing him to understand his past, and hence enter into a new and future relationship with the complex set of emotions that he experienced as a child.

At the same time, even though the feelings that DeCarava sought to evoke through *Hallway* were highly personal, it was critical that they resonate on a social as well as a private level. In other words, DeCarava needed the image to function intra- as well as inter-subjectively. DeCarava addresses this aspect of his picture-making process in the following statement: "I forced *everything* out of that print so that the observer could feel what I felt as a kid."[11] Here DeCarava calls attention to his effort, as in his later photograph *Five Men*, to implicate the viewer in the production of the work's meaning. For DeCarava such emotional involvement on the part of the viewer was essential, since, like his relationship to the image itself, this participation offered him another means to literally reconnect to a community. The problem that remains unique to DeCarava, however, is that in implicating his selfhood as central to the meanings of his representations, the complex, and at times even contradictory, relationships that he attempted to negotiate between his race and subjectivity have frequently become conflated when his works are exhibited or reproduced. This in turn has caused collective-based and essentializing terms like "Harlem" to overdetermine the nature of his explorations into the intersection of race and subjectivity and their representation in photography both then and today.

In an effort to understand both the logic behind the categorization of DeCarava as a "Harlem Photographer" as well as to move beyond this essentializing terminology, in this chapter, I consider the historically specific ways in which DeCarava used his photographs, including those he took in Harlem, to explore concepts of race and self, particularly the psychic self, and the manner in which these investigations were received in postwar America. To reconstruct these sets of relations, I position a selection of DeCarava's photographs relative to their production and reception. These include DeCarava's efforts to use the photographic medium in a metaphoric as opposed to

literal manner, his complex and at times even contradictory feelings of belonging to and longing for the community of Harlem, and some of the major contexts in which his images circulated during the 1950s through 1970s. Through this analysis, I again extend my efforts in the previous chapters to suggest the historically specific ways in which ideas about race and self were intertwined in postwar American photography.

The Problem of *Graduation*

The first exhibition of DeCarava's photographs of Harlem occurred in 1950 at a gallery on West 44th Street run by the painter Mark Perper. While the exhibition itself did not garner much public response, its impression on Perper's friend, photographer Homer Page, proved consequential for DeCarava's career. Through Page, DeCarava befriended MoMA photography curator Edward Steichen who took an immediate interest in DeCarava's photographs of Harlem. In addition to purchasing three of his images, Steichen convinced DeCarava to apply for a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. In 1952, DeCarava became the first African American photographer to win this fellowship, and with the $3,000 stipend, he took a yearlong leave of absence from his day job as a commercial artist to continue to photograph Harlem.[12]

The Guggenheim fellowship provided DeCarava with much-needed financial support; yet, wanting his photographs to be circulated as widely as possible, DeCarava still struggled to find venues for the exhibition and publication of his Harlem photographs.[13] Besides their display by Perper in 1950 and a subsequent exhibition at the Countee Cullen Branch of The New York Public Library in 1951, it was not until 1953 that DeCarava's Harlem photographs were first published in John Kouwenhoven's book, *The Columbia Historical Portrait of New York*.[14] Published in honor of the Tricentennial of New York City and the Bicentennial of Columbia University, this book—which includes an array of images made over a period of 300 years and ranging in media from maps, plans, and photographs to paintings and drawings—was intended, as Kouwenhoven explains in his Preface, as "an attempt to interpret the evolution of the city in visual terms."[15]

In selecting the images and their organization within the book, however, Kouwenhoven did not want them to function simply as "sources of factual information about topography, manner and customs." He instead expected them to function more metaphorically by offering "clues to attitudes and interests, to the blind spots and

perceptions, of which there may be no other surviving evidence."[16] Kouwenhoven further explains:

> In our contemporary enthusiasm for picture history and pictorial journalism we too often lose sight of a simple but important truth: that a picture of something is not the thing itself, but somebody's way of looking at it. Even in the most representational pictures, what is shown may tell us less than we can learn from the manner in which it was presented or the point of view from which it is seen.[17]

In this statement, Kouwenhoven calls attention to the importance of the space in between what pictures depict and mean for understanding "blind spots" or hidden assumptions about what is represented and the points of view of their authors.

Kouwenhoven included three of DeCarava's Harlem photographs in the seventh and final section of *The Columbia Historical Portrait of New York*. Entitled "The Shapes Arise," Kouwenhoven sought the pictures in this section to evoke the rapid changes taking place in New York City between 1910 and 1953. The first photograph by DeCarava appears toward the end of this section with five other images, which together Kouwenhoven organizes into a set of three pairs. The first pair, reproduced as a double-page spread, consists of a photograph by Andreas Feininger of Fifth Avenue traffic and an anonymous schematic drawing by Emil Lowenstein revealing the internal workings—its pipes, ducts, and tunnels—of Sixth Avenue. The next double-page spread includes a photograph by DeCarava of the facade of a building in Harlem and a drawing by Saul Steinberg that simultaneously depicts the exterior and interior of the front of a brownstone. The final pair, reproduced on a single page, consists of a surrealistic painting by Louis Guglielmi and a photograph of Popular Street in Brooklyn Heights by Berenice Abbott. Above all of the images extends the following text:

> No single way of looking at New York . . . is adequate to comprehend either its surface chaos or its underlying order . . . and no selection of pictures can do more than suggest . . . the dissonant variety of personal attitudes and interests which are reflected . . . in the work of contemporary artists and photographers.

In placing this statement across the top of the pages on which the pictures are reproduced, Kouwenhoven encourages readers to interpret the pairs of images in terms of the dissonance described in the above text. To facilitate this connection, Kouwenhoven places a smaller caption next to each of the reproductions. For the

photographs and drawings, Kouwenhoven includes longer captions that identify the author of the image, when and how it was produced, and a short description of what it depicts. For example, the following caption appears next to DeCarava's photograph of the facade of a building in Harlem: "This photograph was taken in 1951 by DeCarava from the platform of the 165th Street station of the Third Avenue El." For the paintings, Kouwenhoven also specifies the author of the image and when it was produced. Yet, instead of describing at length what the paintings depict and how they were produced, Kouwenhoven simply includes the title of the work. Thus, for example, next to the painting by Guglielmi, Kouwenhoven appends the following caption: "'Terror in Brooklyn,' by Louis Guglielmi, was painted in 1941."

In indicating only the original title for Guglielmi's painting as well as who painted it and when it was made, Kouwenhoven reveals an ideological bias regarding its signification. In using captions that are more descriptive for the photographs and drawings, Kouwenhoven restricts their meanings to the level of denotation. In the case of DeCarava's photograph, Kouwenhoven's caption directs the reader's interpretation of what she or he sees in the picture by emphasizing the exact geographical location from which the image was taken. Conversely, in including the more ambiguous title "Terror in Brooklyn," instead of an account of what the author has painted, Kouwenhoven encourages the reader to decode what is depicted in Guglielmi's painting in relation to broader themes, concepts, or meanings. While Kouwenhoven's caption reduces DeCarava's photograph to what Roland Barthes calls an "analogon" of reality, in the case of Guglielmi's painting, it calls attention to its status as a transformation of reality.[18]

Kouwenhoven makes this same association with respect to the second picture by DeCarava reproduced in his book. He places this picture on the right side of a two-page spread, directly above a photograph by Fred Stein. For both photographs, Kouwenhoven inserts a lengthy caption that describes what recently built, or in the process of being built, portion of New York City the images depict. In the case of DeCarava's photograph, the caption directs the viewer to new apartment units known as the St. Nicholas Houses in the background of the picture. Likewise, in the photograph by Stein, the caption calls attention to the row of houses in the foreground of the composition, which, as the text explains, has since been demolished to make room for the construction of the Esso Building. In both instances, Kouwenhoven uses the caption to limit the photographs to, in the words of Barthes, "evidence *of this is how it was*."[19] In short, this anchorage reduces the photographs to "literal" messages.

In making this argument about the function of Kouwenhoven's captions, I rely on Barthes's distinction between denotation and connotation, with denotation indicating the descriptive level at which meaning is produced and connotation referring to the level where interpretation or decoding takes place.[20] According to Barthes, unlike other forms of representation, photographs are often read as "purely" denotative, because their relationship to what they depict appears continuous. Since this relationship renders photographs essentially without "style," one might argue that Kouwenhoven uses his lengthy captions to establish a discontinuity between what is denoted and connoted in these reproductions. The caption that Kouwenhoven appends to the drawing by Saul Steinberg, however, makes this assumption problematical. Like the photographs, the caption for this image also identifies what the image represents: "Saul Steinberg disconcertingly cuts away the shabbily ornate wall of a brownstone front in this drawing from his book, *The Art of Living* (1940)." Here Kouwenhoven seems to ignore how the style of Steinberg's drawing sets up an incongruence between the object that he depicts and the drawing itself.

In using his caption to emphasize Steinberg's drawing as a literal message, Kouwenhoven seems to makes a polarized argument about the denotative potential of the photographs and drawings versus connotative capacity of the paintings that he reproduces in his book. Yet, why then does Kouwenhoven include the phrase "disconcertingly cuts away" as part of the caption for Steinberg's drawing? This phrase calls attention to the fact that Steinberg's drawing, as Kouwenhoven explains in his Preface, "is not the thing itself, but somebody's way of looking at it."[21] In amplifying the literalness of Steinberg's drawing, Kouwenhoven at first seems to merely duplicate what the image depicts. Yet, upon closer inspection, one realizes that this descriptive information, while seeming to establish certain factual information about the picture, in reality imparts a "point of view." The inclusion of the word "disconcerting" in the caption facilitates this understanding for the reader, since it alludes to the jarring nature of this knowledge, particularly when the depiction, as is the case in Steinberg's drawing, is rendered realistically.

Kouwenhoven excludes such information from the caption that accompanies Guglielmi's painting. This discrepancy suggests that Kouwenhoven assumes that the "point of view" in this picture is rendered more explicit than in the photographs or drawings. He thus seems to believe that it is less difficult for the reader to interpret Guglielmi's painting in relation to the text that runs across the top of the pages. Un-

like the smaller typeface captions that flank the reproductions, this text, printed in an italicized and larger font, does not share a literal relationship to the images beneath it. Instead, located at a greater spatial distance than the descriptive captions and broken up by its placement across successive pages, it encourages the reader to interpret the images metaphorically, or in terms of conceptual associations that may not at first seem readily apparent.

The question remains, however, why Kouwenhoven assumes that, for the reader to make this connection in terms of the photographs and drawings and not Guglielmi's painting, she or he needs facilitation. The style in which Guglielmi renders his picture seems an obvious answer. Unlike the other images in this grouping, which are rendered using a more or less realistic style, or in the case of the photographs, using no apparent "style," Guglielmi uses a style that is reminiscent of such Surrealist artists as Giorgio de Chirico. Because of his use of this approach, viewers understand that Guglielmi's painting is an illusion that has been filtered largely through the artist's mind as opposed to an actual location in New York City, such as depicted in the photograph by Berenice Abbott that appears directly below it. This transformation of reality, implicit within the space of Guglielmi's composition, emphasizes the "point of view" from which the image was depicted, thus making it unnecessary for Kouwenhoven to use a descriptive caption to underscore the discontinuity between what it denotes and connotes.

Kouwenhoven appears to follow a similar conceptual framework for the second photograph by DeCarava reproduced in his book. He places this image underneath a painting by Abraham Rattner that depicts a fragmented still-life set against an expressionistic moonlit sky. Next to DeCarava's photograph, Kouwenhoven appends the following caption describing the geographic "point of view" from which it was taken: "Roy de Carava's photograph was taken on 103rd Street, between Lexington and Third avenues, in 1950." Conversely, the caption flanking Rattner's painting simply indicates the author, title, and date of the work: "Abraham Rattner's 'City Still Life' was painted in 1943." Here Kouwenhoven again seems to use the captions to facilitate the reader's interpretation of the images in relation to the larger text that runs along the top of the pages on which the images are reproduced: "But the recurring images . . . in paintings and photographs of the city . . . are the architectural forms in which its loneliness and aspiration . . . its tragedies and triumphs . . . have found their most concrete expression."

As in the Guglielmi and Abbott pairing, Kouwenhoven implies that Rattner's abstract style allows the reader to interpret the painting more easily as a transformation of reality. Lacking a readily identifiable "style," DeCarava's photograph seems to impartially record reality and so requires Kouwenhoven's caption to establish a discontinuity between what it denotes and connotes. Yet, unlike the other two photographs by DeCarava, which depict buildings and their facades—referents that, at least at first glance, more closely correspond to the geographic locations outlined in the captions—in a third image by DeCarava, Kouwenhoven's description is practically irrelevant to what one actually sees in the picture: a solitary figure, clad in a formal gown, walking through a vacant lot. DeCarava's positioning of the figure within his composition adds to this effect.

In this photograph, DeCarava depicts a girl at a moment in which she largely ignores the decay and trash that surrounds her and instead gazes in the direction of a billboard advertising the latest Chevrolet model sedan. To some, her acknowledgement of this billboard, along with her formal attire, may serve as evidence of her "triumph" over the desolation around her. Yet, the authority of this reading quickly unravels once one notices that DeCarava has also depicted the girl moving in the direction of dark shadows that diagonally bifurcate the composition. Since the girl walks toward not away from the dark shadows, one could just as easily argue that the work reflects "tragedy," or that she will not overcome the wretchedness of her environment.

The ambiguity created between the girl and the shadows encourages a metaphoric as opposed to literal reading of DeCarava's photograph. This emphasis serves to draw attention to the "point of view" from which this picture was taken. Accordingly, one might argue that, unlike DeCarava's previous two photographs, for this picture, Kouwenhoven does not need to use a caption to establish a discontinuity between the image and what it depicts. This coding is already implicit within the photograph's composition, and so it would have been sufficient for Kouwenhoven, as he did for Rattner's painting, to only indicate the title of the photograph: *Graduation*.

While the exact circumstance surrounding Kouwenhoven's exclusion of the title to DeCarava's photograph may never be recovered, its omission reveals a "blind spot" in Kouwenhoven's overall approach to visual culture. As he states in his Preface, Kouwenhoven is clearly interested in imparting to his readers an understanding of the visual world, and more particularly photography, as more than a purely mechanical and objective, that is, literal, means of representation. For Kouwenhoven, however,

this appreciation does not render photography and painting indistinguishable from one another. Even though he considers photography as sophisticated and rigorous as painting, for him it will always remain in need of explanatory captions, since it remains bound to the "functional" and not the "fine art" tradition.[22]

Graduation did not only trouble the logic and stability of Kouwenhoven's project. In 1955, MoMA curator Edward Steichen chose not to include this photograph in his blockbuster exhibition *The Family of Man*. This decision troubled DeCarava, because he knew that this "was one photograph that [Steichen] loved . . . but he didn't show it in the exhibit." When DeCarava asked, "'Why? Why don't you show *Graduation*?' [Steichen] replied, 'It's too strong.'" In short, as DeCarava further explains, this photograph "didn't fit in with his perception of a smooth, seamless family."[23] Here DeCarava suggests that *Graduation* was excluded from *The Family of Man* because it did not conform to the universal message about the oneness of mankind that Steichen sought to evoke.

Steichen organized *The Family of Man* according to a series of themes relating to universal notions of family life, including courtship, marriage, childbirth, child rearing, enjoyment, strife, formal education, work, old age, and death, among others. In soliciting photographs for the exhibition, Steichen made these intentions clear: "It is essential to keep in mind the universal elements and aspects of human relations and the experiences common to all mankind rather than situations that represented conditions exclusively related or peculiar to a race, an event, a time or place."[24] Here Steichen reveals his interest in photographs that would evoke his ideological message about the oneness of mankind naturally, or, as Barthes would later explain, on the level of myth.[25] To accomplish this task, Steichen selected photographs in which the relationship between the images signified and the overall message of his exhibition appeared seamless. As a photograph whose meaning was not immediately apparent, *Graduation* did not fit this criterion.

Many have criticized *The Family of Man* for this optimistic message about the "brotherhood" of mankind. Yet, in selecting photographs that clearly illustrated this theme, Steichen also tried to include less "positive" images—including photographs of poverty, famine, death, and war—since, according to Steichen, these pictures would serve to challenge viewers to better themselves and the world. The inclusion of a photograph of a lynched African American man in *The Family of Man*, and its subsequent reproduction in an essay in *Life* magazine about the exhibition, responded

to this need.[26] In a 1955 essay, based on an informal talk given to members of the New York Picture Group at MoMA, Steichen underscores the importance of the lynching image for his exhibition: "The lynching photograph has hurt many—and many don't like it in the show—but I feel it plays an important part. It is an expression of our honesty—we admit that we are not always right or good."[27] In this passage, Steichen again praises the photograph for providing a foil to the optimism conveyed in the exhibition. So why, then, a day after the exhibition's opening, did the photograph mysteriously disappear?[28]

This question may be answered in part by considering the reception of another image from *The Family of Man*: George Silk's photograph of a young Chinese boy begging for food, used by Steichen to illustrate the universal problems of hunger and deprivation (figure 4.1). When exhibited in the United States, this ideological positioning of Silk's work as a universal depiction of starvation was by and large accepted. In the 1959 showcase of *The Family of Man* in Moscow, however, this use of Silk's image produced such controversy that the Soviet Union Chamber of Commerce ordered the photograph removed. As allies of the Chinese, the Soviets found Silk's photograph and its representation of Chinese starvation, although taken prior to the rise of the Communist People's Republic of China, purposely hateful and disparaging.[29] The reception of the lynching photograph in the United States reflects a similar set of concerns. Although Steichen attempted to position the photograph as a universal depiction of hatred and oppression, in using a specifically racial content to evoke these notions, Steichen entered into the messy and tumultuous context of 1950s U.S. race relations.

Since the 1880s, racial lynching has represented an insidious part of U.S. culture, particularly in the South. Begun after Reconstruction and continued in the South by the Ku Klux Klan and other mobs of white citizens, the threat of lynching represented one of the most gruesome ways that African Americans could be prevented from voting and demanding equal rights. While photographs of these events were initially circulated in white supremacist communities in the South, beginning in the 1920s, as art historian Dora Apel explains, "left-wing and liberal black political organizations used them in national antilynching campaigns that reached their apogee in the 1930s." By the 1940s and 1950s, these publicized lynching photographs, as Apel further explains, "met with national protests and condemnation in the international press" and were a general embarrassment for the United States, especially "as it sought to present itself

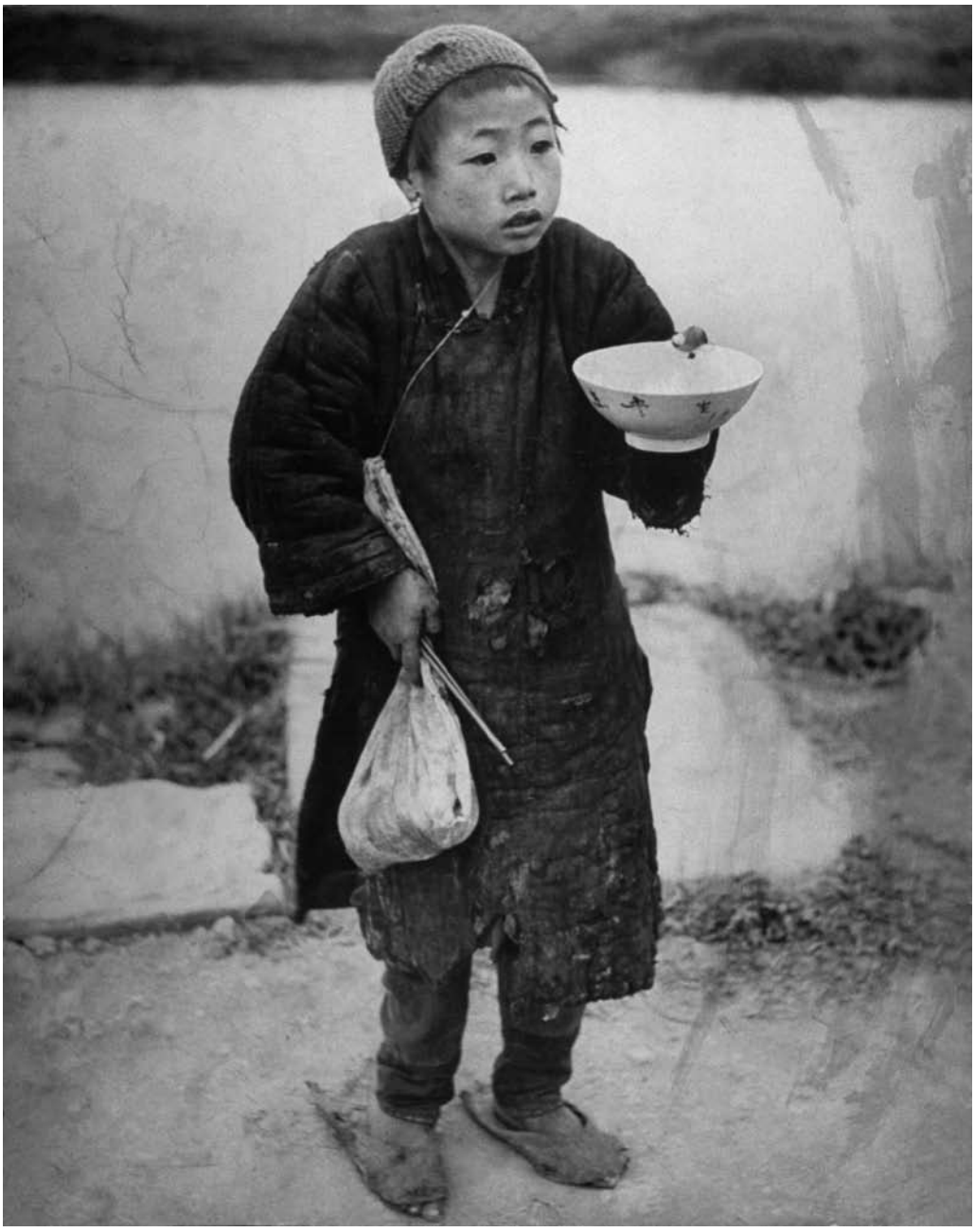


Figure 4.1. George Silk, Starving child holding out an empty rice bowl during famine, 1 May 1946. George Silk/ Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images.

as a more democratic alternative to communism during the cold war."[30] In the context of these specific historical associations, the lynching photograph in *The Family of Man* and the humiliation it would have generated, in particular for the United States, would have stood in contrast to the generalized notions of humanity that Steichen intended the images in his exhibition to evoke.[31] Steichen wanted to end oppression and hatred in the world. Yet, like OEO's approach to poverty in *Profile of Poverty*, he chose to attack such problems from a generalized not a racially specific viewpoint, or, as Barthes explains in his 1957 critique of the exhibition's Paris showcase, without "the determining weight of History."[32] The removal of the lynching photograph attests to some of the difficulty that Steichen encountered achieving this goal.

While the specificity of racial content in the lynching photograph stood in opposition to Steichen's generalized message about the "oneness" of mankind, DeCarava's *Graduation* conflicted more in terms of the image's opacity. An anecdote about Steichen, recalled by his friend and curatorial assistant, Grace Mayer, clarifies this distinction: "I remember once we were walking back and forth through the galleries and there was a man standing there, he was there all morning. And he said to Steichen, 'You seem to work here: why don't I understand these pictures?' And Steichen said, 'Because you are trying too hard.'"[33] This seemingly ordinary story is telling for its insight into Steichen's preference for images that depict clear narrative content in a direct and easily comprehensible manner. Thus, although Steichen ultimately had to remove the lynching photograph because of the specific associations it evoked in terms of racial discrimination in the United States, he appreciated the photograph's directness and easily perceived content, or its literalness. Even though DeCarava's *Graduation* did not evoke associations that were so explicitly tied to U.S. race relations, for Steichen, it addressed the viewer in a manner that was at best metaphorical, opaque, and complicated.

