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The Past as Rhetorical Resource for Resistance: Enabling and Constraining Memories of the Black Freedom Struggle in *Eyes on the Prize*

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by

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Dedication

For Jeff and Marc

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The Past as Rhetorical Resource for Resistance: Enabling and Constraining Memories of the Black Freedom Struggle in *Eyes on the Prize*

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I began this project with the question of how today's social justice activists might find a useable history in a massively influential text like *Eyes on the Prize*. Thus, the broad question that motivated this rhetorical inquiry was: what means are available to people interested in social change, but whose access to the resources to influence society is limited? One important resource that oppressed peoples can lay claim to is a shared sense of the past.

Through a critical analysis of *Eyes on the Prize*, this dissertation examines shared memory as a resource for rhetorical production. I am interested not only in how the past is re-presented in the documentary, but also what resources the documentary provides its audience to consider and take action for social change. The films present memories that complicate or run counter to the dominant narrative of the black freedom struggle and thereby make available a reservoir of rhetoric power for a political present.

My analysis suggests that *Eyes on the Prize* does not contradict public memory's dominant values of the black freedom struggle, but it does resist their blind adherence. The documentary does not force viewers to take sides on divisive issues like separation/integration or violence/nonviolence. Instead it allows them to realize that these concepts are dialectical. These are, in my estimation, productive tensions.

Eyes on the Prize is an excellent pedagogical tool for producing citizen activists. Although activism gives way to electoralism by the end of the documentary, activism is portrayed positively in the documentary. There are certainly costs to activism, as some activists experienced in the most extreme way. However, the heroes of *Eyes on the Prize* are certainly the activists.

In an analysis of a text's rhetorical potential, it is also necessary to acknowledge how the text limits rhetorical possibility. Significantly, *Eyes on the Prize* inadequately addresses the importance of class in the black freedom struggle. The lacuna of class in the documentary neglects fundamental changes in the goals and tactics of the black freedom struggle and limits the material and psychological structures that maintain racism.

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Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize: Recalling the Black Freedom Struggle in Hurricane Katrina's Wake

Wielding winds up to 145 miles per hour across the Gulf of Mexico, Hurricane Katrina made landfall in the Gulf Coast as a "fearsome Category 4 hurricane at 7:10 a.m., 2005 Eastern time near the Louisiana bayou town of Buras, about 63 miles southeast of New Orleans" (Whoriskey & Gugliotta A01). After the wind, rain, and flooding subsided, 1, 577 deaths were attributed to Hurricane Katrina or its "grueling aftermath" ("Around the Nation" A3). The images of the mostly poor and mostly black Americans who were left behind to bear the brunt of the storm and its aftermath shocked a nation that normally lives in blissful ignorance of its poorest citizens. Some pundits speculated that the victims stayed in New Orleans by choice; however, only one in seven residents of the greater New Orleans Metropolitan area had access to a vehicle, and those who didn't have access to a car couldn't buy a ride to safety. In fact, the abandoned people of the Gulf Coast were literally trapped by racism and poverty both before and after the storm.

Confronted with the reality of social and economic policies that created the desperate conditions broadcast during the Katrina disaster led some to wonder, "How could this happen in America?" Even President George W. Bush claimed to understand what happened in the Gulf Coast as a legacy of racism and discrimination (Sykes A2). But it is a mistake simply to use the past as an explanatory tool or as an excuse for the present. In this instance, it seems important to understand how particular versions of the past allow for or excuse present racism.

Coverage of the Katrina crisis revealed the structures of racism that persist in the United States. Dave Martin, an Associated Press photographer, photographed a young black man wading through the water with a case of soda and pulling a floating bag. The caption reads, "A young man walks through chest-deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday." A second photo, by Chirs Graythen for Getty Images, shows a white couple up to their chests in water, but the caption says, "Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store in New Orleans, Louisiana." Both photos were on Yahoo News Tuesday 30 August 2005.