The same could not be said of the four images by DeCarava that Steichen did include in *The Family of Man*.[34] One of the primary differences between these photographs and *Graduation* is DeCarava's use of framing. In an image entitled *Shirley embracing Sam* that Steichen selected for *The Family of Man*, for instance, DeCarava severely crops the composition, a formal device that removes the subjects from their immediate context and forces the viewer to read them as self-contained. In *Graduation*, on the other hand, DeCarava photographs his subject from a distance, thus rendering the surrounding environment as visually important as the figure of the young

woman. As a result, in *Graduation*, the viewer has to continually shift her or his focus between two contrasting aspects in the composition—the dilapidated vacant lot and the girl's formal attire—to make visual sense of the image. Since there is no contextual information in which to situate the subjects represented in DeCarava's images selected for *The Family of Man*, the viewer can more easily read these pictures in relation to the message of "oneness" provided by the exhibition.

Another problem that *Graduation* must have posed for Steichen is its ambiguity. While Steichen could easily pair the four images by DeCarava included in *The Family of Man* with themes such as love, music, and work, Steichen could not categorize *Graduation* as effortlessly. The contrast between the formally attired girl and her trash-filled surroundings, the advertisement for the modern Chevrolet Bel Air in the background and the wooden trash cart in the foreground, as well as the diagonal line cordoning off the light-filled left side from the darkened right side, would have offered no clear answers for Steichen, especially in terms of his efforts to fit the image within the narrative structure of *The Family of Man*.

In creating these visual tensions within his composition, DeCarava suggests his interest in penetrating beneath the surface and assumed literalness of the photographic medium, using it in a more metaphoric manner to express those more nebulous, immeasurable qualities of an individual's psyche. For Steichen's purposes, these particularities and complexities, like the racial specificity evoked by the lynching photograph, were irrelevant to his larger message about the universal "oneness" of mankind. While Kouwenhoven had attempted to facilitate his readers' understanding of the relationship between a photograph's denoted and connoted meanings, Steichen attempted to suppress photography's complicated relationship to signification in favor of its ability to impartially describe the inherent goodness of mankind. This approach to the medium greatly simplified how photographs actually produce meaning, particularly in relation to notions of race and subjectivity. Nonetheless, Steichen's attempt to direct how the photographs in his exhibition signify meaning does reveal a greater awareness of photography's function as a system of representation than do any of the governmental figures or social scientists discussed in Chapter 2. While Steichen may at times posit photographs as transparent, unlike Arthur Trottenberg and Johnson's Administration, he never assumes that these images are blank screens upon which one can project just any ideas, emotions, or feelings.[35]

DeCarava appreciated the interest that Kouwenhoven and Steichen expressed

in his Harlem photographs as well as the widespread circulation that they received as a result of this attention. At the same time, his desire for them to be approached in a metaphoric, as opposed to literal, manner compelled DeCarava to find an alternative means for their distribution. Finding a publisher, however, proved a difficult task. Despite DeCarava's Guggenheim fellowship and his inclusion in the internationally recognized *The Family of Man*, he failed to find anyone who would agree to publish his Harlem photographs. Giving up all hope, DeCarava "had simply shelved them, put them away for good," until he remembered Langston Hughes, whom he had met briefly after the war. In particular, DeCarava recalled Hughes's Jess B. Semple, or "Simple" sketches, a collection of essays, initially published in *The Chicago Defender*, in which two Harlemites, one college educated and Northern born and the other a Southern migrant, engage in frequently humorous conversations about social issues, racism, and the hypocrisy of U.S. society.[36] Believing that Hughes's sketches "really captured Harlem life in words,"[37] in the summer of 1954, DeCarava tried to solicit Hughes's interest in his photographs of Harlem. Much to DeCarava's surprise, Hughes insisted without hesitation that "we have to get these published!"[38]

His enthusiasm notwithstanding, Hughes too had difficulty finding a publisher for DeCarava's Harlem photographs. After a number of rejections, Richard Simon at Simon and Schuster finally agreed to publish DeCarava's photographs, with the stipulation that Hughes write a narrative to accompany them.[39] Hughes agreed; but, rather than write about the factual lives of the people and places represented in pictures, Hughes devised a fictional story about them told from the perspective of an elderly African American woman named Sister Mary Bradley. DeCarava explains: "As for his story, Langston did not want to know any facts about the persons I had photographed on the streets. He told me he knew them already."[40] Thus, rather than simply use his text to literalize DeCarava's pictures, Hughes elected to respond more metaphorically to them.

Simon and Schuster published Hughes's text and DeCarava's photographs as *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* (hereafter *Flypaper*) in November 1955. The 98-page book included 140 images by DeCarava that Hughes had selected and sequenced according to his fictional narrative. Among the photographs is *Graduation*, which Hughes places toward the end of the book in a sequence of images depicting Harlem's street life. Hughes pairs *Graduation* with the following text: "But it's nice to see young folks all dressed up going somewhere—maybe to a party." In anchoring DeCarava's pho-

tograph with this text, Hughes, rather than open up the meaning of this image, fixes, even literalizes, what it depicts. This is largely because Hughes's text ignores those important visual dissonances discussed previously in the photograph, including the tension between the girl's formal attire and the dismal environment surrounding her. Hughes largely ignores these discrepancies and instead focuses the reader's attention solely on the supposition that her formal attire indicates that she is going to a party. Hughes's description of why DeCarava's Harlem photographs should be published suggests one of the reasons that he opted for this optimistic reading: "We've had so many books about how bad life is, that it would seem to me to do no harm to have one along about *now* affirming its value."[41] Here Hughes appears to use his text to position DeCarava's *Graduation* within an ideology of positive humanism, a reading that, upon first glance, seems to parallel Steichen's intentions for the photographs that he included in *The Family of Man*.

In positioning *Graduation* within an affirming light, however, Hughes, unlike Steichen, did not attempt to create a seamless relationship between what DeCarava's images signified and his text about them. Instead, in *Flypaper*, Hughes actually embraced the variance between the two. The use of DeCarava's photograph *Shirley embracing Sam* illuminates this distinction. In *The Family of Man*, Steichen uses this image to naturally evoke his message about the inherent goodness of mankind. Conversely, in *Flypaper*, Hughes challenges the sentimentality that Steichen attributes to DeCarava's photograph by casting the embracing couple as the uncaring parents of Sister Mary Bradley's grandson Rodney. Hughes clarifies this association in the text that accompanies this photograph, in which he uses Bradley, who sees a bit of herself in Rodney, to criticize Rodney's parents for "washing their hands of him . . . when he is the spitting image of them both."[42]

Hughes' reading of DeCarava's photograph of a couple embracing as a depiction of the indifferent parents of Rodney also served to distinguish DeCarava's photographs in *Flypaper* from those sensationalizing representations of Harlem circulated during this period in the mainstream press and more particularly in sociological studies on the African American family. For instance, in an addendum, written in 1950 to his 1939 study *The Negro Family in the United States*, sociologist E. Franklin Frazier argued that African American juvenile delinquents—much like Rodney, whom Sister Mary Bradley laments, "The street's done got"—are the product of "disorganized families" who have "failed in their socializing function" to provide "the emotional se-

curity and sympathy which is one of the main values in family life."[43] Here Frazier implies that the slum conditions and disintegration in which Harlem's African American poor live have prohibited them from providing their children with proper socialization and "family values." Yet, as the inclusion of DeCarava's photograph in *The Family of Man* attests, this image could certainly also be read as evidence of the "emotional security and sympathy" that Frazier believed was lacking in the disorganized African American family, even if it no longer applied to Rodney. In pairing this seemingly loving couple with Bradley's text about their indifference, Hughes thus uses the dissonance created between the image and text to suggest some of the complexity of Harlem's African American community and its relationship to the crime, poverty, and disintegration that filled the pages of these sociological studies. John Parker reiterates this intent in his review of *Flypaper*: "So many studies have concerned themselves solely with the seamy and the pathological side of human existence on the Harlem scene, a book calculated to unearth the sunshine happily blended with the shadow has long been overdue."[44]

DeCarava also sought to distinguish his work from such sociological and documentary studies of Harlem's impoverished conditions and pathological disintegration. DeCarava first voiced his objections to such studies in 1952, when he wrote the following in his application for the Guggenheim fellowship: "I do not want a documentary or sociological statement, I want a creative expression."[45] But, while DeCarava largely agreed with Hughes's efforts to distinguish his photographs from the sociological and documentary engagements of these projects, even praising Hughes for providing "the kind of writing which allow[s] the photographs to live and breathe,"[46] DeCarava still had certain reservations about the manner in which Hughes's text, as well as his selection and sequencing, anchored his photographs. The reception of *Flypaper* only intensified this uncertainty.

A common thread that runs throughout the reviews of this work is the critics' praise for its innovative combination of pictures and words. For instance, *New York Times* photography critic Jacob Deschin praises the photographs and text for "complementing" each other as opposed to "supplement[ing] or, worse still, [competing] with each other."[47] Likewise, John Parker writes in *Crisis*: "Contrary to what is sometimes the case with books of texts and pictures, *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* demonstrates the fact that neither need necessarily be dependent upon the other, but that each may bear an equal and organic relationship to the message in the book."[48] Gilbert Millstein

reiterates this point in an article in the *New York Times Book Review*: "The story and the pictures are not so much dependent on each other as they are justifications of each other."[49] Even though DeCarava appreciated the unique combination between pictures and words that these reviewers attributed to *Flypaper*, he avidly dismissed photographer Minor White's proposition, offered in his "Report on 'Sweet Flypaper of Life,'" that the fusion between DeCarava's photographs and Hughes's text represented a "third medium" not unlike that achieved in Paul Strand's and Nancy Newhall's *Time in New England* or Barbara Morgan's *Summer's Children*, among other examples.[50]

For DeCarava, no matter how loosely Hughes's text anchored itself to his pictures, the words still restricted the meaning of his photographs, "controlling," as photography historian Maren Stange explains, "a viewer's reception of its various potential messages."[51] One of the meanings that Hughes's text overlooked in particular was the personal, even psychic, implication of DeCarava's photographs. In a letter written in response to White's "Report," DeCarava addresses this omission when he explains that his "one thought uppermost in my mind" for these photographs was "to isolate, capture, some thing, person or time that affects me, that moves me." To do this, DeCarava further explains, "I must change it, reshape it into an image which expresses both the object and something of myself."[52] Here DeCarava, like the members of the Kamoinge Workshop, reveals his interest in photography's relationship to subjectivity. Yet, while many of the Kamoinge members used the black subjects in their photographs to explore the relationship between individual and collective notions of selfhood as well as their self and the world, DeCarava sought to use his Harlem photographs as vehicles for coming to terms with his inner, psychic self.

Longing and Belonging

Family provided one of the means through which DeCarava considered the psychic dimensions of these feelings. DeCarava's longing for a relationship with racially specific notions of family developed in part from the feelings of dislocation that he experienced as a child. Because his mother separated from his biological father shortly after his birth and his stepfather died while DeCarava was still relatively young, he and his widowed mother were left "completely destitute" and had to move frequently to make ends meet.[53] Despite these circumstances, DeCarava's yearning for family did not result from his desire to belong to a stable and organized family structure, frequently evoked in postwar sociological studies on African American children. For instance, in

a section of his 1950 essay discussed above, sociologist E. Franklin Frazier claims that the lack of a strong father figure as a positive role model, combined with the absence of a mother who was often working, had an adverse effect, particularly on young, lower-class, African American boys living in urban areas. Without these adult models to provide love, attention, and discipline, or what Frazier refers to as "family values," the disorganized African American family—unable to fulfill its proper socialization function—produces damaged personalities and, more devastatingly, withholds from the African American child that "which makes of the child a 'human being.'"[54]

While DeCarava also sought to use notions of family to understand his sense of self, or in Frazier's terms, what makes him a "human being," for him the African American family provided not a means of socialization but a way to gain access, as he had done through his photograph *Hallway*, to the childhood memories, fears, and desires that made up his inner, psychic life. To recover these feelings and thus begin to understand the nature of his longing to feel connected to a family or community, as part of his Harlem photographs, DeCarava entered the privacy of the homes of Joe and Julia James and their five children, and of Sam and Shirley Murphy and their two children, spending considerable periods of time getting to know the individual members of these two Harlem families and photographing the daily activities of their personal lives.

Langston Hughes included a number of photographs of the James and Murphy families in *Flypaper*. In the middle of the book, for example, Hughes juxtaposes several of DeCarava's photographs of the James family with a narrative in which Sister Mary Bradley lovingly speaks about the relationship between her youngest daughter, Melinda, her son-in-law Jerry, and her five grandchildren with whom she currently lives. While Hughes's fictional text weaves a compelling story about the individuals depicted in these photographs, their reproduction in the context of this book overlooks the centrality of DeCarava's subjectivity, and more particularly the ambivalent feelings of longing that he experienced in relation to this family and his representation of them.

In *Flypaper*, Hughes juxtaposes a photograph that DeCarava took of Julia James and her family eating, with the following text: "With all them children, there's no peace until after supper." He uses this combination of text and pictures to call attention to such daily activities as family meals that took place inside the homes of many African American families. A second picture of the James family, reproduced on the same

page, in which the family members are depicted at a moment of repose after the meal has been cleared from the table reiterates this intent, as does its accompanying text: "And even then there ain't much till the bigger ones get tired." In emphasizing the importance of such ordinary events, narrated through the matriarchal figure of Bradley—"One of Jerry's faults is, he don't come home every night"—Hughes highlights the unity of this extended, even disorganized African American family. This distinction again contests Frazier's claim that lower-class, urban African American families lack "family values." "In many of the broken homes," argues Frazier, "the members of the family seldom gather for a meal. Eating is an individual matter, lacking fellowship and communion, and without the ceremony associated with family meals."[55] Its fictionality notwithstanding, in focusing on the vitality of extended African American family life, Hughes not only refuted such sociological studies on Harlem's poverty and pathological disintegration posited by Frazier and others as intrinsic to this community and its matriarchally structured families, but also offered a more compelling representation of Harlem than those sensational representations circulated contemporaneously in the mainstream press.

In the 21 May 1940 issue of *Look* magazine, for instance, the editors published a photo-essay entitled "244,000 Native Sons," in which they paired images taken by members of the Photo League's Feature Group with text written by African American sociologist and Feature Group member Michael Carter.[56] Through this pairing, the editors at *Look* fail to consider the vitality and complexity of Harlem and instead guide their readers' understanding of this place in relation to the impoverished conditions—housing, poverty, health issues, and crime—in which its disenfranchised African American community supposedly lived. The inclusion of a photograph by Aaron Siskind, of a mother and child sitting at a kitchen table, on the first page of the photo-essay offers a case in point (figure 4.2). Its caption states

> Such squalor as shown above is not isolated, but depressingly typical. A quarter of a million people live in 8,902 dwellings, half of which were built before 1901. Their safety and health are constantly imperiled by rotten plumbing, leaking roofs, sagging floor and stairs, and inadequate fire prevention—to say nothing of ubiquitous rats and other vermin.

In appending this caption to Siskind's photograph, the editors render this image into a transparent representation of the inequitable and decrepit conditions in which

4.2. Aaron Siskind, *Harlem Document*, c.1937–40. Courtesy George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film. By permission of The Aaron Siskind Foundation.

African Americans were living in Harlem. In short, in a manner similar to the function of Hughes's text in *Flypaper*, the editors restrict the meaning of Siskind's photograph and, in so doing, overlook the complex relationship that he attempted to negotiate between himself and the black subjects in this image.

Siskind took this photograph as part of a collaborative project between Carter and the Feature Group known as the "Harlem Document." Conducted between 1936 and 1939, this project was intended to serve as a comprehensive cultural analysis of Harlem.[57] While images from this project, particularly those by Siskind, circulated widely in a variety of publications as well as in several exhibitions during the period, the project itself remains elusive since it was never published in full or in its intended form. Furthermore, though the six-page spread in *Look* represents the closest that the "Harlem Document" came to publication, as American Studies scholar John Raeburn argues, "it must be approached with caution."[58] This is because, this photo-essay, composed of 13 images from the 106 submitted to *Look*, reflects more the needs of its editors—who, as the title "244,000 Native Sons" and introductory text attests, used it to illustrate the "tragic" environment of Bigger Thomas, the pathological, fictional hero of Richard Wright's recently published and critically acclaimed *Native Son*—than it reflects the careful, even fraught, deliberation from which the members of the Feature Group, and more specifically Siskind, approached Harlem.[59] More important, this publication fails to reveal the extent to which Siskind, deeply cognizant of the ways in which his presence as a white photographer, as well as his formal choices, influenced a photograph's objectivity, struggled to limit the effects of his personal point of view so that he could record his subjects in a manner that was both accurate and unmediated.

From a technical point of view, one might assume that Siskind's decision to photograph his subjects with large 4 x 5 and 5 x 7 inch-view cameras would obstruct this objective, since, in using these cameras to laboriously construct each picture on the ground glass as he would later print it, Siskind not only rendered himself highly visible to his subjects but also depended upon their cooperation.[60] Yet, even though Siskind photographed Harlem with a large-format camera and tripod after conducting extensive research and planning, at the moment of exposure he actually attempted to conceal as much of his presence and intentions as possible. Siskind explains:

> Producing a photographic document involves preparation in excess. . . . I worked pretty much this way in making "Harlem Document." However, I cautioned my

> co-workers on this job to become as passive as possible when they faced the subject, to de-energize for the moment their knowledge of the ideas about the subject, to let the facts fall away and at that crucial moment to permit the subject to speak for itself and in its own way.[61]

Here Siskind suggests that controlling his ideas and preconceptions about his subjects allowed him to produce more "objective" documents of them.

To keep his biases in check, as photographer and art historian Carl Chiarenza has noted, Siskind deliberately photographed his subjects from a distance. In fact, Chiarenza further argues that Siskind purposely attempted to avoid taking portraits or photographing his subjects in direct engagement with his camera so as to ensure his images' "objectivity."[62] This is not to say that as a European American photographer Siskind was a detached "outsider" and hence felt no emotional affinity with the black subjects of his pictures. Because Siskind and many of the Feature Group members were first- or second-generation, working-class Jews who had previously lived in and photographed the tenements of New York City's Lower East Side, as curator Deborah Martin Kao points out, "The conditions of poverty and racism that black Harlemites experienced while not analogous, were pertinent to the experiences of the photographers and their families . . . [and] personally linked [them] with the history of the place they photographed."[63] According to American literature scholar Sara Blair, it is precisely the instability of this "partially shared social landscape" that comes to define not only the calculated distance in Siskind's photographs but, more important, his understanding of the limitations of documentary photography, which included the aesthetic and cultural implications of his presence as a European American photographer.[64] To put it differently, like Roy DeCarava and even Bruce Davidson, Siskind struggled with the difficulty of how to assimilate the affective complexity of his personal and social point of view with the assumed objectivity of the medium. Yet, while DeCarava and Davidson sought to address this issue intersubjectively, Siskind approached this problem largely through the framework of aesthetics.

The following comments were recorded during the minutes of Feature Group meetings: "While they were rich in factual material, some of the members thought that they were not interesting enough as pictures" and "while the subject was interesting, the picture was not entirely satisfactory, chiefly because it was all on an even plane, and there was consequently no emphasis on any of the parts."[65] These state-

ments reveal a central problem that Siskind and the other Feature Group members encountered in their attempt to make "objective," impartial documents. For their pictures to function as more than "facts," the photographers had to compose them in a manner that made them visually interesting. In short, the photographers had to make certain aesthetic choices in the construction of their pictures, a method that necessarily compromised the "objectivity" of their images since it imparted a point of view to them.

Siskind's careful arrangement of the composition of the mother and child sitting at a kitchen table provides insight into this problem (see figure 4.2).[66] Although Siskind photographs the pair from the distance of the bedroom to minimize his involvement in the scene, his decision to frame them with the blurred bedpost and hanging laundry—the latter of which the editors at *Look* cropped out of the picture—reflects personal aesthetic choices not impartiality. Siskind also recognizes this contradiction in the following statement:

> We came to see that the *literal representation of a fact* (or idea) can signify less than the fact or idea itself (is altogether dull), that a picture or a series of pictures must be informed with such things as order, rhythm, emphasis, etc., etc.—qualities which result from the perception and feeling of the photographer, and are not necessarily—(or apparently) the property of the subject.[67]

Here Siskind acknowledges the limitations of photography's assumed objectivity or literalness.

In the above statement, Siskind also recognizes that if photographs are to function beyond the literal representation of facts, they had to reflect some part of his personality. In asserting himself in his pictures, however, Siskind ultimately takes a different approach than either DeCarava or Davidson. While DeCarava and Davidson used their photographs of black subjects to explore concepts of selfhood that ranged from the psychic to the solipsistic, Siskind attempted to control the nature of his subjectivism so that it resulted entirely from his reaction to his pictures' formal structure and not in regard to what he felt about his subjects or how his subjects influenced his understandings of his selfhood. In other words, Siskind tried to visualize the black subjects of his photographs purely in terms of the relationships of their formal properties and without the influence of his prior beliefs, values, or education.

To clarify this distinction, it is helpful to return to DeCarava's photograph of

the James family reproduced in *Flypaper*. Like Siskind's photograph of the mother and child (see figure 4.2), in his photograph, DeCarava also depicts a Harlem family sharing a meal. Yet, in contrast to Siskind, who sought to distance himself from his subjects so as to limit the effects of his point of view, for DeCarava, his intersubjective exchange with his subjects was central to his efforts to use images such as this one to explore the nature of his selfhood. Accordingly, DeCarava does not photograph his subjects from the distance of another room; instead, he arranges them largely along the picture's edges so that, like the table that is bifurcated by the bottom of the picture, they are cut off by the boundary of the frame. This pictorial device serves to extend the space of the picture into the one that he and the viewer occupy, thus allowing DeCarava and viewers to feel the sense of connection that had eluded him in his youth. DeCarava's decision to photograph the scene with only the available light and a small hand-held camera adds to this effect for, rather than render his subjects and their surroundings readily identifiable, this formal device obscures their legibility and encourages viewers to interact with them on a more personal level.

At the same time, while the positioning of the James family along the edges of the frame creates intimacy, there is also an implied distance due to the manner in which DeCarava photographs his subjects from a slightly overhead perspective. This detachment is heightened by the fact that none of the members of the James family directly engages the camera nor acknowledges DeCarava's presence. This contrast between intimacy and detachment produces a certain tension in DeCarava's photograph. Due to their close proximity, DeCarava encourages viewers to feel a certain familiarity with the subjects depicted in the photograph. At the same time, their total disengagement from and disinterest in the camera renders this family into a largely unattainable ideal. For DeCarava, this tension was even more important than the intimacy initially evoked by this photograph, since it provided a means of understanding the contradictory nature of his inner desires and fantasies and the manner in which these feelings had become displaced onto this African American family. In photographing the James family, then, DeCarava did not seek to represent some racially inscribed Harlem type or even an accurate portrait of the James family per se. To him, this family offered a vehicle through which he could come to terms with the nature of the relationship between his individual sense of self and those collective notions of family and community that he had longed for since his youth. In short, DeCarava uses the tension in this picture to explore the psychic dimensions of his selfhood.