These captions do more than objectively describe the situation. They reveal the unconscious process of interpretation that leads people to conclude: "It's not looting if you're white" (qtd. in Ralli C6). Although both photographers argued that they were simply following their publications' standard for captions, it seems that in their haste to jump on the looting bandwagon, neither the photographers nor the editors questioned the impulse to interpret the white youth as fortuitous and the black youth as lawless. Although it may be hasty to label either photographer a racist, these instances speak to racialized narratives and ideologies that have shaped and continue to shape American society.

The story of America's past is not a singular narrative. The many stories of our history offer alternative contexts in which to understand and respond to present exigencies. Erica Hunt, president of 21st Century Foundation, situated hurricane Katrina within a larger racial struggle when she commented, "The images from Katrina were as searing for us as the images from Birmingham, AL, during the civil rights era, of

watching dogs set upon children" (Dobrznski F22). In February of 2006, people still displaced from Katrina used the memory of the civil rights movement as part of their protest. Protesters marched across Capitol Hill and sang: "Ain't gonna let no FEMA turn us around, turn us around, turn us around. Ain't gonna let no FEMA turn us around, we're going to keep on a'walking. Gonna keep on a'walking home" (Dart 5B). The anthem is an adaptation of the freedom song, "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Us Round." These protesters' use of this song situates the current injustices within the larger context of the United State's racist past, while they simultaneously call upon that past as a political tool to struggle against contemporary discrimination. By evoking a version of the past that enables critique and energizes social protest, these social activists used the memory of the civil rights movement as a rhetorical resource.

The events of the American civil rights movement continue to circulate "through American memory in forms and through channels that are powerful, dangerous, and hotly contested" (J. Hall 1233). Leigh Raiford and Renee C. Romao argue that although "there exists today . . . a consensus memory, a dominant memory of the movement's goals, practices, victories, and, of course, its most lasting legacies," alternative memory traditions are coming to the foreground through film, memoirs, and documentaries (Raiford & Romano xv). Thus, the history of racial struggle in the United States is a matter of rhetoric as much as of information; stories about what happened, who was responsible, and how racism should be addressed are used to frame particular memories and interpretations of the meaning of the movement.

One of the most extensive and vivid portrayals of the black freedom struggle is the 14-part documentary series, *Eyes on the Prize I: The Civil Rights Years* and *Eyes on*

the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads. In combination these films "are without a doubt, the definitive documentaries on the Civil Rights Movement" (Harris 43). Indeed, many consider the documentary to be the "foundation of our collective memory of the Civil Rights Movement. . . . No other book or movie has comprehensively brought together this much footage or has become a more common reference on the civil rights movement" (www.downhillbattle.com). Together the series was nominated for an Oscar and garnered 23 awards including four Emmys, a Christopher Award, a Peabody Award, and three CINE Golden Eagles.

In addition to its critical acclaim, *Eyes on the Prize* has also become a "classroom classic … especially during February, when schools across the country formally celebrate African-American history (Trotter 1). According to one estimate, the series was in used in more than half the four-year colleges in the country by the later 1990's (Griffin 196). Instructors use *Eyes on the Prize* because it teaches the "present generation the real story of courage and steadfastness of the civil rights activists," a lesson that "must reach all of America's young as a critical part of their basic education" (Fluehr-Lobban 838). One of the strengths of *Eyes on the Prize* is that it allows students to witness the events of the black freedom struggle and to hear the individual experiences from those who were involved. The documentary series, according to Chuck D. of rap group Public Enemy, has had a "[powerful impact] in our schools and in how young people have been able to see themselves in it, growing up believing that their actions, their voice and their participation in the democratic process makes a difference" (qtd. at www.downhillbattle.com).

The series has two companion texts. The first is *A Reader and Guide: Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Year*s, which provides speeches, essays, and other supplementary material for the first six episodes. It is organized in chapters that correspond to each segment of the documentary. It also includes an explanation of how to use the text in combination with the documentary. The second text is *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader: Documents, Speeches, and First Hand Accounts from the Black Freedom Struggle, 1954-1990*. This text also has chapters that correspond to the individual segments of the film. It is inclusive of all 14 episodes in *Eyes on the Prize I and II*.

This vitally important series was almost lost to copyright laws. From 1995 until the present, no new copies of the series have been for sale. In 2005, a four-person activist group named Downhill Battle fought to change copyright laws so that *Eyes on the Prize* could continue to circulate lawfully. They organized around 100 "screen ins" on 8 February 2005. Co-director of Downhill Battle, Holmes Wilson stated, "We wanted people to see it, to watch it in a public setting. . . . We wanted to stimulate discussion about it. The film is an amazing educational resource" (qtd. in Trotter 24). Former Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee member, Lawrence Guyot, also worked on the campaign to get the documentaries re-released. In an interview on Democracy Now! with Amy Goodman, Guyot argues we have "never had a greater need for [Eyes on the Prize]." Viewing the documentary is "necessary" in this moment of political "retrogression" (qtd. in Goodman). Thankfully, a $600,000 grant from the Ford Foundation and checks from other donors covered the cost of copyright renewals in 2006. PBS has already shown the documentaries on television and will most likely make DVD

copies available (Lee and Topcik E2). The re-release of the documentary series will likely significantly increase its viewing audience both through public television and the classroom. Producer Henry Hampton hopes that *Eyes on the Prize* will "reactivate the racial dialogue in this country" (qtd in Kantrowitz ¶ 6).

If rhetoric is the faculty of observing in any given situation the available means of persuasion (Aristotle 1356a; 181), then the broad question that motivates this dissertation is: What means are available to people interested in social change, but whose access to the resources to influence society is limited? One important resource that oppressed peoples can lay claim to is a shared sense of the past. Through a critical analysis of *Eyes on the Prize*, this dissertation examines shared memory as a resource for rhetorical production. I am interested not only in how the past is re-presented in the documentary, but also what rhetorical resources the documentary provides its audience to consider and take action for social change. Although the trajectory of the documentary's narrative conforms to many of the aspects of the dominant narrative about the black freedom struggle, I argue that there is possibility for rhetorical invention contained within the episodes of *Eyes on the Prize*. The films present memories that complicate or run counter to the dominant narratives of the black freedom struggle and thereby make available a reservoir of rhetoric power for a political present.

RHETORICAL AGENCY AND INVENTION

Rhetorical invention is a category of agency that recognizes the ability of ordinary people to work with the discursive resources around them to produce new ways of seeing and to move communities to action. Rhetorical "inventors" are "materially limited, linguistically constrained, historically situated subjects; at the same time, . . . [they are]

articulators who link past and present, and find means to express those strata that connect the psyche, society, and world, the forms of feeling that encapsulate moments in time" (Campbell 5). Productive forms of memory are related to time, not in terms of "quantity" or *chronos*, but more so in terms of *kairos*, or "force" (Hawhee 18). Thus, the power of memory is not its ability to reproduce exactly or quantify the past, but in its ability to remember or invent new ways of interpreting the past. To use the past in this way is not to claim that the past is purely invented by some figurative slight of hand. Rather, the past is becomes a *topos*, or place where a rhetor "turns to" for "ideas, terms, formulas, phrases, propositions, argument-forms and so on that the rhetoric turns to in order to discover what to say on a given matter" (Jost 3). Two important kinds of memory practices present the possibility of rhetorical invention in *Eyes on the Prize*: counter-memory and polyvalenced memories.

Both kinds of memory can be understood in relation to public memories, or memories that are most often presented in culture and are consistent with the values of political elites. Public memories function to justify a particular social and political order by presenting the past as a singular and simplistic narrative. Counter-memories, then, are representations of the past that significantly undermine the legitimacy of a public memory. Polyvalenced memories present multiple and complex versions of the past that open up the possibility for alternative meanings and resistance to dominant interpretations of the past.