DeCarava's interest in the intersubjective potential of photography was not something that Siskind shared. Although Siskind also recognized the limitations of photography's literalness, to overcome this constraint, he sought to sever photography's ties to illusionism. To express it differently, while DeCarava sought to negotiate his psychic feelings in terms of the host of associations that the contents of his photographs evoked in him as well as in his viewers, Siskind sought to eliminate these connections. Yet, removing every association outside the frame that influenced his prior ideas about his subjects and their relationship to himself, not to mention the manner in which these images were received, posed an impossible challenge for Siskind, particularly since his photographs included such highly associative content as human beings.[68] In order to deal with this problem, in the summers of 1943 and 1944, Siskind discovered a new way to approach the medium while photographing objects—wood, seaweed, and man-made substances which were often decaying, destroyed or mutilated—along the beaches of Gloucester and later Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts.[69] In these pictures, Siskind, in an effort to move beyond considering objects naturalistically, began to think exclusively in terms of his personal, even psychic reactions to the formal relationships evoked by an object's formal aspects, such as the textures and shapes of rocks, seaweed, graffiti, and peeled paint (figure 4.3). Siskind maintained that in rendering these objects objective—"sharp, fully textured, and undistorted"[70]—he could limit their meanings to those formal relationships produced within the confines of the frame. Siskind further explains in his seminal 1945 essay "The Drama of the Objects": "The picture—and this is fundamental—has the unity of an organism. Its elements were not put together, with whatever skill or taste or ingenuity. It came into being as an instant act of sight."[71] Positing these photographs as the product of his total visual absorption and independent of his previous knowledge and ideas, Siskind believed that he had created autonomous pictures that reflected his singular emotional experiences with the objects at hand. In sum, Siskind argues that in eliminating his pictures' associative capacities that emanated from outside the frame, he could offer the viewer a pure way of seeing, unconstrained by habit or convention.[72]

Despite their basis in subjectivity, Siskind also insisted that these photographs held an indexical relationship to the world: "Although these pictures which are called abstract . . . there is a real emotional contact with the thing itself, and a belief in the thing itself."[73] Here Siskind alludes to a problem that had troubled him since his "Harlem Document" photographs, namely how to assimilate the personal experiences and

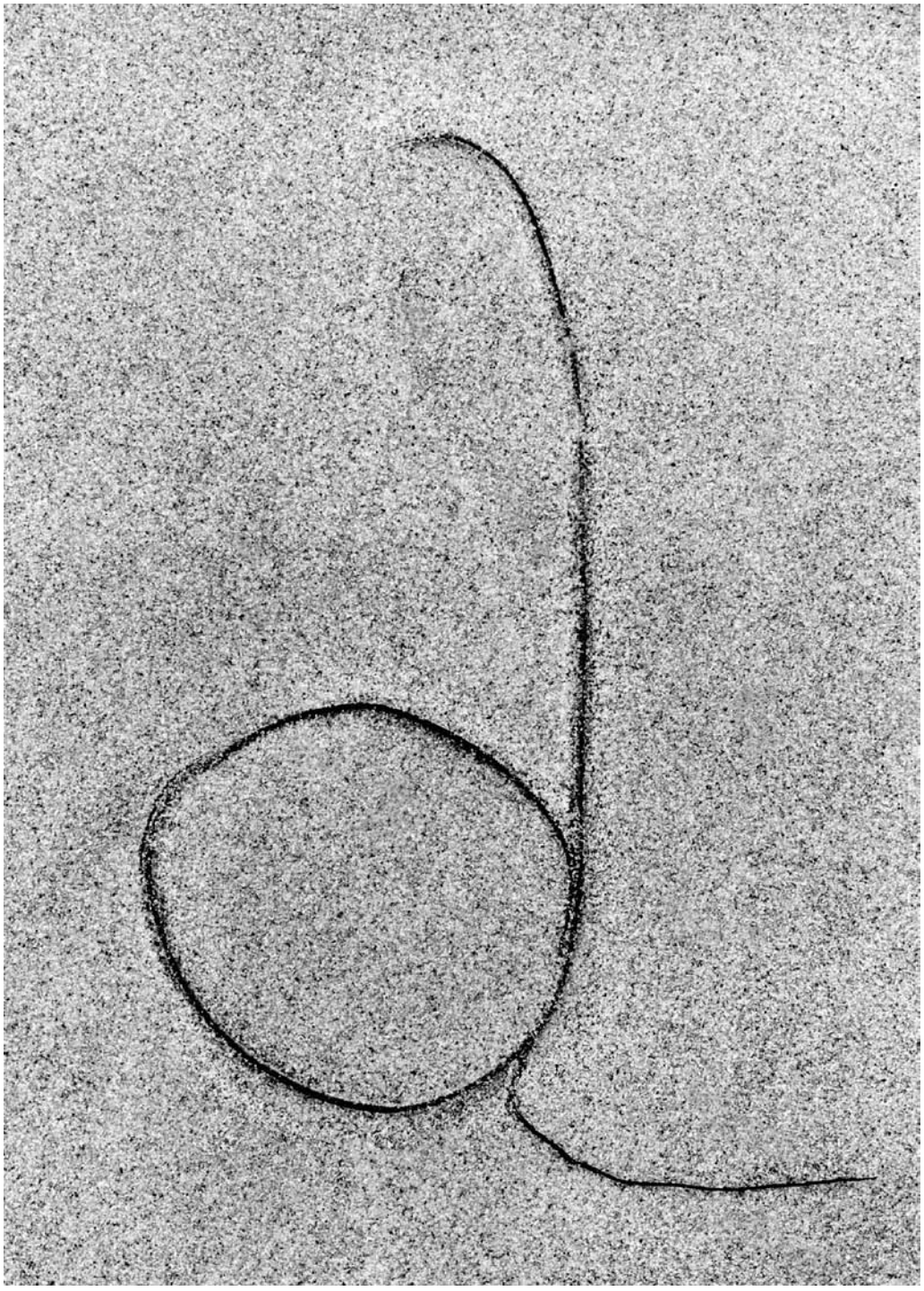


Figure 4.3. Aaron Siskind, *Seaweed 2*, 1943. Courtesy Bruce Silverstein Gallery. By permission of The Aaron Siskind Foundation.

psychic feelings evoked by his subjects with the documentary nature of the medium. To address this contradiction, Siskind asserted that these photographs and his reactions to their contents were "complete and self-contained": "When I make a photograph I want it to be an altogether new object, complete and self-contained, whose basic condition is order—(unlike the world of events and actions whose permanent condition is change and disorder)."[74] Thus, even though Siskind's visual response to these objects may have been informed by other works of art that he had seen or even by relationships that he had witnessed or experienced, in the act of taking the picture, he attempted to erase these social references so that the subject of these pictures became his emotional involvement with the formal relationships set up within the boundary of the frame.[75] In so doing, Siskind offers not a model of the subject—if one considers subjectivity as formed in dialogue with the social structures that constitute one's identity, both individually and collectively, in the world—but a way of perceiving the world, that is, a world defined by the frame of the picture for which a photographer's individual psyche provides the objective and universal standard of authenticity. For DeCarava, the members of Kamoinge, and even for Bruce Davidson, the task of detaching their photographs from the larger social systems in which they are produced and circulated was an impossible one, since the very meanings of their pictures, and by extension their sense of self, even if it was assumed to be transparent and universal, depended upon these relational associations.

To some, Siskind's formalist interest in the subject may seem to share commonalities with the curatorial aims of MoMA photography curator John Szarkowski that I discuss at the beginning of Chapter 2. Yet, while both Siskind and Szarkowski assume that a subject exists independent of pictures, their understanding of photography as a form of literal description differed fundamentally. In focusing on the detail or fragment of ordinary and unmanipulated materials and objects, many of Siskind's compositions, while grounded in reality, retained an "abstract" appearance that has often been associated with subjectivism of the canvases of the Abstract Expressionists.[76] Szarkowski, though equally invested in photography's descriptive potential, did not seek to infuse the medium with psychic feeling; instead, for him, the supposed transparency of the picture surface remained essential. Christopher Phillips reiterates this distinction: "Interestingly, Szarkowski's concern with locating photography's formal properties signaled no incipient move toward abstraction. The formal characteristics he acknowledged were all modes of photographic *description*."[77]

For Szarkowski, emphasizing photography's descriptive potential was critical in his effort to isolate photography from the messy questions of bodies, whom they represent, and who represents them, and instead to situate the medium within an autonomous realm.[78] This meant that when he included one of Siskind's so-called abstract photographs in his 1964 exhibition *The Photographer's Eye*, Szarkowski categorized this image not in terms of Siskind's singular emotional experiences with the objects at hand, but rather in terms of one of the five characteristics that he maintained as intrinsic to the medium of photography: "The Frame." Likewise, in the same exhibition, he did not consider the intersubjective potential of Roy DeCarava's 1959 photograph *Man with portfolio*; instead, he categorized this image in terms of another so-called intrinsic characteristic of photography: "The Detail."[79] For both Siskind and DeCarava, such a formalist reading of their photographs served not only to restrict the meanings of their photographs but more problematically to cut them off from their basis in subjectivity, even if differently conceived. For DeCarava, however, this severing was exacerbated even more by the fact that the very ideas about race and self that he attempted to explore in his image depended upon their ability to be constituted dialogically.

Visually DeCarava's *Man with portfolio* aligns with many of the formal issues discussed by Szarkowski as essential to photography. In severely cropping the man so that all that remains visible are his upper legs, the tips of his fingers, and the black portfolio which he clasps as he walks down the sidewalk, DeCarava calls attention to the structure of the picture plane and the framing edge, features in keeping with Szarkowski's goal in *The Photographer's Eye*, to reveal those formal characteristics intrinsic to photography. However, a crucial difference remains. Even though DeCarava's use of the pictorial devices of the framing edge and the detail attest to his interest in the formal properties of the medium, he does not adopt these strategies solely as a means of establishing the aesthetic autonomy of his pictures. While Szarkowski maintained that the detail severed photographs from associations that extended beyond the boundaries of the frame, for DeCarava this pictorial strategy offered another means of establishing a dialogue between his self, his desires, and the social world.

In electing to crop out the distinguishing features of this man, including his race, DeCarava explores a different type of relationship between himself and his subjects than found in many of his Harlem photographs, including *Julia and children at kitchen table*. In these earlier photographs, DeCarava had largely made the race of his

subjects explicit; in *Man with portfolio,* however, he renders such defining features obscure. As a result, the viewer struggles to identify the man through his fingertips, portfolio, and trousers. Some, knowing that DeCarava is himself of African descent, may take a conceptual leap and read this man as "black," while others, situating this work in the context of DeCarava's images of white businessmen, may read him as "white."[80] There is little visual evidence in the picture to support either hypothesis; even the reflection on the surface of the portfolio case—a formal device that DeCarava had previously used in photographs such as *Gittel* to implicate himself within the space of his pictures—is ambiguous. How, then, is one to read the meaning of this man and his relationship to DeCarava? That is precisely DeCarava's point. He uses cropping and the detail, not to cut off this man from the social world, but rather to explore the manner in which race and subjectivity are constituted relationally.

To come to terms with the man represented in this picture requires that one negotiate one's assumptions about him, including his race, what one actually sees in the picture—the host of associations evoked by the white woman's legs and high-heeled shoes, which are cut off by the upper-left side of the frame—and how this information relates to DeCarava, the picture's maker. For instance, though a vast majority of DeCarava's photographic production depicts black subjects, beginning as early as 1950, DeCarava also photographed white subjects. DeCarava shares a complex and even contradictory relationship to this content and to white America more generally. Part of DeCarava's ambivalence was a product of his feelings of both belonging to and disconnection from not only Harlem but also from white America. These conflicted emotions are particularly evident in the experiences DeCarava had opening A Photographer's Gallery with his wife Anne at their home at 48 West 84th Street in Manhattan in 1955. During the roughly two-year period of the gallery's existence, DeCarava and his wife presented seven one-person exhibitions and five group exhibitions in which they promoted the work of younger photographers as well as that of more established artists, including such European American photographers as Berenice Abbott, Harry Callahan, David Vestal, and Minor White, among others.

Like Helen Gee's Limelight Photo Gallery and later Larry Siegel's gallery Image, DeCarava sought for A Photographer's Gallery to establish a much-needed gallery system for photography as art.[81] In a statement of intentions, DeCarava reiterates this goal:

> It is a gallery that values the single photograph on its merits alone, not how well it fits into a picture sequence, not because the subject is an important figure, or of news value, but because the subject is important to the photographer and will result in a photograph which will be of lasting beauty.[82]

Yet, despite the aesthetic aims laid out in this statement, DeCarava and his wife did not select work for display based on a theme or a photographer's style or content; rather, they exhibited pictures that ranged from Pictorialism and documentary photography to straight photography and even abstraction.[83] This is because they wanted to provide a space where photographers could exhibit their images without the ideological constraints of commercial photography, photojournalism, or social documentary photography. In short, they used the gallery to promote photography as a form of personal expression, an approach that not only served DeCarava's personal struggle to transcend photography's literalism but also provided an important showcase during the 1950s for the exhibition and sale of photography.

The exhibitions that DeCarava and his wife mounted at A Photographer's Gallery received considerable press, particularly by *New York Times* art critic, Jacob Deschin.[84] Nonetheless, DeCarava closed the gallery in 1957, partly in response to the racial prejudice that he experienced in relation to the gallery and more particularly the white photography world. DeCarava recalls,

> One night I came home from work, and I put my key in the door. There were people in the gallery, and they looked at me—like, 'Who is he? What's he doing here?' I was black and they were white, and here I came opening the door like it was mine. It was! I felt like a stranger in my own house.

In this passage, DeCarava expresses the bitterness and isolation he felt in response to his racial difference. At the same time, DeCarava refused to allow these feelings to define his sense of self. He further explains, "But for the time, it was, I think a seminal place for photography. It was an experience . . . I think it was good for everybody. I have no regrets about it."[85] These ambivalent feelings about his personal relation to white America would continue to develop in DeCarava, coming largely to a head in his 1969 one-man exhibition *Thru Black Eyes* at the Studio Museum in Harlem.

For this exhibition, DeCarava grouped his nearly two hundred images—taken

in New York City during the past twelve years—into themes, one of which was white America. According to DeCarava, he sought to use "the physical space" in the photographs from this particular grouping "to show the alienation between myself, a black man, and them."[86] Here DeCarava again acknowledges the estrangement from white America that his experiences of racial difference produced in him. This apparent rift between DeCarava and white America was heightened by a review of *Thru Black Eyes* by Larry Neal, one of the leading theorists of the Black Arts Movement, in which he argues that DeCarava's photographs of white subjects are "essentially comments on the banality and the insipidness of white American life."[87] Here Neal, while distinguishing DeCarava's photographs of white subjects as more than "mere cartooning," nonetheless reduces them to transparent, even literal, representations of the superficiality of European Americans. In so doing, Neal, much like Kouwenhoven, Steichen, and even Hughes, overlooks DeCarava's efforts to use his photographs, even those that depict white subjects, to explore how his sense of self was experienced through as well as complicated by issues of race. This exploration necessitated acknowledging the "alienation" and even "bitterness" that DeCarava felt in relation to white America. But, at the same time, it also required that DeCarava not be so consumed by these feelings that they defined or fixed his sense of self, since, as DeCarava explains, "I can't create out of bitterness. It undermines my creativity."[88] For DeCarava, then, his representations of white subjects, including the white woman's legs in *Man with portfolio*, offered him not the opportunity to express his hostility toward white Americans, but rather to work through the psychical effects that these emotions toward white America have produced in him and his understanding of his self. This navigation was essential for DeCarava in his efforts to explore how his representations of race shape, and were shaped by, the social world.

In using DeCarava's *Man with portfolio* to endorse photography's self-sufficiency, Szarkowski renders the complexity or even possibility of such negotiations obsolete. Rather than consider the formal devices of photography as vehicles for negotiating ideas about race and self and their representation in photography, for Szarkowski, pictorial strategies such as cropping or the detail are simply ends in themselves. He explains:

> The photograph may suggest, but cannot define, intellectual or philosophical or political values. It can only describe appearances. For example, a photograph

> by Walker Evans cannot distinguish a poor but noble Elizabethan sharecropper from a racist redneck, for these are intellectual distinctions that may well describe the same man.[89]

In this statement, Szarkowski again limits photographic meaning to description, effectively transforming photography into an unbiased document.

Despite Szarkowski's attempt to reduce photographic meaning to impartial description and to posit photography as "born whole," photographs have never existed within a self-sufficient, autonomous realm nor are its authors objective or disinterested. Rather, as DeCarava's pictures so aptly reveal, photographs and their makers exist and participate in a complex network of social and psychic relations whose meanings are shaped by the broader societal forces and historical context in which they are embedded. Szarkowski's attempt to overlook the specificity of these frameworks posed a particular problem for DeCarava, as the inclusion of his photograph *Hallway* in Szarkowski's 1978 exhibition *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography Since 1960* at MoMA further attests.

While in *The Photographer's Eye*, Szarkowski uses DeCarava's *Man with portfolio* as visual support for those formal characteristics inherent to photography, in *Mirrors and Windows*, DeCarava's *Hallway* as well as his 1956 *Self-Portrait* offer Szarkowski the means to differentiate between two fundamentally different photographic "impulses." Defined as "Romantic" and "Realist," Szarkowski intended these "impulses" to function broadly and ahistorically. For instance, for Szarkowski, the term "Romantic" provided a category under which he could group those photographers concerned with issues of self-expression, while the term "Realist" provided a conceptual model for assembling those photographers who used the medium as vehicles of "exploration" or "analysis." Szarkowski explains:

> The distinction may be expressed in terms of alternative views of the artistic function of the exterior world. The romantic view is that the meanings of the world are dependent on our own understandings. . . . It is the realist view that the world exists independent of human attention, that it contains discoverable patterns of intrinsic meaning, and that by discerning these patterns, and forming models or symbols of them with the materials of his art, the artist is joined to the larger intelligence.[90]

Here Szarkowski, again ignoring the specific social and historical frameworks in which photographs and their makers acquire meaning, uses these largely philosophical binaries to legitimize photography's status as a descriptive and impartial medium.

Two photographs by DeCarava included in *Mirrors and Windows* address some of the shortcomings of Szarkowski's formalist agenda. The first photograph that begins the "Romantic" section of Szarkowski's catalogue is DeCarava's *Hallway*. Following it is DeCarava's 1956 *Self-Portrait*, which depicts a fragmented representation of DeCarava's face. In placing both in the "Romantic" section, Szarkowski positions DeCarava's photographs as vehicles of self-expression, or, in other words, he argues that their meanings are contingent upon the presence of their author, DeCarava. As a result of this categorization, Szarkowski essentially renders DeCarava incapable of approaching photography from a disinterested perspective.

Upon first glance, Szarkowski's categorization of DeCarava's photographs as self-expression seems appropriate. After all, the hallway that DeCarava depicts in his photograph has particular emotional, even psychic, implications for DeCarava. Likewise, in his *Self-Portrait*, DeCarava literally references himself. Yet, in positioning these photographs as "Romantic," Szarkowski fixes DeCarava's subjectivity, effectively rendering it the ultimate conveyor of his photographs' value and meaning. Steeped in autoanalysis, Szarkowski's categorization implies that DeCarava is incapable of describing the world impartially and without reference to his racial self. As a result, Szarkowski conflates DeCarava's subjectivity with the character of his work, so that his subjectivity and race become one and the same. For DeCarava, this conflation is particularly problematic, since it fails to address the relational nature of his representations of subjectivity and their complex relationship to psychic effects produced by his lived experiences of racial difference.

In *Hallway*, as in *Man with portfolio*, DeCarava is not trying to privilege himself as an all-knowing author who speaks for the collectivity of his race. Instead, in these as well as in his Harlem photographs, DeCarava attempts to negotiate his individual sense of self with the complex set of feelings evoked by the collectivity of his race. For DeCarava, using the medium of photography to explore those more immeasurable qualities of his psychic life—emotion, intuition, doubt, bitterness, and fantasy—represents a fundamental part of this task. At the same time, in emphasizing these aspects of his inner life, DeCarava does not intend to render them, his self, or even his race as the primary source of validation for the meanings of his pictures. In calling attention

to his self, his feelings, and his desires as socially and historically determined, DeCarava attempts to explore the multifaceted relationship that subjectivity brings to the representation of race in photography. It is only in reinstating these complexities that one can begin to read DeCarava's photographs in terms of his efforts, as articulated in his 1955 letter to Minor White, to transform the subjects of his pictures into images that "[express] both the object and something of myself."

Epilogue

Dawoud Bey and the Act of Reciprocity

"To appreciate fully [his] contribution to the status of the African American artist," writes Victoria A.-T. Sancho in relation to the work of Dawoud Bey, "one must place him in the proper historical context."[1] Given that Bey spent the years between 1975 and 1979 photographing the people and streets of Harlem for his project *Harlem USA* so as "to know where I was, both geographically and socially,"[2] it seems logical that this historical context should include the efforts of the photographers discussed in this book to explore the complex intersection between race and selfhood. Bey's recognition of Roy DeCarava's photographs as well as the 1970s series *The Black Photographer's Annual*—a publication which was not only founded by several members of the Kamoinge Workshop but also featured numerous images by the group—as foundational to his practice only strengthens such a claim.[3]

In discussing the historical dimension of Bey's work, however, scholars have largely overlooked such connections and instead sought to position his images within institutional definitions of lineage regarding African American photography: "Many have said that they have seen further by standing on the shoulders of giants. Perhaps Dawoud Bey might say the same of his own achievement. He traces the history of his work to James Van Der Zee and to Roy DeCarava."[4] Alternatively, they have sought to locate his photography in terms of already accepted styles and techniques related to this tradition: "DeCarava's masterful control of the tonal ranges of deep blacks in the photographic palette has had important metaphoric implications [for Bey]."[5] In both comparisons, the authors rely on well-established canons of African American photography to legitimize Bey's works. This model is important, because it allows them to demonstrate how Bey's "mastering" of these practices early in his career enables him to understand their limitations and inadequacies and thus subvert them in his later, more mature work. As A. D. Coleman explains: "Bey's earliest work[s] . . . are intelligent, expertly made images that build on the work of their predecessors. By the mid-1980s, a decade after he began his work, Bey had mastered this approach—and appears to have found its restrictions and conventions chafing."[6]

Besides greatly simplifying the historical dimension of Bey's practice, this institutional model, based largely on ideas about artistic genius and heroic notions of the avant-garde, establishes a hierarchy between Bey and his African American predecessors, thereby obscuring important connections between their practices as well as those of European American photographers working at the time. For instance, it is generally assumed that Bey relinquished the largely documentary photographs that he took of people, street life, and neighborhoods in Harlem in the mid-1980s upon realizing, as Stuart Hall and Mark Sealy explain, "the false and intrusive position of the photographer, and the power relations involved in making images of poor communities." To deal with this issue, as Hall and Sealy further elaborate, Bey "traded in his 35 mm camera for a 4 x 5 inch camera with a tripod and hood, which he laboriously set up in the street, exposing the whole machinery of representation to its subjects."[7] In making this argument about Bey's practice, Hall and Sealy, in a manner similar to the authors discussed above, position Bey's later work in relation to postmodernist and multiculturalist theories of identity, whose very foundation depends upon a rejection or critique of what has come before.