Eyes on the Prize is composed of news footage, photographs, songs and lyrics from the black freedom struggle and covers the time between 1954 through the mid 1980s. The scope and depth with which the issues of the movement are presented makes

it an important work of memory to analyze. My interest in rhetorical invention leads me to investigate two major dynamic tensions in this series of films about the movement: integration versus separation and nonviolence versus violence. My analysis will primarily focus on the narrative aspects of the documentary; I will also include analysis of the visual and aural cues that influence interpretation of the oral histories and voiceovers. Although divisive in their day, the memory of these tensions is productive insofar as they articulate the nature of oppression and responses to it.

I will analyze the ways in which *Eyes on the Prize*, across multiple episodes, represents differing viewpoints on integration and separation as paradigms for black life in America and nonviolence and violence as methods to achieve racial equality. First, I shall offer a formal analysis of the documentary's narrative trajectory and overall argument; here I focus on narrator Julian Bond's voiceovers, the use of news footage, and oral history testimony in which the perspective and point of view of the documentary are overt. Second, I am interested in discovering the rhetorical strategies of the text. How does each episode and the series as a whole encourage audience adherence to a particular point of view? Here I focus on how the documentary exhorts viewer identification with the subjective experience of various people and groups and how the documentary employs form and editing in support of its arguments.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In the following chapters I will analyze the memories of the black freedom struggle produced in *Eyes on the Prize*. In Chapter One, I argue that such cultural productions as documentary films are important forms of cultural agency. I shall,

therefore, review literature on collective memory, social movements, and documentary film as well locate myself within the debate over the uses of the black freedom struggle memory.

In order to argue that a particular rhetorically produced memory is consonant with and/or contestatory of dominant popular memory, it is necessary to construct a standard against which I compare the memories presented in *Eyes on the Prize*. In Chapter Two, I establish what scholars consider to be dominant memory of the civil rights and Black Power movements. Based on this literature, I argue at the time of the films' release, the trajectory of the documentary projects a version of the movement that heralds the usurpation of the movement into electoral politics. In this way, the documentary limits the scope of rhetorical possibility and political potential. However, I argue that in the present political context, there is reason to believe that viewers may attend to other forms of political agency alongside or outside electoral politics, specifically with regard to the binaries integration-separation (Chapters Three and Four) and nonviolence-violence (Chapters Five and Six).

Chapter Three offers an analysis of the ways in which the documentary presents the issue of integration. Although integration is a goal lauded in dominant public memory, *Eyes on the Prize* troubles this unitary story in its coverage of the Little Rock Nine, Boston Busing, and *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* episodes. These segments present polyvalenced memories of the process of integration by revealing the hardship and resistance of some whites to integration both in and outside of the South. I argue that these memories reveal the latent power relations that maintained white supremacy throughout a process that is more appropriately labeled de-segregation.

In Chapter Four, I analyze the concept of Black Nationalism beginning with The Nation of Islam and its two most popular figures, Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali; the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community school controversy and the student protests at Howard University, and ending with the Black Nationalism convention in Gary, Indiana. I argue that presentations of Black Nationalism counter public memory of separatism as a solely white response to civil rights. Black Nationalism developed within the black community as a response to racism. By symbolically constituting a black political subject, leaders such as Malcolm X redirected the goals of the movement.

In Chapter Five, I analyze the publicly sanctioned and celebrated memory of nonviolence as the only legitimate form of social protest. While the documentary certainly attests to its utility as a movement tactic, it also suggests that white violence against peaceful protesters had to become a public and embarrassing spectacle for the federal government to take action. Thus, nonviolence on the part of civil rights activists was predicated to some degree on a violent white response that would be covered bythe media. This chapter offers an analysis of the student sit-ins and Freedom Rides, the march from Selma to Montgomery, and the Albany Movement. Thus, I argue that documentary qualifies the use of nonviolence as an appropriate movement tactic and response to racism.