But did Bey in fact entirely reject the practices of his predecessors? In speaking about why he exchanged his cameras, Bey offers the following: "I began to want a more sustained contact with the people I was photographing . . . I thought this would only be possible if I slowed down the way in which I was working."[8] Most authors have interpreted this statement to mean that Bey used his 4 x 5 inch-view camera to interrupt the hierarchy of seeing/being seen, which was considered implicit to the so-called documentary practices of his predecessors. Yet, as I have repeatedly argued throughout this book, neither DeCarava nor the members of the Kamoinge Workshop nor Robert Frank, Bruce Davidson, and Aaron Siskind passively accepted the parameters set forth by the tradition of documentary photography. While these photographers differed in terms of how they ultimately addressed the implied hierarchy between photographers and subjects in their practices, they came together in their mutual interest to transcend documentary photography's claims to objectivity and social reform. In electing to "slow down" his process by using a 4 x 5 inch-view camera, Bey then did not reject their practices as much as change the terms through which he investigated photography's intersubjective potential. In short, even though Bey and his documentary predecessors were equally interested in photography's complicated relationship to truth and the implied hierarchy between photographers and their subjects, they

differed in terms of how they ultimately used the subjects of their pictures to explore these issues.

One of the primary differences in Bey's large-format pictures and the 35 mm work produced by the photographers discussed in this book is the relationship that they attempted to establish with their subjects. Again, while these photographers each addressed this association differently, they shared a lack of concern for the manner in which their subjects collaborated in their representations. This is not to say that they never took photographs of consenting subjects. For the most part, they were more interested in using the relationship between themselves and their subjects as a means to explore the relational space between their personal and social selves, the emotional landscape of the inner self, or the descriptive space determined by the formal edges of the picture plane than in ensuring that their subjects were involved in the actual picture-making process. For Bey, beginning in the mid-1980s, these types of interactions became increasingly limiting. He sought, therefore, to make his subjects more active collaborators in several ways: by turning to the slower and more cumbersome 4 x 5 inch-view camera, by asking them for permission to take their photograph and involving them in the posing, and by giving them a print of it in appreciation of their participation.

Due, in part, to Bey's interest in using photography as a form of collaboration, scholars frequently trace his work to the portrait photography of early twentieth-century African American photographer James Van Der Zee. While not dismissing the significance of this comparison, situating Bey in terms of this African American lineage has meant that the relationship between his photographs and that of his European American photographer predecessors has remained largely overlooked. This is the case for a series of photographs that Bruce Davidson took in East Harlem in the mid- to late 1960s. For this project, Davidson also turned from a 35 mm to a 4 x 5 inch-view camera and gave over two thousand prints away in an effort to establish reciprocity between himself and his subjects. Despite these similarities, the relationship between Davidson and Bey's projects has yet to be discussed.[9]

Part of the reason for this oversight has to do with race. When scholars discuss Bey's collaborative work, they commend him for breaking down the power relations assumed intrinsic to documentary photography and in its place establishing a sense of reciprocity. As Kellie Jones explains: "He could feel a mutual consent between himself and those whom he photographed. . . . There was even, perhaps, a sense of shared au-

thorship, a recognition of the collaboration of artist, subject, and ultimately, viewer, in the construction of each picture."[10] Even though scholars have also praised Davidson's East Harlem photographs for their collaborative efforts, many contend that his position as a European American necessarily "limits" these representations. Since Bey has a similar racial background to the black subjects of his collaborative street work, this question of racial expertise is never posed in connection with him. Yet, if Bey's race naturally predisposed him to represent his subjects more naturally and truthfully, and thus begin to break down their power relations, why then did it matter to him what type of camera he used?

Positioning Bey's collaborative efforts historically in relation to those used by Davidson in his East Harlem photographs offers one way to address this question without resorting solely to the postmodernist and multiculturalist theories of identity relied on by Jones and others. For Bey, the problem with the 35 mm camera is not only the implied power structure that it establishes between photographers and subjects but also the manner in which it prevents subjects from collaborating in his picture-making process: "I also wanted the process to be more reciprocal, and create a dialogue that allowed the subject to both confirm my intentions and gain possession of the image I was making."[11] In this statement, Bey implies that, unlike the 35 mm camera, the larger and slower 4 x 5 inch-view camera enables his subjects, as much as himself, to take responsibility for the act of speaking in his images. This same concern seems to inform Davidson's East Harlem photographs, which he also took with the larger camera: "I needed to get close to people again, in a way that involved not just watching and commenting, but sharing, a give and take."[12] Here, in contrast to the more self-referential photographs that he took as part of his "American Negro" photographs, Davidson suggests his interest in developing a reciprocal relationship with his subjects. In the end, however, due to the actual sociohistorical and economic conditions of his East Harlem subjects, the relationship that he enacts in these images remains impersonal.[13]

Davidson began his East Harlem project in the fall of 1966 largely to fulfill an intersubjective need. He had just finished a series of industrial photographs, which left him wanting to feel connected to people again. But while previously Davidson had used his emotional connection to his subjects for largely solipsistic purposes, for these pictures, he wanted his subjects to have a voice as well. To carry out this relationship, Davidson decided that he could not just turn his camera on anyone that he encoun-

tered; rather, he needed a specific community of individuals. He found such a group living in a particularly poverty-stricken part of East Harlem: East 100th Street between First and Second Avenues. According to Davidson, however, his interest in this group transcended the specificity of their social and economic circumstances. Moreover, Davidson was convinced that his choice of equipment—a Linhof 4 x 5 inch-view camera, a tripod, and a strobe light so as to "really be exposed as a photographer"[14]—would allow him to create a situation in which, as he explains, "we both directed each other . . . a kind of osmotic direction!"[15] In other words, through this equipment, Davidson believed that he could establish an intersubjective exchange that would transcend the specificity of the social and economic circumstances in which he, his subjects, or even the viewers lived: "The use of the camera here invites an eye-to-eye relationship between the people of East Harlem and those who would never go there. The purpose of the project is to go beyond photography and poverty to the people themselves."[16] In spite of Davidson's efforts to create reciprocity in the taking and viewing of his photographs, he never successfully detaches the black subjects of his pictures from the actual poverty and decrepit conditions that existed in this particular area of East Harlem. This impenetrability is evident both in the images' circulation and reception as well as in the pictures themselves.

The block that Davidson elected to photograph in East Harlem was notorious for being one of the worst blocks in the city.[17] Davidson was aware of these associations as well as the efforts by a residents' group, known as the Metro North Citizens Committee, who had come together in the early 1960s to garner financial and public support for the physical, social, and economic improvement of this area. In fact, it was largely because of the introductions provided by the director of this group, Edwin Suarez, that Davidson was able to gain intimate access to many of his subjects.[18] These associations between Davidson's photographs and the rehabilitation efforts of Metro North were also well known to contemporary audiences. For instance, when John Szarkowski exhibited a selection of Davidson's East Harlem photographs at MoMA in 1970, the press release included two paragraphs detailing the renovations initiated by Metro North as well as Davidson's relationship to this group.[19] Likewise, in the written commentary for his photographs, Davidson mentions the rehabilitation efforts of Metro North in East Harlem, including attending a meeting with them.[20] These connections attest to the impossibility of detaching Davidson's East Harlem photographs from the poverty-stricken conditions in which his subjects lived and that

Metro North was attempting to alleviate. The reception of and financial backing for Davidson's project also substantiate this claim. In all of the critical responses, regardless of whether written in support of or in opposition to Davidson's project, the authors cite the specific social and economic situation of his subjects as part of their reviews.[21] Moreover, the special grant from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) that Davidson received in support of this project was also informed by its "powerful social message."[22]

The prints themselves, even those that do not literally represent the poverty-stricken circumstances of their East Harlem subjects, also attest to the impact of this specific context in East Harlem. In a photograph taken as part of this project, for example, Davidson depicts a man who stares resolutely at his camera (figure E.1). The closeness of the man to the camera as well as his rigid posture attests to Davidson's effort to "slow down" the picture-making process and establish reciprocity with him. At the same time, since the man's head is cut off by the top of the frame and his face is almost completely obscured by darkness, the image invites not "an eye-to-eye relationship" but rather focuses attention on the jagged scar which extends over half of the man's shirtless torso. Because of this choice of perspective as well as the placement of him on this particular East Harlem street, Davidson encourages viewers to engage with this man with regard to his scar, the specific circumstances which led to it, and the surrounding environment. As a result, Davidson creates an impersonal dialogue, since, instead of eliciting an intersubjective response, the emphasis and placement of the man and his scar fixes the nature of the exchange between Davidson, the subject, and viewers. Consequently, in contrast to what the critics have maintained, it is not his race per se that "limits" Davidson's East Harlem photographs. What prohibits Davidson from enacting reciprocity in his photographs is his failure to acknowledge the extent to which the specificity of the poverty-stricken conditions of this block in East Harlem overdetermines the nature of the exchange between himself, his subjects, and viewers. Though Davidson may want to explore photography's intersubjective potential, in electing to focus on such individuals in this manner, he restricts the reciprocity of his pictures and thus the relationships that he initiates in his photographs can only function impersonally. For Bey, conversely, it was precisely the impact that a sociohistorical context has on the nature of the exchange between photographers and subjects that instigated a shift in his photographic production and collaboration process.

When Bey began to photograph subjects that he encountered on the streets of

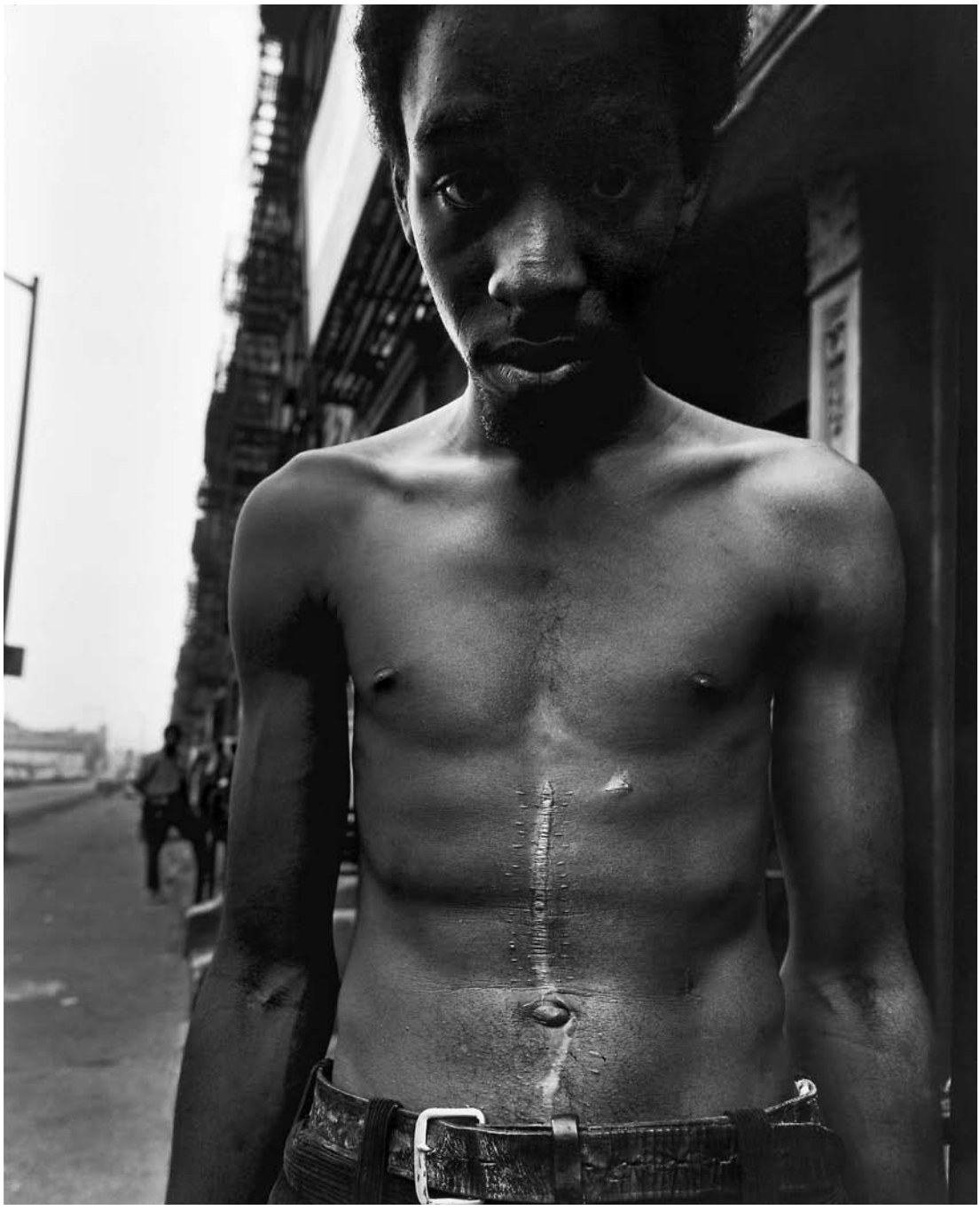


Figure E.1. Bruce Davidson, East 100th Street, Spanish Harlem, New York City, 1966. ©Bruce Davidson and Magnum Photos.

Harlem in the mid-1970s, his exchanges with these individuals were as important as the pictures that he took of them. But the problem for Bey was that his 35 mm hand-held camera did not lend itself well to these types of sustained engagements. "Designed," as Bey explains, "to be used unobtrusively and operated quickly," he felt that by using this camera he "was losing some fundamental contact with the subject."[23] To overcome this problem, in the mid-1980s Bey, as Davidson had done a decade earlier, switched to a 4 x 5 inch tripod-mounted-view camera so as to make his subjects more complicit in his representation of them. At this time, Bey also began to use Polaroid positive/negative film so that he could offer a print in exchange for his subjects' time and cooperation.

In taking these large-format photographs throughout the streets of Harlem, Washington, D.C., and various other cities throughout New York, Bey sought to make his photographic practice more reciprocal. Nonetheless, these images reflect many of the same problems as Davidson's East 100th Street photographs. For instance, though there are significant formal differences between *A Young Man in a Bandanna and Swimming Trunks*, which Bey took in Rochester, New York, in 1989, and Davidson's East 100th Street photograph of the man with a scar (see figure E.1), these images come together in the manner in which the context of the street and the host of social and historical associations that it evokes (and which I discuss throughout this book, particularly with respect to the black male body) overdetermine the relationships enacted in these images.[24] The difference is that, while Davidson largely ignored these associations, Bey attempted to confront them:

> After making portraits in the streets, I found that the reading of the photograph is largely influenced by environment. The environment becomes our key to figuring out who this person is, but it's not necessarily a true reading. I wanted to put the person in the foreground and force an engagement that was free of the encoded readings suggested by the environment.[25]

To deal with this issue, in the early 1990s, Bey decided to change his practice once again by moving entirely into the studio, where he began to photograph his subjects using formal lighting, backdrop paper, and a 20 x 24 inch Polaroid camera.

Once in the context of the studio, Bey also shifted his exploration into issues of reciprocity through the very construction of his prints. Accordingly, rather than photograph his subjects frontally and in the center of his compositions as he had done in so

much of his large-format street work, Bey began to manipulate his images by focusing on different aspects of his subjects' bodies and photographing them from multiple angles or profiles. It is only in Bey's presentation of these prints—they are usually arranged as a series of pairs or in a grid formation on the wall—that the whole figure or group of figures come into focus. Many critics have read this fragmentation in Bey's prints in terms of postmodern theories of identity and identification. Stuart Hall and Mark Sealy, for instance, argue that through this disjointed format, Bey calls attention to the incomplete and fractured nature of postmodern identity: "Often the parts and frames do not line up together precisely, obliging us to live with the ultimate 'lack' or failure of the subject perfectly to cohere."[26] Kellie Jones, building on the ideas of Homi Bhabha, reiterates this intent: "Bey's composite portraits stand in opposition to the concept of a stable and unchanging cultural self."[27]

In defining Bey's composite photographs by means of these more generalized notions of postmodern identity, these critics fail to consider how these pictures actually extend those explorations into issues of reciprocity that Bey had already begun to investigate both in his 35 mm and in his large-format street photographs. Rather than reject or even criticize his earlier works, Bey sought to use his studio prints to prolong his engagement with his subjects even further. The increased time required to set up and operate a 20 x 24 inch Polaroid camera, measuring approximately 5 feet high and 3½ feet wide, responded in part to this intent. While the encounters that he had initiated in his large-format street photographs lasted at most fifteen minutes, the studio works required at least four hours, thus giving Bey more sustained contact with his subjects.

To call attention to this change in his collaboration process, Bey also began literally to break up the figures and spaces in his pictures by, as I mention above, photographing them from multiple angles or profiles. Because of this disjointed framework, viewers are no longer able to engage with the subjects in the way of a suspended moment or chance encounter, as was the case in much of Bey's street photography. Instead they are encouraged to adopt a more sustained connection, both physically and temporally, with the depicted subjects, one that mirrors the reciprocity that actually transpired between the photographer and his subjects. The titles that Bey selected for these images further substantiate this objective. Unlike his street photographs, in which viewers could remain largely detached from the depicted subjects, identified by such generic descriptions as "young woman" or "couple," in his studio works, he began

to title his photographs with his subjects' first names "to create a sense of enhanced familiarity between the subject and the viewer . . . to give the subjects more of a voice, to make them less anonymous."[28] In so doing, Bey suggests that in moving his practice into the studio and creating a disjointed framework for his pictures, he attempted to address more than just the fragmentary nature of identity or even to overcome the subject/object hierarchy considered implicit in documentary photography. In creating these studio pictures, he aspired to visualize the dialogical nature of the exchange itself.

The subject of Bey's studio photographs is the act of reciprocity. Yet, in order for Bey to make the dialogical nature of that exchange primary, it was necessary for him to also control and, by extension neutralize, the sociohistorical context in which this reciprocity took place. While interested in photography's intersubjective potential, for the group of photographers discussed in this book, their explorations into the dialogical relationship between photographers, subjects, and viewers—formed largely through interaction as opposed to exchange—remained foremost a vehicle for exploring knowledge about race and self, both individually and collectively. Consequently, for these photographers, their representations did not, and for that matter could not, emanate from within the constructed or manipulated nature of the photograph itself or within the relatively neutral confines of the studio. This is because their representations were formed in relation to their interactions with the world, which included the particularities of their lived circumstances and interpersonal relationships as well as the larger social structures that constituted the culture and society in which they, their subjects, and viewers lived. In short, their investigations into race and self, even those which assumed the transparent and universal nature of these representations, could not be separated from the specific set of private, social, and historical conditions surrounding their production and reception.

It is precisely Bey's effort to dictate the nature and terms of these interactions that distinguishes him from those photographers discussed in this book. While his predecessors had largely used their representations of race to explore aspects of their private and social selves, Bey sought to render his subjects, who were incidentally no longer exclusively black or even strangers, equal participants in his picture-making process. Thus, for these studio photographs, Bey spent at least a day, or in the cases of his time as artist-in-residence several months, working and interacting with his subjects.[29] Yet, aware of the difficulty of adequately representing the complexity of any

of these individuals, when it came time to photograph them, Bey sought to make the dynamics of their intersubjective exchange, as opposed to either the subjects or even himself, the focus of the pictures. This is not to say that Bey wanted to entirely divorce his photographs from their private, social or even historical meanings. These pictures and the exchanges that they represent are still informed by the particularities of their subjects—which consisted of Bey's family and friends as well as individuals that he got to know during the course of his artist-in-residence programs—and by their specific relationship to Bey. As Stephanie Smith has argued with respect to Bey's artist residency at the Smart Museum in Chicago, this included "Bey's age, charismatic personality, and role as successful professional artist."[30] The difference is that, unlike the works of his documentary predecessors, Bey attempts to use the studio setting, his choice of equipment, and the disjointed nature of his prints to limit these influences in order to ensure that they do not overdetermine the meanings of his pictures. In so doing, Bey does not reject the documentary-based works of his predecessors as much as attempt to isolate and hence explore one aspect left largely unexamined in their practices, namely the act of reciprocity itself. The significance of this distinction needs to be reconsidered, since it will lead to a much richer and more historically complex understanding of the intersection of race and self in postwar American photography.

ENDNOTES

Introduction: The Self in Black and White

1 Louis Draper, "The Kamoinge Workshop," *Photo Newsletter* 1 (December 1972): 3.

2 A. D. Coleman, "Two Critics Look at Davidson's 'East 100th St.,'" *New York Times*, 11 October 1970, 21.

3 For a discussion of the logic behind positive images, see David Bailey, "Rethinking Black Representations: From Positive Images to Cultural Photographic Practices," *Exposure* 27, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 37–46; David A. Bailey and Stuart Hall, "The Vertigo of Displacement," *Ten.8* 2, no. 3 (Spring 1992): 15–23; and Stuart Hall and Mark Sealy, *Different* (New York: Phaidon Press, 2001), 14–15.

4 The supposed shift that takes place in post-1980s black photographic practice is also discussed in Kobena Mercer, "Black Art and the Burden of Representation," *Third Text* 10 (Spring 1990): 61–78; Bailey and Hall, "Vertigo of Displacement," 15–23; and Hall and Sealy, *Different*, 4–16.

5 For a more in-depth analysis of this shift in Bey's photographic production, see Dawoud Bey, *Dawoud Bey: Portraits, 1975–1995* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1995); and Victoria A-T. Sancho, "Respect and Representation: Dawoud Bey's Portraits of Individual Identity," *Third Text* 44 (Autumn 1998): 55–68. For a further discussion of this so-called transformation in the work of other African American photographers, including Carrie Mae Weems, Lorna Simpson, and Pat Ward Williams, see Kellie Jones, "In Their Own Image," *Artforum* 29, no. 3 (November 1990): 132–38.

6 Dawoud Bey, "An Interview with Jock Reynolds," in *Dawoud Bey*, 115.

7 See Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present*, rev. ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982); and Jonathan Green, *American Photography: A Critical History 1945 to the Present* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984). Some of the major pioneering publications that have responded to the exclusionism of these books include Valencia Hollins Coar, *A Century of Black Photographers, 1840–1960* (Providence: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 1983); Jeanne Moutoussamy-Ashe, *Viewfinders: Black Women Photographers* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1986); Deborah Willis-Thomas, *Black Photographers 1840–1940: A Bio-Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985); Deborah Willis-Thomas, *An Illustrated Bio-Bibliography of Black Photographers* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1989); and Deborah Willis, *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002).

8 See Jacqueline Francis, "Writing African American Art History," *American Art* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 2–10. For an excellent recent example of such an approach to African American art history, see Darby English, *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness*

(Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007). His effort to explore how ideas of "blackness" continue to inform the manner in which the works and practices by black artists are received is one that overlaps with my project.

9 My book builds on and engages with such recent cultural studies work as Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Sasha Torres, *Black, White, and in Color: Television and Black Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); and Sara Blair, *Harlem Crossroads: Black Writers and the Photograph in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

10 See, in particular, the essays included in Martha Rosler, *3 Works* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1981); Allan Sekula, *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photographic Works* 1973–1983 (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984); and Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) as well as those in n. 3 above.

11 Allan Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," *Artforum* 13, no. 5 (January 1975): 38, reprinted in *Thinking Photography*, ed. Victor Burgin (London: Macmillan, 1982), 84–109.

12 Émile Benveniste, "Subjectivity in language," in *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971), 224. Michel Foucault expands Benveniste's structural linguistic conceptions of the subject in his *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

13 Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 43.

14 Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1980s* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 60.

15 Martha Rosler, Allan Sekula, and Abigail Solomon Godeau have leveled similar critiques against documentary photography and more specifically "concerned photography." See Martha Rosler, "in, around, and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)," in *3 Works*, 83 n. 1; Martha Rosler, remarks made during the lecture "The Look of War Photography," at Walker Art Center, 16 November 1981, quoted in Adam D. Weinberg, *On the Line: The New Color Photojournalism* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center and University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 31; Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," 45; and Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Who Is Speaking Thus? Some Questions about Documentary Photography," in *Photography at the Dock*, 301 n. 11.

16 I use the term dialogical to refer to an understanding of the self that is formed as part

of a relation, interaction, or exchange between two or more speakers. See, in particular, Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (1935; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 293–94.

Chapter One: Beyond the "Negro Point of View"

1 Members of the Kamoinge Workshop do not agree on the circumstances that led to the inclusion of their work in *Camera*. For instance, Louis Draper claims that former *Camera* editor Romeo Martinez invited the Workshop to participate after seeing photographs by members at one of their meetings at the Kamoinge Gallery. Beuford Smith remembers the invitation as resulting from Roy DeCarava's connections with Martinez. There is also some speculation that Henri Cartier-Bresson, who is also said to have visited the Kamoinge Gallery, convinced Martinez to publish the portfolio. See Draper, "The Kamoinge Workshop," 6; Kamoinge, Inc., The Photographers Group, "Kamoinge History," (Organizational Brochure, 1999–2000, photocopy), 2; and Beuford Smith, interview by author, Brooklyn, New York, 1 March 2001.

2 The Kamoinge Workshop's "Harlem" portfolio includes images by Kamoinge members Louis Draper, Ernest Dunkley, James Mannas, Herbert Randall, Beuford Smith, Shawn Walker, and Calvin Wilson. These photographs appeared in conjunction with three additional portfolios, each by a single photographer: Pepi Merisio's portfolio depicts the inhabitants of the Italian rustic mountain village Valtellina, Jean Mohr's portfolio represents a group of Wisconsin Amish, and the portfolio by Leonard Freed portrays individuals celebrating Purim in Jerusalem. According to Porter, though marginalized by geography, religion, economics, and race, the individuals depicted in all four portfolios had neither been sensationalized nor represented in a "negative" light. The images instead offered "sympathetic" statements that had result from a shared personal, racial, national, or religious affiliation between photographers and subjects. Porter explains: "In each case the camera observes not as a curious outsider peeping through keyholes and pointing a finger, but as an insider, as part of the life it observes." Allan Porter, "Harlem, Valtellina, Amish, Purim," *Camera* (July 1966): 3.

3 Porter, "Harlem," 25.

4 Porter, "Harlem," 25.

5 See, for example, Ray Gibson, "Roy DeCarava: Master Photographer," *Black Creation* 4, no. 1 (Fall 1972): 34–36; Carrie Weems, "Personal Perspectives on the Evolution of American Black Photography: A Talk with Carrie Weems," *Obscura* 2 (1982): 9–17; Shawn Walker, "Preserving Our History: The Kamoinge Workshop and Beyond," *Ten.8* 24 (1987): 20–25; and Carla Williams, "Naked Neutered, or Nobel: The Black Female Body in America and the Problem of Photographic History," in *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong: The Black Female Body in American Culture*, ed. Kimberly Wallace-Sanders (Ann Ar-

bor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 182–200. For a discussion of some of the limitations of this approach, particularly when coupled with the term "black aesthetic" and its collective-based associations, see my "Transcending the Fixity of Race: The Kamoinge Workshop and the Question of a "Black Aesthetic in Photography," in *New Thoughts on the Black Arts Movement*, ed. Lisa Gail Collins and Margo Crawford (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 187–209.

6 Hall and Sealy, *Different*, 15.

7 bell hooks, "In Our Glory: Photography and Black Life," in *Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography*, ed. Deborah Willis (New York: New Press, 1994), 45–46, 48.

8 This meeting was held at photographer Larry Stewart's studio.

9 Ray Francis, Herman Howard, Earl James, and Calvin Mercer belonged to "Group 35." Other members who joined the Kamoinge Workshop during the 1960s included Anthony Barboza, Bob Clark, David Carter, Roy DeCarava, Melvin Mills, Herbert Robinson, Beuford Smith, Ming Smith, Larry Stewart, Shawn Walker, and Calvin Wilson. Roy DeCarava served as their first director; he resigned in 1965. With many new members, the group, now known as Kamoinge, Inc., continues to meet and exhibit together. For more information on Kamoinge, see Draper, "The Kamoinge Workshop," 3–8; Weems, "Personal Perspectives," 9–17; *Two Schools New York and Chicago: Contemporary African-American Photography of the 60s and 70s* (New York: Kenkeleba Gallery, 1986); Walker, "Preserving Our History," 20–25; Iris Schmeisser, "Liberating Views/Views of Liberation: Black Photographers of the Civil Rights Era," (Master's thesis, University of Munich, 1997); and "A Tribute to Kamoinge, Inc.," *Nueva Luz Journal* 7, no. 1 (2001): 2–33.

10 Albert Fennar, interview by author, Englewood, New Jersey, 22 March 2001.

11 See Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938). There is some discrepancy over who originally discovered this name. Fennar explains in his interview by author, 22 March 2001: "I think it was me and Louie thinks it was him. But I remember us both in my apartment on 112th Street looking at this book and we were looking at the glossary and there we found this word Kamoinge that means a group a people acting together. Louie and I think we share that finding of Kamoinge from the glossary of that book."

12 The diversity of styles is particularly evident in the two limited edition portfolios that the Kamoinge Workshop produced in 1964 and 1965. The Museum of Modern Art and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture both own copies of these portfolios (though the ones at the Schomburg are incomplete).

13 For information on these groups, see Jeanne Siegel, "Why Spiral?," *Artnews* 65, no. 1 (September 1966): 48–51, 67–68; Mary Schmidt Campbell, *Tradition and Conflict: Images of a Turbulent Decade, 1963–1973* (New York: Studio Museum in Harlem, 1985);

Elsa Honig Fine, *The Afro-American Artist: a Search for Identity* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973); *AfriCOBRA: The First Twenty Years* (Atlanta: Nexus Contemporary Art Center, 1990); and Jeff Donaldson, "AfriCOBRA—then and now," interview by Alice Thorson, *New Art Examiner* 17 (March 1990): 26–31.

14 These discussions about approach would often become quite heated, especially in terms of the positions that individual members of Kamoinge adopted regarding the depiction of black subjects and the social relevancy of this work for the black community. In his interview by author, 22 March 2001, Fennar recalls: "I was insulted and told many times that my work was just not relevant. I remember this one guy whose name I will not mention. He wanted to see black people. He thought my work was too abstract; it didn't deal with social issues."

15 Louis Draper, interview by author, New York, New York, 24 March 2001.

16 Draper, "The Kamoinge Workshop," 3.

17 Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in *Black Film, British Cinema*, ed. Kobena Mercer (London: Institute for Contemporary Arts, 1988), 28.

18 Hall, "New Ethnicities," 29.

19 Hall, "New Ethnicities," 29.

20 This effort is very much in dialogue with the important work of Torres, *Black, White, and in Color*, to displace the analytical focus on stereotypes that has hampered studies of the depiction of African Americans in television.

21 Hall, "New Ethnicities," 29. Here Hall refers to several articles about Mapplethorpe's work written by black critics and cultural practitioners. I, too, have been impacted by these articles, especially the ones written by Kobena Mercer. See n. 65 below.

22 Louis Draper, "Kamoinge Notes by Draper," Folder II, Box 8 II C, The Louis H. Draper Archives, Mercer Community College, Trenton, New Jersey. According to Draper, Kamoinge member Jimmie Mannas authored the post scriptum. The Louis H. Draper Archives are now on loan to the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia.

23 "Harlem: A State of Mind," *Camera* (July 1966): 25. This description of Harlem shares parallels with John L. Jackson, Jr.'s use of the expression "Harlemworld" to suggest how Harlem is "a singularly multiplicitous location seen by so many people as so much more than the literal place itself." See his *Harlemworld: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 10.

24 Porter, "Harlem," 25. In addition to the extensive coverage given to the subject of Harlem, during the 1960s, a number of magazines also featured stories on the question of the "Negro in America." For instance, in the 29 July 1963 issue of *Newsweek*, the editors published "the first definitive national survey" about African Americans in which they claimed to have penetrated beneath the surface to reveal the "true facts" about African American people and culture. To ensure an impartial representation, in the 21 October

1963 issue of *Newsweek*, the editors published a follow-up poll on the other side of the racial story—"the white man"—and what he feels about race relations in the United States. Through these nationally read surveys, the *Newsweek* editors believed that they had offered a unique perspective on the nation's racial crisis and that their use of African American pollsters would help fill the "factless" void existing between the races. These surveys were subsequently expanded into William Brink and Louis Harris, *The Negro Revolution in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964). A number of African American publications responded critically to these polls, including *Ebony*, whose editors, in response to the *Newsweek* issues, published their own special issue on "The White Problem in America" in August 1965.

25 "A Letter from the Publishers," *Time*, 31 July 1964, 8A.

26 HARYOU was a community action project originally funded by President Johnson's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. Clark used his HARYOU report as the basis for his more sustained investigation of "the pathologies of American ghettos" in his *Dark Ghettos: Dilemmas of Social Power* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965). For an expanded discussion of these pathologies, see Clark, *Dark Ghettos*, chaps. 4–5; Gerald Markowitz and David Rosner, *Children, Race, and Power: Kenneth and Mamie Clark's Northside Center* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 197–99; and Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 200–203.

27 "No Place Like Home," *Time*, 31 July 1964, 17.

28 "No Place Like Home," *Time*, 31 July 1964, 11–12.

29 "Why Harlem Is Angry," *New York Times Magazine*, 14 July 1963, 6–7. See also "Two Faces of Harlem," *Look*, 28 July 1964, 22–26, which used images by Frank Dandridge and text by Theodore Berk to call attention to the growing violence and protest that was concurrently developing within Harlem. Immediately following this photo-essay is an article by Senior Editor Ernest Dunbar about the growing rage in Harlem entitled "Harlem's Violent Mood."

30 Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997), 13.

31 Richard Saunders photographed Harlem at length in his freelance work, documenting in particular the people and activities that he encountered on the streets of this neighborhood. Some of the publications for which Saunders worked include *Fortune*, *Life*, *Ebony*, *Playboy*, *New York Times*, *Woman's Day*, *Glamour*, and *Paris Match*. For more information on Saunders, see Joe Crawford, "Richard Saunders: Using the Camera to Educate," in *The Black Photographers Annual*, vol. 4 (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Another View, 1980), 64.

32 Gordon Parks, "What Their Cry Means to Me—a Negro's Own Evaluation," *Life*, 31 May 1963, 31.

33 Parks, "What Their Cry Means to Me," 79.

34 According to former director of the Kamoinge Workshop, Roy DeCarava, in the early 1960s, a group of African American photographers met to discuss the discrimination of African American photographers within the American Society of Magazine Photographers, among other subjects. At this meeting, Gordon Parks supposedly said that there was no discrimination within the mainstream press and instead attributed the exclusion of African American photographers to the lack of quality of their work. DeCarava discusses this meeting in David Vestal, "In the Key of Life," *Camera Arts* 3, no. 5 (May 1983): 87–89; and Roy DeCarava, "A Conversation with Roy DeCarava," interviewed by Melissa Shook, *Views* 4, no. 2 (Winter 1983): 11.

35 Parks, "What Their Cry Means to Me," 31.

36 Parks, "What Their Cry Means to Me," 79.

37 The symbolic value represented by this bookstore mirrors that of other famous Harlem landmarks such as the Audubon Ballroom, the Hotel Theresa, and the Apollo Theater, which, as cultural anthropologist John L. Jackson, Jr., explains, have been used by African Americans as sites to negotiate their identities. See Jackson, *Harlemworld*, 9.

38 For additional information on Lewis Micheaux and the National Memorial African Bookstore, see Sharon Y. Lopez, "Up in Harlem," *Crisis* 88, no. 8 (October 1981): 408–9.

39 See, for instance, "Why Harlem Is Angry," 6–7; Lorraine Hansberry, *The Movement: Documentary of a Struggle for Equality* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964); John Henrik Clarke, ed., *Harlem: A Community in Transition* (1964; reprint, New York: The Citadel Press, 1969); and Allon Schoener, ed., *Harlem on My Mind: Cultural Capital of Black America, 1900–1968* (New York: Random House, 1968). Even today, as Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., explain, images of the National African Memorial Bookstore continue to symbolize that "Harlem has long served as a home to movements and ideas stressing African American self-reliance and self-esteem." Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., eds., *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 1999), 923.

40 Here, I am referring to the manner in which the editors of magazines and newspapers assume that the relationship between photographs and their referents is transparent. For a discussion of this paradox, see Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 15–31.

41 Smith discusses his desire to involve the viewer implicitly in his work in his interview with Lou Draper, in *Artist and Influence*, ed. James V. Hatch, Leo Hamilton, and Judy Blum, vol. 18 (New York: Hatch-Billops Collection, 1999), 163–64.

42 Larry Neal, "New Space/The Growth of Black Consciousness in the Sixties," in *The Black Seventies*, ed. Floyd B. Barbour (Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1970), 17. For an excellent discussion of divergences within the Black Arts Movement, especially in terms of their historical and geographical specificity, see James Edward Smethurst, *The Black*

Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

43 Smith, interview by author, 1 March 2001.

44 Porter, "Harlem," 25.

45 Fennar, interview by author, 22 March 2001.

46 Smith, interview by author, 1 March 2001.

47 See Draper, "The Kamoinge Workshop," 6; and Kamoinge, Inc., "Kamoinge History," 2.

48 Scholars and critics continue to rely solely on the collective associations of terms like "Harlem" in their discussions of the Kamoinge members' photographs. For instance, Peter Galassi characterized the Kamoinge Workshop as "centered on community life: The Harlem neighborhood was both its essential subject and intended principle audience." Peter Galassi, "Introduction," *Roy DeCarava: A Retrospective*, ed. Peter Galassi (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1996), 32.

49 The two exhibitions included *Theme Black* (15 March–19 April 1964) and *The Negro Woman* (6 June–4 July 1965).

50 Fennar, interview by author, 22 March 2001.

51 The Kamoinge Gallery closed at the end of the second exhibition, *The Negro Woman*. The members do not agree on the circumstances surrounding the closure; however, in addition to Fennar, a number of members have also noted that several photographs exhibited in *The Negro Woman* generated controversy both within the group and the Harlem community. See Beuford Smith, "Beuford Smith: In the Humane Tradition," interview by Van Wilmer, *Ten.8*, no. 24 (1987): 26–33; Smith, interview by author, 1 March 2001; and Shawn Walker, interview by author, New York, New York, 24 March 2001.

52 Porter, "Harlem," 3.

53 See Schmeisser, "Liberating Views/Views of Liberation," 103; and Shawn Walker, interview by author, 31 January 2001, Harlem, New York.

54 Linda Nochlin addresses the extent to which the successes of women artist are predicated, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, on their close, personal relationships with stronger or more dominant male artists, in her "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?," in *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 168–70.

55 Smith, interview by author, 1 March 2001.

56 "For a Better Future," *Ebony* 21, no. 10 (August 1966): 150.

57 In a controversial 1971 article in *Ebony*, Dick Gregory argued that African Americans should have large families as a way to avoid genocide by white America. See his "My Answer to Genocide," *Ebony* 26, no. 12 (October 1971), 66–70, 72.

58 "For a Better Future," *Ebony*, 150.

59 See Daniel P. Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Washing-

ton, D.C.: Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor, March 1965). Moynihan authored the report in collaboration with two members of his staff, Paul Barton and Ellen Broderick. For an excellent overview of the production and reception of the Moynihan Report, see Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey eds. *The Moynihan Report and the Politics of Controversy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967).

60 See E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939); Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem*; Thomas Pettigrew, *A Profile of the American Negro* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1964); and Clark, *Dark Ghetto*. Some of the earliest and most influential projects to refute these ideas about the African American family and particularly the Moynihan Report include Carol Stack, *All of Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); and Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750–1925* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

61 Julius Horwitz, "The Arithmetic of Delinquency," *New York Times Magazine*, 31 January 1965, 55.

62 Jason Chambers addresses the distinctly middle-class readership of *Ebony* in his "Presenting the Black Middle Class: John H. Johnson and *Ebony* Magazine," in *Historicizing Lifestyle: Mediating Taste, Consumption and Identity from the 1900s to 1970s*, ed. David Bell and Joanne Hollows (London: Ashgate, 2006), 54–69.

63 For a discussion of the representation of the black female body in the history of photography as well as more generally in the history of Western art, see Williams, "Naked Neutered, or Nobel"; and Lisa Collins, "Economies of the Flesh: Representing the Black Female Body in Art, in *Skin Deep, Spirit Strong*, 99–127.

64 See Judith Wilson, "Getting Down to Get Over: Romare Bearden's Use of Pornography and the Problem of the Black Female Body in Afro-U.S. Art," in *Black Popular Culture*, ed. Gina Dent (Seattle: Bay Press, 1992), 112–22.

65 Kobena Mercer, "Skin Head Sex Thing: Racial Difference and the Homoerotic Imaginary," in *How Do I Look? Queer Film and Video* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 169. My initial interest in issues of intersubjective exchange owes much to Mercer's discussion of the reciprocity between Robert Mapplethorpe and his black male nudes in this article.

66 While the years after World War II saw a proliferation of photography programs within the academy, during the 1950s, many photographers continued to teach informal courses or workshops inside their studios. See Helen Gee, *Photography of the Fifties: An American Perspective* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980), 13. Draper discovered Feinstein's workshop through an advertisement in Jacob Deschin's photography column in the *New York Times*. See Jacob Deschin, "Courses," *New York Times*, 2 February 1958, X20. It was through this workshop that Draper befriended Herbert Randall, with whom he became a fellow member in the Kamoinge Workshop. See Draper, interview by author, 24 March 2001.

67 Harold Feinstein, "Harold Feinstein," in *U.S. Camera Annual 1958* (New York: U.S. Camera Publishing, 1957), 116.

68 W. Eugene Smith, quoted in Jim Hughes, *W. Eugene Smith: Shadow and Substance, The Life and Work of an American Photographer* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1989), 394.

69 Draper, interview by author, 24 March 2001.

70 In manipulating his scenes, a number of scholars have noted that Smith functions in a manner similar to a movie director. See Hughes, *W. Eugene Smith*, 276–78. Gilles Mora, John Hill, and Glenn Willumson have also commented on Smith's function as a producer/director. See Gilles Mora, "W. Eugene Smith: The Arrogant Martyr," in *W. Eugene Smith Photographs 1934–1975*, ed. Gilles Mora and John T. Hill (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 13–14; John T. Hill, "W. Eugene Smith: His Technique and Process," in *W. Eugene Smith Photographs 1934–1975*, 337; and Glenn G. Willumson, *W. Eugene Smith and the Photographic Essay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 243–48.

71 This photo-essay was originally published in the 3 December 1951 issue of *Life*.

72 Smith, quoted in Hughes, *W. Eugene Smith*, 570–71, n. 22.

73 For a further discussion of Smith's involvement with his subjects, see his "W. Eugene Smith," in *Photography Within the Humanities*, ed. Eugenia Parry Janis and Wendy MacNeil (Danbury, N.H.: Addison House Publishers, 1977), 97–109.

74 Louis Draper, telephone conversation with author, 29 October, 2001.

75 Draper, telephone conversation with author, 29 October 2001.

76 Smith, "W. Eugene Smith," in *Photography Within the Humanities*, 105.

77 Draper, telephone conversation with author, 29 October 2001. Besides *The Americans*, Draper also recalls being influenced by Frank's series of photographs of Welsh miners, an image of which appeared in Steichen's *The Family of Man*. Interestingly, Anne Tucker cites Smith's photographs of Welsh miners, published in the 20 February 1950 issue of *Life* as influencing Frank's photographs of the same subject. See Anne W. Tucker, "It's the Misinformation That's Important," in *Robert Frank: New York to Nova Scotia*, ed. Anne Wilkes Tucker and Philip Brookman (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986), 100, n. 19.

78 Draper, telephone conversation with author, 29 October 2001.

79 For instance, in his exhibition catalogue *Mirrors and Windows*, Szarkowski cites the publication of Robert Frank's *The Americans* as one of the three most important events in 1950s U.S. photography. In contrast, he discusses the photographic production of W. Eugene Smith solely in relation to the decline and failure of picture magazines. See John Szarkowski, *Mirrors and Windows: American Photography Since 1960* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1978), 13, 16.

80 Louis Draper, "A Rap on Photography," *Black Creation* 3, no. 4 (Summer 1972): 6.

81 Robert Frank, "A Statement," in *U.S. Camera Annual 1958* (New York: U.S. Camera Publishing, 1957), 115.

82 See Tucker, "It's the Misinformation That's Important," in *Robert Frank*, 96; Philip Brookman, "In the Margins of Fiction: From Photographs to Films," in *Robert Frank*, 83; Lili Corbus Bezner, *Photography and Politics in America: From the New Deal into the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 202–6; and George Cotkin, "The Photographer in the Beat-Hipster Idiom," *American Studies* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 19–33, revised and reprinted in George Cotkin, *Existential America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 210–21.

83 Cotkin, "The Photographer in the Beat-Hipster Idiom," 25.

84 This association is in keeping with the Beats' romanticism of the marginality of African Americans, the most frequently cited example of which is Norman Mailer, "The White Negro," *Dissent* (Summer 1957): 276–93. The essay was subsequently reprinted as a paperback in 1957 by City Lights Books in San Francisco and then in Norman Mailer, *Advertisements for Myself* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1959). For a contemporary response to this essay, see James Baldwin, "The Black Boy Looks at the White Boy," *Esquire* 55 (May 1961), 102–6, reprinted in *Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes on a Native Son* (New York: Delta, 1962), 171–90.

85 While Frank's *The Americans* is frequently discussed as a distinctly Beat work, Frank did not actually meet Kerouac until 1958, after the Paris edition, *Les Américains*, had been published. It was at that time that he asked Kerouac to write the introduction of the 1959 American version of the book. Frank has also said: "I don't think that I traveled on the Beats' path, but it seems we've heard each other." Robert Frank, quoted in Green, *American Photography*, 83–84.

86 Cotkin, "The Photographer in the Beat-Hipster Idiom," 20.

87 Robert Frank, "Robert Frank," in *Photography Within the Humanities*, 64.

88 In making this argument, I am by no means denying the role played by Frank's ethnic and nationalist background as a Swiss Jew; however, I am suggesting that the manner in which Frank's ethnicity and nationality flowed into his work is neither uncomplicated nor unmediated. For a compelling reading of the complex relationship of nationalism to Frank's *The Americans*, particularly in terms of his perception of the "openness" of the United States versus the "smallness" of Switzerland and the distress that the reality of this situation posed for Frank, see Blake Stimson, "Photographic Anguish and *The Americans*," in *The Pivot of the World: Photography and Its Nation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 105–35.

89 For a discussion of the relationship of the binary of insider/outsider to photography, see Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Inside/Out," in *Public Information: Desire, Disaster, Document* (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 49–61. While this essay is useful for its attempt to complicate the terms of this binarism, particularly as they have been employed by Susan Sontag and Martha Rosler, the implication of race to this discussion remains unexamined.

90 Despite going to great lengths to secure permission to reproduce Robert Frank's photograph, based on his editorial objection to how his image is used in this book, Frank denied permission to reproduce this photograph. While I certainly respect Frank's refusal, this decision has created an unfortunate absence in my argument and, more seriously, has impeded critical discourse about his work. To view this missing photograph, see Robert Frank, *The Americans* (New York: Scalo Publishers in association with the National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2000), 153. I encountered similar problems securing permission to reprint photographs by Roy DeCarava, see my Chapter 3 n. 84.