In Chapter Six, I analyze the documentary's depiction of violence. Overall, the documentary presents violence as a response to continued racism, most notably police brutality. These issues are salient to the portrayals of the Black Panther Party and the Detroit and Miami riots. Dominant memory normally construes violence on the part of blacks as a "pathological." However, I argue that the documentary counters this memory

by presenting the issue of violence in tragic form, which displaces black guilt for white culpability.

In spite of the films' attempts to sanction integration and nonviolence, the footage complicates any possibility of a uniform dominant narrative emerging from the text. While the documentary underscores dominant values, it also sets them in extensive opposition to their counterparts. There can be no elaboration of the principle of non-violence without giving voice to actors advocating instrumental coercion. Likewise, there can be no celebration of integration without recognizing those movements and individuals who made strong cases for separation. The complexity of the text offers resources for activists and teachers today, ground upon which counter-memories can be built. The conclusion of this dissertation explores these possibilities.

Perhaps the most dangerous way of remembering the Black freedom struggle is to render it a mere memory as if there were no longer the need for a movement to address racism. The naked racism laid bare in the images and personal experiences of Hurricane Katrina exposed that the United States remains a nation that is separate and unequal. How this event fits into the larger memory of struggle of African Americans will contribute to and be influenced by a body of narratives about race and class in the United States. These stories and memories are "narrated by powerful storytellers, portrayed in public events, acted upon in laws and policies and court decisions, and grounded in institutions—become primary sources of human action" (Hall 1239). Thus, the contours of that construction of the memory of the black freedom struggle as well as its message is important not as an historical artifact, but as a text that has a message for the current socio-political moment.

Chapter One: Rhetorical Invention in Presentations of the Past

Collective memory is a primary source of human action. How citizens come to think of themselves in the present and how they should act in the future is a product of what and how the past is collectively remembered. Stephen H. Browne's survey of scholarship on collective memory argues that the term is used to denote a "shared sense of the past, fashioned from the symbolic resources of community and subject to its particular history, hierarchies and aspirations" (248). In Pearson's words, publicly shared memory functions within a hegemonic order, a "fluid and unstable site of contestation between the dominant social formations . . . and those marginalized social formations seeking concessions from the dominant, and whom the dominant constantly strives to incorporate" (Pearson 180). Thus, contestation over the interpretation and uses of a collective version of the past is a political struggle.

Documentary films lend themselves readily to the study of collective recollection and its political potential. Gary Edgerton argues that documentaries have "sustained an extremely active and nuanced engagement with the construction of history and has played a crucial role in the shaping of cultural memory" (Edgerton 20). For example, the *See It Now's* television documentary on Senator Joseph R. McCarthy "abides as one of the most provocative documents in American discourse" (Rosteck "Irony" 277). Moreover, non-fiction film presents a unique opportunity to the documentary filmmaker who organizes and interprets the past. The form of documentary film is also the most "compelling mode with which to present an alternative, more authentic narrative of black experience and an effective critique of mainstream discourse" (Klotman and Cutler xvii).

The purpose of this chapter is to review literatures that inform my analysis of the documentary series *Eyes on the Prize*; this literature includes arguments regarding the rhetoric of representing the past, documentary film, and old and new social movements. This chapter establishes the claim that cultural productions of shared memory are important rhetorical resources for political contestation. As a rhetorical scholar interested in the process of social change, I agree with a number of scholars, such as A. Susan Owen, Peter Ehrenhaus, and Barbara Biesecker, who argue that collective memory serves a unifying and sometimes conservative function. However, I would also argue in accordance with Carole Blair, Marouf Hasain, and Marita Sturken that culturally produced texts about the past contain the possibility of multiple and resistant readings. The following survey of literature describes not only the function of collective memory, but also how resistant readings of the past contain the possibility of rhetorical invention for the purpose of social change. In addition, each chapter approaches the questions of how, for whom, and with what outcomes memories circulate differently.