91 Cotkin, "The Photographer in the Beat-Hipster Idiom," 30.

92 Robert Frank, quoted in *The Pictures Are a Necessity: Robert Frank in Rochester, NY, November 1988*, ed. William Johnson (Rochester: George Eastman, 1989), 173.

93 In the 1970s, Frank returned to the photographic medium, this time using multiple images and texts to address his personal and largely private emotions, including the feelings of loss brought about by the death of close family members and friends. The autobiographical and intensely personal nature of these images further supports Frank's increasing distrust of photography's intersubjective potential.

94 See, Tucker, "It's the Misinformation That's Important," in *Robert Frank*, 96.

95 Tod Papageorge, *Walker Evans and Robert Frank: An Essay on Influence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Art Gallery, 1981), 9.

96 Frank, "Robert Frank," in *Photography Within the Humanities*, 64.

97 Stimson, "Photographic Anguish and *The Americans*," 126.

98 James M. Zanutto, "An Off-Beat View of the U.S.A.," *Popular Photography* 46 (May 1960): 106.

99 Frank, "Robert Frank," in *Photography Within the Humanities*, 56.

100 Frank, "Robert Frank," in *Photography Within the Humanities*, 61.

101 Draper, telephone conversation with author, 29 October 2001.

102 Draper, telephone conversation with author, 29 October 2001.

103 See Draper, telephone conversation with author, 29 October 2001.

104 Henri Cartier-Bresson, introduction to *The Decisive Moment* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952), not paginated.

105 Henri Cartier-Bresson's photograph was initially published in *The Decisive Moment* and subsequently reproduced in Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man* catalogue, which first stimulated Draper's interest in photography.

106 Cartier-Bresson, introduction to *The Decisive Moment*, not paginated.

Chapter Two: Bruce Davidson's "American Negro" Photographs in Context

1 Although later referred to as his "Black American" and "Civil Rights" photographs, I use the term "American Negro" to reflect their use in the 1960s. See Letter, William H. Ryan

to William Moyer, 11/5/65, Bruce Davidson Name File, WHCF, LBJ Library; Press Release for *Bruce Davidson*, 7 July 1966, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York; Jacob Deschin, "Two Shows," *New York Times*, 17 July 1966, 90; and David Vestal, "The Bruce Davidson Show," *Infinity* 15 (August 1966), 22–24.

2 The exhibition included forty photographs by Davidson, including images from his essays on England, Wales, Los Angeles, and the "American Negro." For contemporary reviews, see n. 1 above.

3 John Szarkowski, *Bruce Davidson* [unpublished wall label], 1966, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

4 Christopher Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography," *October* 22 (Autumn 1982): 53, reprinted in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography,* ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 14–47.

5 John Szarkowski, *The Photographer's Eye* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966), 7.

6 Szarkowski, *The Photographer's Eye*, 9. Szarkowski further develops his formalist agenda in John Szarkowski, *Looking at Photographs* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1973); John Szarkowski, "A Different Kind of Art," *New York Times Magazine*, 13 April 1975, 16, 64–68; and Szarkowski, *Mirrors and Windows*. A number of scholars have challenged this conception of photography. Among the earlier and more well known are Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning," 36–45; Martha Rosler, "Lookers, Buyers, Dealers, and Makers: Thoughts on Audience," *Exposure* 17, no.1 (Spring 1979): 10–25; Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock*, xxi–xxxiv and 28–51; Victor Burgin, "Photography, Phantasy, Function," *Screen* 21 (Spring 1980): 43–77; and Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," *Art Journal* 42 (Winter 1982): 311–19.

7 Szarkowski, "A Different Kind of Art," 67.

8 Szarkowski, *The Photographer's Eye*, 8.

9 For an excellent discussion of Szarkowski's aesthetic project within the context of the history of photographic curation at the Museum of Modern Art, see Phillips, "Judgment Seat". Szarkowski's formalist approach to photography is also discussed in Green, *American Photography*; Joel Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation: American Criticism of Photography in the Modernist Period* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); and Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).

10 Burgin, "Photography, Phantasy, Function," 70.

11 For a related discussion of the problems that Diane Arbus's photographic practice and especially her use of the family portrait raised for Szarkowski's modernist project, see Anthony W. Lee, "Noah's Ark, Arbus's Album," in *Diane Arbus: Family Albums*, ed. Anthony W. Lee and John Pultz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 21–62.

12 William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (1973; reprint, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 28.

13 Roy E. Stryker, "Documentary Photography," in *The Complete Photographer*, ed. Willard D. Morgan, vol. 4 (New York: National Educational Alliance, 1943), 1364. For a discussion of documentary's humanistic function in relation to 1930s U.S. culture, see Warren Susman, "The Thirties," in *The Development of an American Culture*, ed. Stanley Coben and Lorman Ratner (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1970), 179–218; and Stott, *Documentary Expression*, 26–45.

14 See Edward Steichen, ed., *The Bitter Years, 1935–1941: Rural America as Seen by the Photographers of the Farm Security Administration* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1962); and Edward Steichen, *A Life in Photography* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963), chap. 14. That same year, curator Robert J. Doherty, Jr., organized the exhibition *USA, FSA* for the Allen R. Hite Art Institute at the University of Louisville, which he in turn featured as part of his nineteen-page illustrated essay about the influence of FSA photography for the October 1962 issue of the magazine *Camera*. See Robert J. Doherty, Jr., *USA, FSA: Farm Security Administration Photographs of the Depression Era* (Louisville, Ky.: Allen R. Hite Art Institute, 1962); and Robert J. Doherty, Jr., "USA, FSA: Farm Security Administration Photographs of the Depression Era," *Camera* 41 (19 October 1962): 9–51. In addition, in 1966, a retrospective of Dorothea Lange's photographs was held at MoMA. This historical interest in FSA photography during the 1960s is also discussed in "Documentary and Social Documentary Photography," in *The International Center of Photography Encyclopedia of Photography*, ed. William L. Broecker (New York: Crown, 1984), 151; and Cara A. Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and FSA Photography* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2003), xviii.

15 Steichen, *A Life in Photography*, chap. 5.

16 Christopher Phillips, *Steichen at War* (1981; reprint, New York: Portland House, 1987), 28. Steichen's involvement with the Photographic Divisions of the Air Force Service and the U.S. Navy is also addressed in Edward Steichen, *Power in the Pacific* (New York: U.S. Camera Publishing, 1945); Edward Steichen, *The Blue Ghost: A Photographic Log and Personal Narrative of the Aircraft Carrier USS Lexington in Combat Operation* (New York: Harcourt Bruce, 1947); and Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty*, 238, n. 15.

17 Organized by Willard Morgan, the International Photographic Exposition, which opened in April 1938 at Grand Central Palace in New York City, included about seventy FSA prints. See F. Jack Hurley, *Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972), 132.

18 Edward Steichen, "The F.S.A. Photographers," in *U.S. Camera Annual 1939*, ed. T. J. Maloney (New York: William Morrow, 1938), 44. The importance of FSA photography on Steichen's later career has also been noted by Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty*, 238, n. 15;

and Eric Sandeen, "'The Show You See with Your Heart: 'The Family of Man' on Tour in the Cold War World," in *The Family of Man 1955–2001, Humanism and Postmodernism: A Reappraisal of the Photo Exhibition by Edward Steichen*, ed. Jean Back and Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2004), 105–7.

19 Steichen hired Bauhaus-trained architect Paul Rudolph to help him to realize this goal: "In the creation of such an exhibition, resources are brought into play that are not available elsewhere. The contrast in scale of images, the shifting of focal points, the intriguing perspective of long-and-short range visibility with the images to come being glimpsed beyond the images at hand—all these permit the spectator an active participation that no other form of visual communication can give." Steichen, *A Life in Photography*, chap. 13.

20 Steichen, "On Photography," *Dædalus* 89, no. 1 (Winter 1960): 137. Steichen makes the same point in his "Photography: Witness and Recorder of Humanity," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 41 (Spring 1958): 167.

21 Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (1962; reprint, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 17.

22 Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, xxiii.

23 Memorandum, President Johnson to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, 1/9/65, White House Photography Program, Ex PR 6-3, WHCF, Box 236, LBJ Library. For a more in-depth discussion of this short-lived project and the complications that ultimately undermined its potential, see my "The Failure of the President's Choice," in *Visual Research Methods: Image, Society, and Representation*, ed. Gregory C. Stanczak (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 2007), 121–40.

24 Memorandum, President Johnson to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, 1/9/65. This memorandum was released to the public by the Office of the White House Press Secretary on 13 January 1965; it is reprinted in John Durniak, "The President as Picture Editor," *Popular Photography* 46 (April 1965): 46. For additional information on "The President's Choice" photography program, see "President Gave Retroactive Pay," *New York Times*, 14 January 1965, 38; "Smile Please," *Wall Street Journal*, 16 February 1965, 14; Jacob Deschin, "Shows at Five Galleries," *New York Times*, 24 January 1965, X19; and John Neubauer, "The President's Choice: 'Photography Can Show . . . That Government Is Personal," *Popular Photography* 57 (November 1965): 59, 130.

25 Other members considered for the committee included Edward Steichen, Richard Avedon, Eliot Elisofon, Philippe Halsman, Eugene Ostroff, Dorothea Lange, Margaret Bourke-White, and Aaron Siskind.

26 Memorandum, President Johnson to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, 1/9/65.

27 John Szarkowski, "John Szarkowski," in *Photography Within the Humanities*, 81.

28 Press release, *The Photo Essay*, 16 March 1965, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

29 Letter, John Szarkowski to Eric Goldman, 5/17/65, White House Photography Program, Ex PR 6-3, WHCF, Box 236, LBJ Library.

30 Szarkowski, "John Szarkowski," in *Photography Within the Humanities*, 93.

31 Szarkowski, *Mirrors and Windows*, 23–24.

32 Memorandum, President Johnson to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, 1/9/65.

33 President Johnson's inclusion of thirty photographs, each hung at eye level on a separate gray or beige panel, in his White House Festival of the Arts, is one exception. Yet, I would argue that for this event Johnson was more interested in revealing his Administration's commitment to and interest in contemporary American art-making practices, including photography. The promotion of the White House Festival of the Arts, held on 14 June 1965, as showcasing the finest contemporary art, including prose and poetry, music, drama, motion pictures, dance, jazz, paintings, sculptures, and photography in the United States further supports this argument. See Memorandum, Eric F. Goldman to the President, 2/25/65, AR/MC 11/23/63–6/4/65, GEN AR 7/26/65, WHCF, Box 2, LBJ Library. Szarkowski along with Smithsonian's curator of photography, Eugene Ostroff, and Library of Congress's curator of photography, Allan Fern, selected the thirty photographers included in the Festival, each of whom was represented by a single work. For a contemporary review of the photography portion of the Festival, see Charles Reynolds, "White House Presents Photography as Art," *Popular Photography* 57 (November 1965): 59, 128.

34 Alianza was a foreign aid program initiated by President Kennedy to help underdeveloped countries in Central and South America. As part of his affiliation with this program, Heyman visited El Salvador, Panama, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela between 10 May and 4 July 1962 to document those situations that Alianza was intended to help. Within a year, Heyman returned to photograph the improvement in their situation. Interestingly, Szarkowski exhibited photographs from these trips in his 1962 exhibition *Five Unrelated Photographers* at MoMA; they have subsequently been published in Ken Heyman and Margaret Mead, *Family* (New York: Macmillan, 1965); Ken Heyman and Margaret Mead, *World Enough: Rethinking the Future* (Boston: Little Brown, 1975); and Ken Heyman, *The World's Family* (New York: Putnam, 1983).

35 Ken Heyman, *Hipshot* (New York: Aperture, 1988), not paginated.

36 Paul Byers, "Ken Heyman," in *U.S. Camera '62*, ed. Tom Maloney (New York: US Camera Publishing, 1961), 88.

37 Anthropologist Oscar Lewis first introduced the term "culture of poverty" in *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1959). For general information on Lewis and the "culture of poverty," see Susan Ridgon, *The Cul-*

ture Facade (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); and O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 117–23.

38 Harrington, *The Other America*, 17. For more information on Galbraith's position, see John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton, Milfflin, 1958); and, for a comparison of Galbraith and Harrington's ideas on poverty, see O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge,* 146–51.

39 Published in March 1962, Harrington's *The Other America* only sold a few thousand copies during that year. However, after a review by Dwight MacDonald of Harrington's book and other major literature on poverty appearing in the 19 January 1963 issue of *The New Yorker*, around 7,000 copies of the second printing sold. The appearance of poverty, for the first time since the 1930s, as front-page news and as the topic of numerous articles and books in fields ranging from journalism and economics to social and political science further attests to the widespread attention on poverty which Harrington's book helped to initiate. While the literature on poverty during the 1960s is vast, some of the major publications include Ben H. Bagdikian, "The Invisible Americans," *Saturday Evening Post*, 21–28 December 1963, 28–39; "Poverty, U.S.A.," *Newsweek*, 17 February 1964, 19–35; "Can We Abolish Poverty?," *Saturday Evening Post*, 5 September 1964, 74; George H. Dunne, ed., *Poverty in Plenty* (New York: P. J. Kennedy and Sons, 1964); Hubert H. Humphrey, *War on Poverty* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964); "The Poor Amidst Prosperity," *Time*, 1 October 1965, 34–35; Ben Seligman, *Poverty as a Public Issue* (New York: Free Press, 1965); Margaret S. Gordon, ed., *Poverty in America* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1965); and Thomas Gladwin, *Poverty USA* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967).

40 Harrington, *The Other America*, 167.

41 Humphrey, *War on Poverty*, 22.

42 Humphrey, *War on Poverty*, 18.

43 Harrington, *The Other America*, 4. The idea that the poor need to be "seen" so that their plight can be "felt" by the rest of America continues to impact approaches to poverty. For instance, for the 1987 book *Below the Line: Living Poor in America*, Consumers Union, which publishes *Consumer Reports* magazine, commissioned photojournalist Eugene Richards to travel across the U.S. taking photographs and conducting interviews with America's poor. In using Richards's images and interviews, Consumers Union Executive Director Rhoda H. Karpatkin sought to "take the wrapping off America's most unacceptable product—poverty—and to reveal what it looks like and feels like." Eugene Richards, *Below the Line: Living Poor in America* (Mount Vernon, N.Y.: Consumers Union of U.S., 1987), 216.

44 Humphrey, *War on Poverty*, 9.

45 Transcript, Economic Opportunity Council Meeting, 1/26/66, Records of the President's Task Force on the War Against Poverty, RG 381, pp. 19–20, National Archives.

46 For a history of the development of OEO, see Sar A. Levitan, *The Great Society's Poor*

Law (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969). Photographs taken by members of OEO as well as by individuals such as Paul Conklin, Fletcher Drake, Stephen Feldman, Ralph Matthews, Jr., Michael Sullivan, and Deborah Wagner introduce each chapter of this book, further suggesting the implicit role that photography played in the antipoverty efforts of OEO.

47 Memorandum, Vice President to Sargent Shriver, 3/17/65, Profile of Poverty (1) File, OEO Records, Box 15, LBJ Library.

48 Harrington, *The Other America*, 188.

49 Harrington, *The Other America*, 10.

50 Harrington, *The Other America*, 171.

51 "The Problem of Poverty in America," *Economic Report of the President* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1964), 15.

52 In order to open up opportunities for the young, OEO oversaw a number of Community Action Programs (CAP) that included Head Start, Upward Bound, Neighborhood Health Centers, Family Planning, Legal Services, and VISTA. Designed to provide "maximum feasible participation" by the poor, CAP focused on instilling dignity, self-reliance, and motivation in the poor and its children in particular. See Levitan, *The Great Society's Poor Law*, 109–224.

53 Hubert H. Humphrey, quoted in McCandlish Phillips, "400 Pictures Show Plight of Poverty," *New York Times*, 24 October 1965, 83.

54 Judith Friedberg involvement with *Profile of Poverty* came about largely as a result of a pamphlet that she helped to produce for OEO's Head Start program. It was the photographs in this pamphlet that initially inspired Humphrey to suggest that OEO mount an exhibition on poverty. See Memorandum, Sargent Shriver to Vice President, 3/29/65, Profile of Poverty (1) File, OEO Records, Box 15, LBJ Library.

55 Press Release, *Profile of Poverty*, 5/8/65, Profile of Poverty (1) File, OEO Records, Box 15, LBJ Library. The attendance of Humphrey, members of the Cabinet, and members of Congress at the opening reception of *Profile of Poverty* at the Smithsonian underscores U.S. governmental interest in the exhibition and its ideological positioning of the culture of poverty.

56 Press Release, *Profile of Poverty*, 5/8/65, Profile of Poverty (1) File, OEO Records, Box 15, LBJ Library.

57 The alternative titles proposed by Humphrey for *Profile of Poverty* reiterate the emphasis that the government placed on "opportunity" in relation to the poor. Among those that Humphrey suggested were "A Neighbor Needs Opportunity" and "Opportunity Denied." See Memorandum, Sargent Shriver to Judith Friedberg, 3/17/65, Profile of Poverty (1) File, OEO Records, Box 15, LBJ Library.

58 John Durniak, "OEO Sponsors Photo Exhibit on Poverty," *Popular Photography* 57 (November 1965): 60.

59 Kay Shannon, "Letters to the Editor," *The Washington Post*, 13 June 1965, E6.

60 Edward Steichen, *The Family of Man* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955), not paginated.

61 See Elisabeth Stevens, "Art in Washington," *The Washington Post*, 6 June 1965, G8; John G. Morris, "Poverty in Perspective," *The Washington Post*, 30 May 1965, G1; and Durniak, "OEO Sponsors Photo Exhibit on Poverty," 59–60.

62 After its display at the Smithsonian, four duplicate editions—one large and three smaller—of *Profile of Poverty* traveled across the United States for a thirty-month tour of twenty cities. After the tour, the larger edition returned to Washington, D.C., where it was on view in the Pennsylvania Avenue Lobby of the National Archives Building from 18 January through 5 April 1968.

63 Steichen, *A Life in Photography*, chap. 13. Photographs that Steichen took of visitors to *The Family of Man* during its tour in Moscow also suggest his interest in viewer participation. In these images, reproduced in his autobiography, *A Life in Photography*, Steichen photographed visitors actively responding to pictures that depicted a woman and a baby as well as visitors positioned so that they seem to merge with one of the displayed images. For a brief discussion of these images, see Ralph L. Harley, Jr., "Edward Steichen's Modernist Art-Space," *History of Photography* 14, no. 1 (January–March 1990): 1–22.

64 Since I have been unable to locate any photographic reproductions of this structure, I rely on John Durniak's description of it in his "OEO Sponsors Photo Exhibit on Poverty," 60.

65 Morris, "Poverty in Perspective," G1.

66 Shannon, "Letters to the Editor," E6.

67 Stevens, "Art in Washington," G8.

68 See Durniak, "OEO Sponsors Photo Exhibit on Poverty," 59–60.

69 Durniak, "OEO Sponsors Photo Exhibit on Poverty," 60.

70 Durniak, "OEO Sponsors Photo Exhibit on Poverty," 60.

71 Durniak, "OEO Sponsors Photo Exhibit on Poverty," 59–60.

72 Morris, "Poverty in Perspective," G1.

73 While Steichen intended the experience of the selected photographs in *The Family of Man* to evoke universal reactions in the viewer, he did recognize when this message became too literal. For instance, as part of the installation design, Steichen wanted a mirror to appear alongside nine portraits that depicted individuals of diverse races and ages, thus implicating the viewer as part of the global family. When the exhibition opened, Steichen along with his assistant Miller quickly found the association too heavy handed and had the mirror removed. See Mary Anne Staniszewski, *The Power of Display: A History of Exhibition Installations at the Museum of Modern Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998), 244; and Eric J. Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 50.

74 Phoebe Lou Adams, "Through a Lens Darkly: Steichen," *Atlantic* 195, no. 4 (April 1955): 72.

75 According to Williams, a "structure of feeling" is "a social experience which is still in *process*, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis (though rarely otherwise) has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies. These are often more recognizable at a later stage, when they have been (as often happens) formalized, classified, and in many cases built into institutions and formations." In this passage, Williams calls attention to those aspects of social life that are still in the course of being lived and felt, yet, which despite their ephemerality, remain firmly embedded within the social matrix. "Not feelings against thought," Williams further states, "but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity." Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feelings," in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132.

76 Judith Friedberg, quoted in "Poverty Touches All Races, Ages," *The Kansas City Star*, 1 March 1967, Profile of Poverty (2) File, Records of OEO, Box 15, LBJ Library.

77 "New Crisis: The Negro Family," *Newsweek*, 9 August 1965, 32.

78 Moynihan, along with Richard N. Goodwin, drafted Johnson's speech.

79 Elliot Liebow, *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown, 1967), 209.

80 See, Herbert J. Gans, "Culture and Class in the Study of Poverty: An Approach to Anti-Poverty Research," in *Understanding Poverty*, ed. Daniel P. Moynihan (New York: Basic Books, 1968); and Lee Rainwater, "The Problem of Lower-Class Value Stretch," in *Understanding Poverty*. For a discussion of how African American cultural deviance contributed to this critique of the "culture of poverty," see O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 198–210.

81 Serving as a protest against Alabama's Jim Crow laws—which made it nearly impossible for African Americans to vote—on 21 March 1965, individuals from around the nation participated in the four-day Selma to Montgomery March, which demanded the passage of a national law to secure equal voting rights for African Americans. The Selma to Montgomery March played a decisive role in bringing about the Voting Rights Amendment, ratified by Congress and signed by Johnson on 3 August 1965. For a general history of the civil rights movement through the medium of photography, see Steven Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement: A Photographic History, 1954–68* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1996); and Deborah Willis, "Visualizing Political Struggle: Civil Rights–era Photography," in *American Visual Cultures*, ed. David Holloway and John Beck (London: Continuum, 2005), 166–73.

82 W. C. Heinz and Bard Lindeman, "The Meaning of the Selma March: Great Day at Trickem Fork," *Saturday Evening Post*, 22 May 1965, 30–31, 89–95.

83 Simeon Booker's twenty-one-page article, "50,000 March on Montgomery," published in the May 1965 issue of *Ebony* with over ninety-five photographs by such individuals as Maurice Sorrell, Moneta Sleet, Robert Ellison, and G. Marshall Wilson, provides a useful comparison to the *Saturday Evening Post* article in which Davidson's photographs appear.

84 See "Profiles in Poverty," *U.S. Camera & Travel* 29, no. 2 (February 1966): 42–47.

85 "Through a Black Man's Eyes," *Look*, 17 December 1963, 32.

86 "Through a Black Man's Eyes," *Look*, 33.

87 Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 81. Other studies that blend a situational and psychological approach to African American poverty include Thomas Pettigrew, *Profile of the American Negro*; and Lee Rainwater, *Behind Ghetto Walls: Black Families in a Federal Slum* (Chicago: Aldine, 1970). For a more in-depth discussion of the use of damage imagery in relation to African Americans, see Daryl Michael Scott, *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880–1996* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); and Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 174–207.

88 Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, xv. In contrast to "participant" observation, an approach widely used by anthropologists to describe their method of living among their subjects in order to better understand and describe their outlook and ways of life, Clark uses the term "involved" observation in *Dark Ghetto* to describe his method of investigating Harlem from the perspective given to him as a result of his "personal and lifelong experiences" living there.

89 Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, xx.

90 Clark, *Dark Ghetto*, 81.

91 See Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie P. Clark, "Emotional Factors in Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children," *Journal of Negro Education* 19 (1950): 341–50; and Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie P. Clark, "Racial Identification and Preference in Negro Children," in *Readings in Social Psychology*, ed. Theodore M. Newcomb and Eugene L. Hartley, rev. ed. (New York: Holt, 1952, 551–60).

92 These included Frazier, *The Negro Family*; John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937); Hortense Powdermaker, *After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South* (New York: Viking Press, 1939); Allison Davis, Burleigh Gardner, and Mary Gardner, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941); and St. Clair Drake and Horace Clayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945).

93 See Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democ-*

racy, 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1944). Myrdal, a good friend of Kenneth Clark, subsequently wrote the introduction to Clark's *Dark Ghetto*.

94 Commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation, Myrdal's study was intended to help the foundation deal with the "Negro Problem" and specifically the potential for interracial conflict in the North. For more information on Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, see Walter Jackson, *Gunnar Myrdal and America's Conscience: Social Engineering and Racial Liberalism, 1938–1987* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, 94–98.

95 Like Myrdal's book, *The Negro American* also received funding through the Carnegie Corporation.

96 Besides *Dædalus* editor Stephen Graubard, members of the Planning Group included Daniel Bell, Eric H. Erikson, Rashi Fein, Paul A. Freund, Clifford Geertz, Oscar Handlin, Everett C. Hughes, Carl Kaysen, Edward H. Levi, Jean Mayer, Robert Merton, Daniel P. Moynihan, Thomas F. Pettigrew, Talcott Parsons, Arthur Singer, and William M. Schmidt. Additionally, Edwin C. Berry, Willey Branton, James P. Breeden, Oscar Cohen, Ralph Ellison, Hudson Hoagland, Max Lerner, Edward Levi, Hylan Lewis, Guichard Parris, Saunders Redding, Peter H. Rossi, and C. Vann Woodward participated in the conference but did not contribute essays.

97 Talcott Parsons, "Why 'Freedom Now', Not Yesterday?," in *The Negro American*, ed. Talcott Parsons and Kenneth B. Clark (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), xix.

98 Kenneth B. Clark, "The Dilemma of Power," in *The Negro American*, xi–xii.

99 Parsons, "Why 'Freedom Now,'" in *The Negro American*, xxiii.

100 A. D. Trottenberg, "The Negro American," in *The Negro American*, 449. I have been unable to uncover the exact circumstances surrounding his solicitation of Davidson's images or Davidson's relationship to Trottenberg, who served as both Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University. However, my research suggests that Trottenberg, who also functioned as a photographer, had no prior involvement with the Davidson's photographs until their publication in *The Negro American*.

101 Trottenberg, "The Negro American," *The Negro American*, 450.

102 OEO used this same photograph by Davidson in *Profile of Poverty* to emotionally convince viewers of the poor's passive and resigned behavioral traits.

103 Trottenberg, "The Negro American," *The Negro American*, 450.

104 "The Power of Blackness," *Look*, 27 June 1967, 22.

105 The sexism of the civil rights movement, especially as it was experienced by Ella Baker and Septima Clark, is described in Ellen Cantarow, *Moving the Mountain: Women Working for Social Change* (Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist Press, 1980); and Cynthia Stokes Brown, ed., *Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement* (Navarro, Calif.: Wild Trees Press, 1986). The series of race riots, often referred to as

the "long, hot summers," that broke out across major U.S. cities beginning in 1964 and continuing to the late 1960s was also discussed in gender specific terms. For instance, after the Watts Riots, which began on 11 August 1965, the mainstream press attributed the cause of this conflict to the failure of African American men, brought about, as detailed in the Moynihan Report, by the disintegration of the African American family and its matriarchal structure. See Rainwater and Yancy, *The Moynihan Report*, 192–215.

106 Whitney Young, *To Be Equal* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964), 25; cited in Moynihan, *The Negro Family*, 34.

Chapter Three: Getting Down to the Feeling

1 See "The Clown," *Esquire* 53, no. 1 (January 1960): 71–75; and Norman Mailer, "Brooklyn Minority Report," *Esquire* 53, no. 6 (June 1960): 129–37.

2 Bruce Davidson, quoted in "Voyages of Self-Discovery: Unknown Worlds Close to Home," in *Images of Man*, ed. Sheila Turner (New York: Scholastic Magazines and the International Fund for Concerned Photography, 1972), 43.

3 Bruce Davidson, introduction to *Bruce Davidson Photographs* (New York: Agrinde Publications and Summit Books, 1978), 10–11. Davidson's discomfort regarding this fashion work is also discussed in Livingston, "Bruce Davidson," in *The New York School Photographers, 1936–1963* (New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1992), 331.

4 Besides civil rights photographs, Davidson's "Negro American" project also includes pictures of a farm migrant labor camp in South Carolina, cotton pickers in Georgia, a funeral in Mississippi, and black subjects living and working in New York City. The first major circulation of Davidson's "Negro American" photographs occurred in 1965 in a one-man exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago. They were subsequently exhibited again in 1965 as part of OEO's exhibition *Profile of Poverty*, in 1966 in a one-man exhibition at MoMA, and in 1969 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition *Harlem on My Mind*. Most recently, they have been published as Bruce Davidson, *Time of Change: Civil Rights Photographs, 1961–1965* (Los Angeles: St. Ann's Press, 2002).

5 Bruce Davidson, quoted in Charles Reynolds, "Bruce Davidson: The Personal Photographer as Autobiographer," *Popular Photography* 86 (March 1980), 119.

6 Recognizing the potential of photography to act as an activist tool for the civil rights movement, in 1963, James Forman recruited Danny Lyon to serve as the first staff photographer for SNCC. A year later, a separate department within SNCC—SNCC Photo—was established; its members included Tom Wakayama, Clifford Vaughs, Joffre Clark, Bob Fletcher, Julius Lester, Marian Varela, Norris McNamara, and Doug Harris, among others. Besides setting up darkrooms, collecting supplies, and providing publicity and documentation about the civil rights movement, SNCC Photo published pamphlets, posters, and the 1964 book *The Movement: Documentary of a Struggle for Equality*.

They also organized the 1965 exhibition *NOW* and the 1967 exhibition *US*. In 1964, with the support of SNCC, Matt Herron established the Southern Documentary Project to cover the activities in the South during that summer; Dorothea Lange served as the project's advisor. For more information about both of these projects, see Photo Department, 1963–67, The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Papers, 1959–72, A:XI:1–4 and A:XI:13–20, King Library and Archives (microfilm, Sawyer Library, Williams College); Matt Herron, "The Civil Rights Movement and the Southern Documentary Project," in *Witness in Our Time: Working Lives of Documentary Photographers*, ed. Ken Light (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 62–71; Danny Lyon, *Memories of the Southern Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); and Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement*, 16. For an extended analysis of *The Movement* and the intimate involvement of playwright Lorraine Hansberry, see Blair, *Harlem Crossroads*, 198–223.

7 Julian Bond, foreword to Lyon, *Memories of the Southern Civil Rights Movement*, 6.

8 See Lyon, *Memories of the Southern Civil Rights Movement*, 22–27. For a more detailed discussion of Lyon's iconic photograph of Lewis as well as its relationship to SNCC's understanding of the power of photography, see Leigh Raiford, "'Come Let Us Build a New World Together': SNCC and Photography of the Civil Rights Movement," *American Quarterly* 59, no. 5 (December 2007): 1129–1157. For a discussion of Lyon's image in terms of its function within Hansberry's *The Movement*, see Blair, 213–14.

9 Lyon, *Memories of the Southern Civil Rights Movement*, 30.

10 Exceptions include Cherise Smith and Joel Eisinger, who have both examined the status of civil rights photographs as documents as well as constructed images. See Cherise Smith, "In Black and White: Constructing History and Meaning in Civil Rights Photography," in *Let My People Go: Cairo, Illinois, 1967–1973*, ed. Jan Peterson Roddy (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 83–94; and Joel Eisinger, "Powerful Images: Charles Moore's Photographs of the Birmingham Demonstrations," *Exposure* 33, no. 1/2 (2000): 33–42.

11 Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, *SNCC Photo* (Organizational Brochure), Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

12 Herron, "The Civil Rights Movement and the Southern Documentary Project," in *Witness in Our Time*, 68. The connection between FSA and civil rights photography is also noted in *The International Center of Photography Encyclopedia of Photography*: "In 1962, the revival of the FSA Depression-era photographs in the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *The Bitter Years* triggered a renewal of the social documentary approach in America. Especially in its evocation of the struggle of black Americans in the civil rights movement." "Documentary and Social Documentary Photography," in *The International Center of Photography Encyclopedia of Photography*, ed. William L. Broecker (New York: Crown, 1984), 151.

13 The series also featured a 112-page Teaching Guide that included photographic reproductions, transcripts of the soundtracks, discussion and project ideas for different subject areas, biographical and bibliographical information on each photographer, as well as exhibition and equipment suggestions. Although designed to be used in senior high school English, social studies, art, and humanities classes, the series could also be purchased by the general public. See Sheila Turner, ed., *Images of Man*; and Sheila Turner, ed., *Images of Man II* (New York: Scholastic Magazines and the International Fund for Concerned Photography, 1973). For a general discussion of the educational value of sound filmstrip programs, including the *Images of Man* series, see Jack Christensen, "Sound Filmstrip Programs," *Media and Methods* 10, no. 6 (February 1974): 14–29.

14 The section consisted of seventy-five images by Bruce Davidson.

15 Cornell Capa, quoted in "Voyages of Self-Discovery: Unknown Worlds Close to Home," in *Images of Man*, 40.

16 Sister Leah Caliri, Additional Comments, Images of Man Survey, ICP Fund Pre 1974, International Center of Photography Archives, New York.

17 Davidson's first publication in *Life* appeared in the 31 October 1955 issue. For this photo-essay entitled "Tension in the Dressing Room," Davidson photographed a Yale football game as part of a class project.

18 Davidson, introduction to *Bruce Davidson Photographs*, 9. Excerpts from this text are also published as "A Photographer's Life: Selected Frames," *New York Times Magazine*, 11 March 1979, 30–34, 38–44, 48–50, 54. For a review of this publication, see Reynolds, "Bruce Davidson: The Personal Photographer," 110–19, 135.

19 W. Eugene Smith, "Photographic Journalism," *Photo Notes* (June 1948), 4, reprinted in *Photographers on Photography*, ed. Nathan Lyons (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall and Rochester: The George Eastman House), 104–5.

20 Wilson Hicks, *Words and Pictures: An Introduction to Photojournalism* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), 16.

21 W. Eugene Smith, "The Responsibilities of the Photographic Journalist," in Charles Lamb and Amy Rule, *W. Eugene Smith Papers* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography, 1983), 7. This concern did not, however, stop Smith from staging or directing his subjects. See Chapter 1, n. 70.

22 Smith would typically shoot up to 2,500 negatives for many of his major photo-essays. He would then enlarge, crop, and mount groups of several hundred prints to help him to map out his conceptual ideas and layout designs for his photo-essays, which could easily consist of up to 150 images. Needless to say, the editors at *Life* felt differently and typically published only between ten and thirty of what they judged to be Smith's most compelling images. No longer willing to concede to such limitations, in 1954, Smith defiantly turned in his letter of resignation to *Life*. For more on Smith's working methods, see, W. Eugene Smith, *W. Eugene Smith: Early Work* (Tucson: Center for Creative Pho-

tography, 1980); and W. Eugene Smith and William Johnson, *W. Eugene Smith: Master of the Photographic Essay* (Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture, 1981).

23 Bruce Davidson, quoted in Lee Witkin and Barbara London, *The Photograph Collector's Guide* (Boston: NY Graphic Society, 1978), 120.

24 Founded in 1947 by Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Maria Eisner, George Rodger, David Seymour, and William and Rita Vandivert, Magnum distinguished itself from other organizations by giving photographers the opportunity to choose their own assignments and to retain copyright of their pictures. It also provided a central office and staff to handle administrative issues. For additional information on Magnum, see William Raymond Manchester, *In Our Time: The World as Seen by Magnum Photographers* (New York: American Federation of Arts in association with Norton, 1989); Rudolf Janssens and Gertjan Kalff, "Time Incorporated Stink Club: The Influence of *Life* on the Founding of Magnum," *European Contributions to American Studies* 29 (1994): 223–42; and Russell Miller, *Magnum: Fifty Years at the Front of History* (New York: Grove Press, 1997).

25 David Seymour, quoted in *Photographic Communication: Principles, Problems, and Challenges of Photojournalism*, ed. R. Smith Schuneman (London: Focal Press, 1972), 219.

26 Bruce Davidson, quoted in Livingston, "Bruce Davidson," in *The New York School*, 330.

27 Davidson discusses the impact of these photographers in his introduction to *Bruce Davidson Photographs*, 8–10.

28 Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment*, not paginated.

29 Cartier-Bresson, *The Decisive Moment*, not paginated. Davidson cites this same passage by Cartier-Bresson in his introduction to *Bruce Davidson Photographs*, 8.

30 Henri Cartier-Bresson, quoted in Dorothy Norman, "A Visitor Falls in Love—with Hudson and East Rivers," *New York Post*, 26 August 1946, 12.

31 Bruce Davidson, quoted in "Bruce Davidson," in *Encyclopedia of Photography*, vol. 6 (New York: Graystone Press, 1967), 1042.

32 Smith, "The Responsibilities of the Photographic Journalist," in *W. Eugene Smith Papers*, 7.

33 Davidson, quoted in "Voyages of Self-Discovery, " in *Images of Man*, 58.

34 See n. 1 above.

35 Thomas W. Southall, "The Magazine Years, 1960–1971," in *Diane Arbus: Magazine Work*, ed. Doon Arbus and Marvin Israel (Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture, 1984), 154.

36 Norman Mailer, "The White Negro," in *Advertisements for Myself*, 339.

37 David Savran, *Taking It Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 50.

38 Morris Zelditch, "Role Differentiation in the Nuclear Family: A Comparative Study," in

Family, Socialization and Interaction Process, ed. Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Bales (New York: Free Press, 1955), 339.

39 In "The White Negro," Mailer describes the "hipster" as a product of a ménage-à-trois between the bohemian, the juvenile delinquent, and the "Negro." See Mailer, "The White Negro," in *Advertisements for Myself,* 340.

40 Harrison E. Salisbury, "Youth: On the Streets, in the Schools," *New York Times*, 24 March 1958, 17. For a more detailed discussion of the general public's perception of juvenile delinquency in the United States during the 1950s and the blame that was placed for this social problem on the mass media, see James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to Juvenile Delinquency in the 1950s* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

41 Mailer, "Brooklyn Minority Report," 137.

42 Davidson, quoted in "Voyages of Self-Discovery," in *Images of Man*, 41.

43 The New York City Youth Board was made up of the heads of ten city departments, seventeen lay members, and a commissioner. Its purpose was "to tame the gangs by assigning counselors to convert them to peaceful pursuits." Emanuel Perlmutter, "Gangs—What They Are and What to Do About Them," *New York Times*, 6 September 1959, E7.

44 Bruce Davidson, quoted in Blaine Harden, "With Brass-Knuckled Tales, 50's Street Gang Looks Back," *New York Times*, 15 February 1999, B4.

45 Patricia Vettel Tom addresses the masculine aggression and rebellion of gang culture in her, "Bad Boys: Davidson's Gang Photographs and Outlaw Masculinity," *Art Journal* 56, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 69–74.

46 See *Isaac Bashevis Singer and the Lower East Side* (Amherst, Mass.: Mead Art Museum and Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press 2004).

47 This is not the only image from Davidson's gang photographs to explicitly reference Catholicism. In another photograph from the series, Davidson juxtaposes three members of the "Jokers" and with a more distant depiction of the facade of the Roman Catholic Holy Name Church. See *Bruce Davidson: Brooklyn Gang* (Santa Fe, N.Mex.: Twin Palms Publishers, 1998).

48 Vettel Tom, "Bad Boys," 73.

49 "Bengie," interview by Emily Haas, in *Bruce Davidson: Brooklyn Gang*, 86. This quotation by Bengie also appears in Sarah Boxer, "When Trouble Was Harder to Find," *New York Times*, 8 January 1999, E41.

50 Dyer, *White*, 57.

51 Bruce Davidson, "The Brooklyn Gang," in *Bruce Davidson: Brooklyn Gang*, 81.

52 Dyer, *White*, 80.

53 Dyer, *White*, 45.

54 For more information on Lewis's involvement in the Freedom Rides and his attack, see Richard P. Hunt, "2 'Freedom' Buses Linked by Youth," *New York Times*, 22 May 1961,

26; and Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954–1963* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 415–16, 444–46.

55 For more information on the Freedom Rides, see Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 412–91; and Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement*, 73–87.

56 Davidson took a number of photographs of John Lewis at this press conference. For this purposes of this study, I have chosen to focus on the one that is reproduced in his monograph *Time of Change*, since its inclusion in this publication suggests a personal value to Davidson.

57 Davidson states that he was commissioned by the *New York Times* through Magnum to cover the Freedom Riders in his introduction to *Bruce Davidson Photographs*, 11.

58 See Claude Sitton, "Bi-Racial Riders Decide to Go On," *New York Times*, 24 May 1961, 1.

59 Stuart Hall, "The Determinations of News Photographs," in *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media*, ed. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (London: Constable, 1973), 232.

60 Hall, "The Determinations of News Photographs," 236.

61 Sitton, "Bi-Racial Riders Decide to Go On," 1.

62 See for instance, "Bi-Racial Buses Attacked, Riders Beaten in Alabama," *New York Times*, 15 May 1961, 1; and "Freedom Riders Attacked by Whites in Montgomery," *New York Times*, 21 May 1961, 1. For an account of the international response to such images, see "How the World Press Viewed the Days of Tension," *Newsweek*, 5 June 1961, 22.

63 See Claude Sitton, "Passive Tactics Spread in Rights Battle," *New York Times*, 21 May 1961, E5.

64 Sitton, "Passive Tactics Spread in Rights Battle," E5.

65 A series of events greatly compromised President John F. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy's support of the Freedom Riders. These included a second group of Riders buying bus tickets to Montgomery, only four hours after the original bus of Riders left the terminal, the refusal of all twenty-seven Freedom Riders from both buses to post bail when they were arrested in the Jackson terminal, and the arrival of another Freedom Ride bus in Montgomery from Atlanta. See Claude Sitton, "27 Bi-Racial Bus Riders Jailed in Jackson, Miss., as They Widen Campaign," *New York Times*, 25 May 1961, 1; Claude Sitton, "Dr. King Refuses to End Bus Test," *New York Times*, 26 May 1961, 1; Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 468–77.

66 Sitton, "Dr. King Refuses to End Bus Test," 1.

67 Davidson, introduction to *Bruce Davidson Photographs*, 12.

68 For an account of the mob violence which broke out in Montgomery after the arrival of the Freedom Riders and the subsequent declaration of martial law there, see "Montgomery Under Martial Law; Troops Called After New Riot; Marshals and Police Fight Mob," *New York Times*, 22 May 1961, 1; and Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 462–64.

69 To further persuade Alabama and Mississippi authorities to protect the Freedom Riders on their trip, President Kennedy agreed not to interfere with the unconstitutional arrests of the Riders by state officials provided no violence resulted. See Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 468–77. For contemporary accounts of the Montgomery to Jackson trip and the ensuing arrest of the riders, see Sitton, "27 Bi-Racial Bus Riders," 1; Larry A. Still, "A Bus Ride Through Mississippi," *Ebony* 16, no. 10 (August 1961): 21–28; "'Freedom Riders' Force a Test . . . State Laws or U.S. Law in Segregated South?" *Newsweek*, 5 June 1961, 18–23; "Crisis in the South," *Time*, 2 June 1961, 14–18; and "The Ride for Rights," *Life*, 2 June 1961, 46–53.

70 Davidson, introduction to *Bruce Davidson Photographs*, 11. Here Davidson may also be referring to a tip circulated among reporters that a threat had been made to dynamite the bus once it crossed the state border. See Sitton, "27 Bi-Racial Bus Riders," 1; and Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 472.

71 James Farmer, quoted in Howell Raines, *My Soul Is Rested: Moment Days in the Deep South Remembered* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons's, 1977), 124.

72 David Dennis, quoted in Raines, *My Soul Is Rested*, 277.

73 Davidson, quoted in "Voyages of Self-Discovery," in *Images of Man*, 43.

74 Hall, "The Determinations of News Photographs," 236.

75 Jim Lawson, quoted in "Crisis in the South," *Time*, 15.

76 Bernard Lafayette, quoted in Still, "A Bus Ride Through Mississippi," 23.

77 Julia Aaron, quoted in Still, "A Bus Ride Through Mississippi," 22.

78 "'Freedom Riders' Force a Test," *Newsweek*, 20.

79 Roy DeCarava, quoted in *American Images: New Work by Twenty Contemporary Photographers*, ed. Renato Danese (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 70.

80 For a complete list of clients for which DeCarava worked, see Galassi, "Introduction," in *Roy DeCarava*, 38, n. 28.

81 Melissa Rachleff, "The Sounds He Saw: The Photography of Roy DeCarava," *Afterimage* 24, no. 4 (January/February 1997): 16.

82 Galassi, "Introduction," in *Roy DeCarava*, 31.

83 Even though I went to great lengths to secure permission to reprint fifteen photographs by Roy DeCarava, unfortunately, he denied permission to reproduce any images for which he is the exclusive rights holder. He based this decision on his editorial objection to what I have written about his work in this book. While I certainly respect his opinion, this decision has posed a serious impediment to the extensive visually based arguments that I make in this book and, more gravely, it has hampered the ability to engage in and foster critical discourse (that is greatly lacking) about his important work. For those who wish to view these absent photographs, all but one of them are reproduced in Galassi, ed., *Roy DeCarava*.

84 Galassi, "Introduction," in *Roy DeCarava*, 31.

85 Roy DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since': An Interview with Roy DeCarava," interview by Charles H. Rowell, *Callaloo* 13, no. 4 (Autumn 1990): 864.

86 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 863.

87 As part of this assignment, DeCarava took 879 negatives. See Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Look Magazine Photograph Collection, LOOK Job 64-1975.

88 Numerous riots broke out during the summer of 1964, including disturbances in Harlem, the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, Rochester, three communities in New Jersey, and Philadelphia. Together they inaugurated what was often referred to as the "long, hot summers" of racial strife that took place across major U.S. cities during the mid- to late 1960s. For a contemporary account of these disorders and the U.S. government's response to them, see *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968). For a discussion of the photographs reproduced in this publication and the subsequent Bantam Books edition, see Grant Kester, "Riots and Rent Strikes: Documentary During the Great Society," *Exposure* 27, no. 2 (1997): 21–37.

89 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 867. For a discussion of the complexity of framing within *Gittel* and its relationship to images by Aaron Siskind and Walker Evans, see Blair, *Harlem Crossroads*, 59–60.

90 Roy DeCarava, quoted in Vestal, "In the Key of Life," 88.

91 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 867.

92 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 860–61.

93 Roy DeCarava, quoted in "Roy DeCarava: Images Find Me," *Photo Review* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 3.

94 See Roy DeCarava, Letter to Minor White, 21 November 1955, The Minor White Archive, Art Museum, Princeton University.

95 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 864.

96 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 864.

97 "Harlem: Hatred in the Streets," *Newsweek*, 3 August 1964, 16.

98 Hall, "The Determinations of News Photographs," 241.

99 *Report of the National Advisory Commission*, 365.

100 The critical role that photography plays in the construction and meaning of reality, particularly as it intersects with issues of race, is addressed in terms of the murder of Emmett Till in Jacqueline Goldsby, "The High and Low Tech of It: The Meaning of Lynching and the Death of Emmett Till," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 9, no. 2 (1996): 245–82.

101 DeCarava speaks about this photograph in an interview with Charles H. Rowell, see DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 864.

102 On 15 September 1963, barely two weeks after the March on Washington, a bomb was flung from a car into Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, which was filled with children in celebration of Youth Day. The bomb injured twenty-one children and

killed four girls, including Addie Mae Collins, Carol Roberson, Cynthia Wesley, and Denise McNair. Fourteen years later, Klansman Robert Chambliss was convicted of the murder of Denise McNair and sentenced to life in prison. For more information on the bombing, see Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 889–96; and Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement*, 121–29.

103 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 864.

104 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 864.

105 Roy DeCarava, interview by A. D. Coleman, *Photo Metro* 14, no. 139 (1996): 16.

106 Although sometimes referred to as *Four Men*, I use the title *Five Men* as it appears in DeCarava's 1996 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art. The timeless and symbolic quality of this photograph is also discussed in Coar, *A Century of Black Photographers*, 178.

107 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 864.

108 DeCarava, "'I Have Never Looked Back Since,'" 864.

Chapter Four: Roy DeCarava, Harlem, and the Psychic Self

1 DeCarava had his first one-person exhibition at the Serigraph Galleries in New York City in 1947. For further information on DeCarava's exhibitions at the Serigraph Galleries, see reviews in *The Art Digest*, 1 August 1947, 16; and *The Art Digest*, 15 December 1949, 23.

2 African American photographer James Van Der Zee is also frequently referred to as a "Harlem Photographer." For information on James Van Der Zee and his connections to Harlem, see Regenia A. Perry, *James Van DerZee* (Dobbs Perry, N.Y.: Morgan and Morgan, 1973); Jim Haskins, *James Van DerZee: The Picture Takin' Man* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1979); and Deborah Willis-Braithwaite, *Van DerZee Photographer, 1886–1983* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, in association with the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1993).

3 Jacob Deschin, "Pictures and Words," review of *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* (*Flypaper*), by Roy DeCarava and Langston Hughes, *New York Times*, 18 December 1955, X20. Sherry Turner DeCarava remarks on the relationship between the success of *Flypaper* and the label of DeCarava as "Harlem Photographer" in her "Pages from a Notebook," in *Roy DeCarava*, 60 n. 11.

4 Galassi, "Introduction," in *Roy DeCarava*, 20.

5 As a child, DeCarava lived in neighborhoods composed of varying ethnicities. At age twelve he moved to a segregated area of South Harlem. In his twenties his lived in a multiethnic neighborhood in the Bronx, and subsequently lived in midtown and downtown Manhattan. In 1970, he moved permanently to Brooklyn. See Turner DeCarava, "Pages from a Notebook," in *Roy DeCarava*, 59, n. 2.

6 Roy DeCarava, quoted in Elton C. Fax, "Roy DeCarava," in *Seventeen Black Artists* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1971), 168. Another good source of biographical material is Roy DeCarava, interview by Sherry Turner DeCarava, in *Artist and Influence*, vol. 8 (New York: Hatch-Billops Collection, 1989), 27–37.

7 From 1944 to 1945, DeCarava studied painting and drawing at the George Washington Carver School, where he met or studied with the African American artists Elton Fax, Charles White, Norman Lewis, Jacob Lawrence, Romare Bearden, Elizabeth Catlett, and James L. Allen. Additionally, DeCarava credits Charles White, who taught him at the Carver School, as his "strongest influence." See Maren Stange, "'Illusion Complete Within Itself': Roy DeCarava's Photography," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 9, no. 1 (1996): 72–73.

8 Tuner DeCarava, "Pages from a Notebook," in *Roy DeCarava*, 51.

9 Roy DeCarava, quoted in Fax, "Roy DeCarava," 169.

10 Roy DeCarava, quoted in *Roy DeCarava: Photographs*, ed. James Alinder (Carmel: The Friends of Photography, 1981), 14.

11 DeCarava, quoted in Fax, "Roy DeCarava," 169.

12 For more information on this part of DeCarava's career, see Fax, "Roy DeCarava," 176–77; and Galassi, "Introduction," in *Roy DeCarava*, 18–19.

13 See DeCarava, Letter to Minor White, 21 November 1955.

14 In 1953, selections of DeCarava's Harlem photographs were also included in two group exhibitions: *Always the Young Strangers* at MoMA and *Through the Lens* at the Caravan Gallery, New York.

15 John Kouwenhoven, *The Columbia Historical Portrait of New York* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1953), 11.

16 Kouwenhoven, *The Columbia Historical Portrait*, 11.

17 Kouwenhoven, *The Columbia Historical Portrait*, 11.

18 See Barthes, "The Photographic Message," in *Image—Music—Text*, 17.

19 Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image—Music—Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 44.

20 Barthes discusses the distinction between denotation and connotation in *The Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 89–94.

21 Kouwenhoven, *The Columbia Historical Portrait*, 11.

22 Kouwenhoven discusses the relationship between the "functional" and "fine art" traditions in the United States in *Made in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), also published as *The Arts in Modern American Civilization* (New York: Norton, 1967).

23 DeCarava, interview by Sherry Turner DeCarava, in *Artist and Influence*, 32.

24 Press Release, "Museum of Modern Art Plans International Photography Exhibition,"

31 January 1954, Edward Steichen Archives, MoMA, quoted in Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition*, 41.

25 Here I rely on Roland Barthes's discussion of how myths function as systems of representation in his "Myth Today," in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 109–59.

26 See *Life*, 14 February 1955.

27 Edward Steichen, "From Edward Steichen to Members of the Picture Division," *Picturescope: Newsletter of the Picture Division, Special Libraries Association* 3, no. 2 (July 1955): 7.

28 The lynching photograph is one of two photographs in *The Family of Man* exhibition that does not appear in the catalogue. For further discussion of this photograph, see Bezner, *Photography and Politics in America*, 162–63; Staniszewski, *The Power of Display*, 251–54; and Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition*, 49–50.

29 For more information about George Silk's photograph and its reception in the Soviet Union, see Bezner, *Photography and Politics*, 148–50; Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition*, 155; and Louis Kaplan, "Photo Globe," in *American Exposures: Photography and Community in the Twentieth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 71–74.

30 Dora Apel, "Lynching Photographs and Public Shaming," in Dora Apel and Shawn Michelle Smith, *Lynching Photographs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 45, 61.

31 In his interviews with Eric Sandeen and Mary Anne Staniszewski, Steichen's assistant Wayne Miller characterizes the lynching photograph in *The Family of Man* as a "discordant note" and a "form of dissonance" within the overall theme of the exhibition. See Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition*, 49–50; and Staniszewski, *Power of Images*, 251–54.

32 Roland Barthes, "The Great Family of Man," in *Mythologies,* 101. As part of this critique of *The Family of Man*, Barthes references Emmett Till as a means of undermining the universality that Steichen advocates in his exhibition: " . . . but why not ask the parents of Emmet Till, the young Negro assassinated by the Whites what *they* think of *The Great Family of Man*?"

33 Grace Mayer, interview by Sharon Zane, 3 April 1991, Oral Histories, 1991–present, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

34 Steichen placed at the beginning of the exhibition, with a series of photographs representing "lovers" from various nations and races, the first image by DeCarava of a black couple embracing. The next two photographs by DeCarava appear respectively in the sections on work and labor and on recreational themes, including the performance of music. He placed a second image by DeCarava of a black couple embracing alongside other images of happy couples at the end of the exhibition.

35 This characterization of Steichen stands in contrast to that of Blake Stimson, who argues

that Steichen approached photography as "a placeholder or empty container that could be filled by any and all meaning. It could be a blank screen that could be projected on with any image whatsoever." Stimson, "Photographic Being and *The Family of Man*," in *The Pivot of the World*, 100.

36 The "Simple" sketches originally appeared in the nationally distributed African American newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*, for which Hughes wrote a weekly column. Hughes also had extensive experience working with documentary and photojournalistic production. For a brief discussion of these projects, see Blair, *Harlem Crossroads*, 53–54.

37 Roy DeCarava, quoted in Arnold Rampersad, *The Life of Langston Hughes*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 242.

38 Langston Hughes, quoted in Rampersad, *Langston Hughes*, 242–43.

39 Besides asking Aaron Douglas to exhibit DeCarava's photographs, Hughes also tried a number of his contacts at publishing houses in New York City. When Simon and Schuster finally agreed to publish the photographs, they stipulated that unlike Henri Cartier-Bresson's *The Decisive Moment*, which they had just published in 1952 in a large-scale format, DeCarava's images would be printed on relatively cheap paper and in a small-sized book to reduce costs. See Rampersad, *Langston Hughes*, 243–44.

40 DeCarava, quoted in Rampersad, *Langston Hughes*, 244.

41 Hughes, quoted in Rampersad, *Langston Hughes*, 244.

42 Roy DeCarava and Langston Hughes, *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955), 10.

43 E. Franklin Frazier, "Problems and Needs of Negro Children and Youth Resulting from Family Disorganization," *Journal of Negro Education* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1950), 275.

44 John W. Parker, "Parcels of Humanity," review of *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*, by Roy DeCarava and Langston Hughes, *Crisis* (February 1956): 124.

45 Roy DeCarava, quoted in Galassi, "Introduction," in *Roy DeCarava*, 19.

46 DeCarava, Letter to Minor White, 21 November 1955, quoted in Stange, "'Illusion Complete Within Itself,'" 79.

47 Deschin, "Pictures and Words," X20.

48 Parker, "Parcels of Humanity," 124.

49 Gilbert Millstein, "While Sister Mary Sticks Around," review of *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*, by Roy DeCarava and Langston Hughes, *New York Times Book Review*, 27 November 1955, 321.

50 See Minor White, "Report on 'Sweet Flypaper of Life,'" 11 November 1955, The Minor White Archive, Art Museum, Princeton University. Jacob Deschin also cites Paul Strand's and Nancy Newhall's *Time in New England* as a successful collaboration between photographers and writers in his "Pictures and Words," 20.

51 Stange, "'Illusion Complete Within Itself,'" 79.

52 DeCarava, Letter to Minor White, 21 November 1955, quoted in Stange, "'Illusion Complete Within Itself,'" 79.

53 Fax, "Roy DeCarava," 168.

54 Frazier, "Problems and Needs," 275.

55 Frazier, "Problems and Needs," 274.

56 Sara Blair has pointed out that Michael Carter was actually a journalist named Milton Smith who represented himself as a professional sociologist. See Blair, *Harlem Crossroads*, 19–20. This discrepancy is also noted in Lili Corbus Bezner, "Interview: Aaron Siskind," *History of Photography* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 29; and Kao, "Personal Vision," 24 n. 18.

57 Besides Siskind, the other primary photographers who worked on the Harlem Document included Harold Carsini, Lucy Ashjian, Beatrice Kosofshy, Richard Lyon, Jack Mendelson, Sol Prom, and Morris Engle. For more information on this project see Aaron Siskind, *Harlem Document: Photographs, 1932–1940* (New York: Matrix, 1981); "Harlem Goes on View," *Photo Notes* (February 1939); Carl Chiarenza, *Aaron Siskind: Pleasures and Terrors* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1982); Bezner, *Photography and Politics*, 24–26; Maricia Battle, "Harlem: A Document," in *Harlem: Photographs by Aaron Siskind, 1932–1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1990); Deborah Martin Kao, "Personal Vision in Aaron Siskind's Documentary Practice," in *Aaron Siskind: Toward a Personal Vision, 1935–1955*, ed. Deborah Martin Kao and Charles A. Meyer (Chestnut Hill, MA: Boston College Museum of Art, 1994); John Raeburn, *A Staggering Revolution: A Cultural History of Thirties Photography* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 229–38; and Blair, *Harlem Crossroads*, 19–49.

58 Raeburn, *A Staggering Revolution*, 238.

59 For a more elaborate discussion of this photo-essay and its relationship to the "Harlem Document", see Raeburn, *A Staggering Revolution*, 238–42.

60 Siskind's camera choices are discussed further in Chiarenza, *Aaron Siskind*, 33; and Blair, *Harlem Crossroads*, 38.

61 Aaron Siskind, "The Drama of Objects," *Minicam Photography* 8, no. 9 (1945): 22.

62 Chiarenza, *Aaron Siskind*, 33. Besides objectivity, Chiarenza also proposes that Siskind's distance from his subjects may have resulted from his failed marriage and his subsequent incapacity for intimacy.

63 Kao, "Personal Vision," in *Aaron Siskind*, 17. Sara Blair also addresses important connections between the members of the Feature Group and Lower East Side tenement culture and offers a compelling argument for the complex effects of this shared history on Siskind's approach to the black subjects in his "Harlem Document" photographs in her *Harlem Crossroads*, 19–49.

64 Blair, *Harlem Crossroads*, 32.

65 Quoted in Chiarenza, *Aaron Siskind*, 33.

66 John Raeburn offers a more sustained analysis of ambiguities in this photograph by Siskind, including the appearance of a third figure in an uncropped version housed at the Siskind Harlem Document archive at the George Eastman House. See his *A Staggering Revolution*, 236–37.

67 Aaron Siskind, "The Feature Group," *Photo Notes* (June–July 1940): 6.

68 Siskind's "Tabernacle City" and "Repertory Theater" photographs further support this reading. For these projects, Siskind explored the metaphoric potential of architectural forms. However, the public, unwilling to read Siskind's photographs except as literal documents, criticized these projects as too artful and lacking in a social purpose. See Chiarenza, *Aaron Siskind*, 48–50.

69 While many characterize this change in Siskind's production as a shift from documentary to abstract photography, Carl Chiarenza argues that Siskind had been developing a distinctly "personal" photography all along. Thus, in his post-1943 works, this search simply became clarified, so that "if it was a change at all, it was a change of referents." Carl Chiarenza, "Form and Content in the Early Work of Aaron Siskind," in *Photography: Current Perspectives*, ed. Jerome Liebling (Rochester, N.Y.: The Massachusetts Review, 1978), 180. See also Kao, "Personal Vision," 13–25; and Joseph Entin, "Modernist Documentary: Aaron Siskind's *Harlem Document*," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (1999): 357–82.

70 Siskind, "The Drama of Objects," 21.

71 Siskind, "The Drama of Objects," 22.

72 Siskind's decision to significantly reduce the content in his pictures resulted from his prolonged consideration of the relationship between form and content rather than a simple exchange of one for the other. See Chiarenza, "Form and Content," 180–205.

73 Aaron Siskind, interview by Jaromir Stephany, in *Aaron Siskind: Toward a Personal Vision*, 44.

74 Aaron Siskind, "Credo," *Spectrum* 6, no. 2 (1956), 2.

75 Siskind speaks about such influences in the photographs that he took of rocks on Martha's Vineyard, in his interview by Jaromir Stephany, in *Aaron Siskind: Toward a Personal Vision*, 43–47.

76 This connection between Siskind and the Abstract Expressionist is also based on Siskind's friendship with a number of members of this group; Barnett Newman is also said to have commended Siskind for his "compelling use of abstraction." See Chiarenza, *Aaron Siskind*, 67–107.

77 Phillips, "Judgment Seat," 57.

78 A number of scholars have noted the similarities between Szarkowski's formalist project and that of Clement Greenberg. See, for instance, Batchen, *Burning with Desire*, 14–15; Phillips, "Judgment Seat," 56–58; Victor Burgin, "Photography, Phantasy, Function," 73–76; Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Canon Fodder: Authoring Eugène Atget," in

Photography at the Dock, 43; and Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation*, 218. Yet, despite the connections between Szarkowski and Greenberg, as Eisinger notes, the formalist ideas of George Kubler and Louis Sullivan also influenced Szarkowski's formalism. See Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation*, 212. Another individual who might have impacted Szarkowski is Alfred Barr, who, in his 1936 exhibition *Cubism and Modern Art*, presents the development of abstract art as existing in a self-enclosed and self-referential realm of formalist concerns and as largely unaffected by any larger social or historical issues.

79 Although in *The Photographer's Eye* and *Mirrors and Windows*, the title of DeCarava's photograph is *Untitled*, I use the title *Man with portfolio* as it appears in DeCarava's 1996 retrospective at MoMA.

80 See for instance, Ruth Wallen, "Reading the Shadows—the Photography of Roy DeCarava," *Exposure* 27, no. 4 (Fall 1990), 19.

81 Although a sustained market for photography as art would not happen until the 1970s, DeCarava's A Photographer's Gallery and Helen Gee's Limelight Gallery represented two important efforts to present photography as a commercially viable art. For more information on these galleries as well as Larry Siegel's semi-cooperative venture Image, see Gee, *Photography in the Fifties*, 15–17; and Helen Gee, *Limelight: A Greenwich Village Photography Gallery and Coffeehouse in the Fifties* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

82 DeCarava, quoted in Galassi, "Introduction," in *Roy DeCarava*, 23.

83 In his review, "Nineteen in Exhibit: Photographer's Gallery Show New Work," *New York Times* (12 June 1955), X14, Jacob Deschin criticized DeCarava and his wife Anna for not using more stringent criteria in their selection process. For Anne DeCarava's response to this criticism, see "From a Reader," *New York Times*, 26 June 1955, X17.

84 During the period of March 1955 to May 1957, there are twelve instances in which Deschin reported on the exhibitions and activities at A Photographer's Gallery in his photography column in the *New York Times*.

85 DeCarava, quoted in Vestal, "In the Key of Life," 88.

86 DeCarava, quoted in Larry Neal, "To Harlem with Love," *New York Times*, 5 October 1969, D34.

87 Neal, "To Harlem with Love," D34.

88 Roy DeCarava, quoted in A. D. Coleman, "Roy DeCarava: Thru Black Eyes," *Popular Photography* 66 (April 1970): 115.

89 Szarkowski, "A Different Kind of Art," 64.

90 Szarkowski, *Mirrors and Windows*, 18–19. A number of scholars and critics have addressed the shortcomings of this exhibition, yet none has discussed them in terms of their racial implications. See for example Leo Rubinfien, "Reflections on 'Mirrors and Window,'" *Art in America* 67, no. 1 (January/February 1979): 38–39; and Eisinger, *Trace and Transformation*, 231–35.

Epilogue: Dawoud Bey and the Act of Reciprocity

1 Sancho, "Respect and Representation," 55.

2 Bey, "An Interview with Jock Reynolds," in *Dawoud Bey*, 103.

3 Bey speaks about the importance of *The Black Photographers Annual* in his "An Interview with Jock Reynolds," in *Dawoud Bey*, 114. *The Black Photographers Annual* was founded by Kamoinge members Beuford Smith and Jimmie Mannas and subsequently funded by Joe Crawford who, along with Joe Walker, served as its editors. From 1973 to 1980, four annuals were published; they each included approximately fifty images by black photographers who worked in the early parts of the twentieth-century as well as in the contemporary period. A selection of Bey's photographs from his series *Harlem USA* is reproduced in the fourth volume of *The Black Photographers Annual*.

4 Sancho, "Respect and Representation," 56.

5 Kellie Jones, "Dawoud Bey: Portraits in the Theater of Desire," in *Dawoud Bey*, 12.

6 A. D. Coleman, "Taken Seriously: The Portraits and Street Photography of Dawoud Bey," in *Dawoud Bey*, 59.

7 Hall and Sealy, *Different*, 59.

8 Hall and Sealy, *Different*, 106.

9 Bey's frequent references to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1969 exhibition *Harlem on My Mind*, and more particularly the photographs by James Van Der Zee that he saw there, as being foundational to his practice has only served to exacerbate this distinction. Interestingly, a selection of Bruce Davidson's "Negro American" photographs was also included in this exhibition. Nonetheless, the relationship between Bey and Davidson continues to remain unexamined. Bey speaks about the impact of *Harlem on My Mind* in his "An Interview with Jock Reynolds," in *Dawoud Bey*, 101–2.

10 Jones, "Dawoud Bey," in *Dawoud Bey*, 35.

11 Bey, "An Interview with Jock Reynolds," in *Dawoud Bey*, 106.

12 Bruce Davidson, "East 100th Street, New York," *Du* 29, no. 4 (March 1969): 156.

13 I use the word "impersonal" to describe a relationship in which the "I" and the "you" are not reciprocal. See, Émile Benveniste, "Relationship of Person in the Verb," in *Problems in General Linguistics*, 195–204.

14 Bruce Davidson, quoted in Joseph Lelyveld, "East Harlem Block Sits for a 'Family' Portrait," *New York Times*, 25 September 1970, 45.

15 Bruce Davidson, quoted in Michael Edelson, "Bruce Davidson: East 100th Street," *Popular Photography* 68 (October 1971): 176.

16 Bruce Davidson, quoted in Press release, "Bruce Davidson at Design-In," 3 May 1967, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

17 See, for example, Samuel Kaplan, "Chicagoans to Aid Uptown Renewal," *New York Times*, 29 October 1965, 51; and Steven V. Roberts, "The 'Worst' Block Is No Longer That," *New York Times*, 10 May 1967, 31.

18 Davidson refers to East 100th Street as "the 'worst' block in the city," and discusses Metro North in his *Bruce Davidson Photographs*, 12.

19 Press release, *East 100th Street*, 23 September 1970, Curatorial Exhibition Files, Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

20 See n. 18 above.

21 See, Lelyveld, "East Harlem Block," 45; Hilton Kramer, "Photos Transform Experience Into Art," *New York Times*, 25 September 1971, 45; Coleman, "Two Critics," 21, 32; Philip Dante, "'But Where Is Our Soul?,'" *New York Times*, 11 October 1970, 21, 32; and Jonathan Green, review of *East 100th Street*, by Bruce Davidson, *Aperture* 16, no. 1 (1971), not paginated.

22 To help him complete this project, Davidson used funding from a special grant from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA). For more information on this fellowship and the formation of NEA's formal program in photography, see Merry Amanda Foresta, *Exposed and Developed: Photography Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984).

23 Bey, "An Interview with Jock Reynolds," in *Dawoud Bey*, 105.

24 After favorably acknowledging my initial request to reproduce two of his photographs, Dawoud Bey, without explanation, ceased all subsequent correspondence with me about this request. For reproductions of these images, please see the figure illustrations in *Dawoud Bey*.

25 Bey, "An Interview with Jock Reynolds," in *Dawoud Bey*, 110.

26 Hall and Sealy, *Different*, 60.

27 Jones, "Dawoud Bey," in *Dawoud Bey*, 51.

28 Bey, "An Interview with Jock Reynolds," in *Dawoud Bey*, 111.

29 Bey initially began his studio photographs using family and friends as his subjects. He expanded these explorations during his artist-in-residency program at Addison Gallery of Art in Andover, Massachusetts, in 1992, where Bey collaborated with students from the Phillips Academy and from the local, public Lawrence High School. Bey repeated this style of residency in 1993 with the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College and Providence St. Mel High School in Chicago. For later residencies, including one in collaboration with the Smart Museum in Chicago in 2003, Bey collaborated with teenagers of different races and classes and created more formal pedagogical frameworks for exploring issues of reciprocity. See, Jones, "Dawoud Bey," in *Dawoud Bey*, 40–51; and Dawoud Bey, *Dawoud Bey: The Chicago Project* (Chicago: David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, 2003).

30 Stephanie Smith, "Mutual Regard," in *Dawoud Bey: The Chicago Project*, 103.

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