SOCIAL MEMORY AND HISTORY

Research in the area of collectively shared memory is based on the premise that "[n]o memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections" (Halbwachs 43). Collective memories bind societies together by providing a common repertoire and interpretation of historical events and individual stories. This is not to say that individuals cannot have personal recollections, but rather that there are shared memories that hang together because "they are part of a totality of thoughts common to a group, the group of people with whom we have a relation on the preceding day or days" (Halbwachs 52). In other words, societies,

groups, or nations share a common understanding of the past that is negotiated symbolically in a public setting.

The memories common to members of a community tell us more about the present than they do the past. Unlike history, the value of collective memory is not necessarily in its accuracy; ”present factors tend to influence – some might say distort – our recollection of the past, but . . . past factors tend to influence, or distort, our experience of the present” (Connerton 2). This does not mean that memory cannot be accurate. It is because we are capable of remembering accurately that demonstrates “what distorts memory is not some inherent defect in the process of mental recall, but rather a series of external constraints usually imposed by society” (Fentress and Wickham xii). Therefore, in spite of many arguments in rhetorical studies to the contrary (see Scott 1967, Greene 1998; contrast Cloud 2006) it is important to consider what can be empirically established because it helps reveal how social forces shape collective recollection and occlusion.

THE HEGEMONY OF PUBLIC MEMORY

Memories that become popular or dominant do so through cultural processes that establish and maintain a particular version of the past through cultural texts and public ceremony. Dominant memories are not simply the “true” or preferred interpretations of the past. They are the product of and are indicative of power relations within a society. To refer to these kinds of memories, I will use the term public memory because the term “deliberately resonates with the concept of the public sphere” and indicates that these memories emanate from above, “from such central institutions of the hegemonic order as the government and private corporations” (Pearson 181). Public memory stresses the

"transgressive force with which memory, far form being private, displays itself in the marketplace and the political domain" (Weissberg 16). These memories become dominant within culture because the "powerful institutions producing and circulating . . . public memory ensure that certain historical representations become . . . ubiquitous" (Pearson 181). In this way, public memory is a subset of the hegemonic order against which individual and occluded memories struggle for adherence.

To study memory within the context of hegemony refers to the dynamic and continuous process whereby the ruling class maintains its power through a combination of force and consent. Antonio Gramsci used the concept to explain how and why people act against their interests. In rhetoric, scholars have used the term to articulate how ideological texts justify and maintain a particular economic and social order (see Cloud 1996). Rhetorical studies of the function of memory also demonstrate how memory is deployed to re-establish a particular social and political order. *Saving Private Ryan* received considerable attention by rhetoricians interested in the function of World War II memory in American culture. Peter Ehrenhaus, Susan Owen, Marous Hasian, and Barbara Biesecker all agree that *Saving Private Ryan* was an attempt to re-enoble a particular American national identity. Through "suturing" the memory of the Holocaust into the narrative of World War II (Ehrenhaus 334) and glorifying blood sacrifice (Owen 274), the film "allows viewers to blur the lines between the past and the present. . . [Allowing them to] create their own identities as [patriotic and] worthy beneficiaries of a national identity (Hasian 351, 353). In doing so, the film assisted in the "reconsolidation and naturalization of traditional logics and matrices of privilege that today traverse the various arenas of collective life" (Biesecker 406).[i] In other words, the film reestablishes

American exceptionalism by recovering memories that assert conventional gender roles and race relations (Owen 274). Memory studies such as these demonstrate the hegemonic and creative process of remembering and how members of subordinated or subaltern groups, i.e. women and people of color, are encouraged to privilege this particular order even though it is not in their interest.

The concept of hegemony is, therefore, a tool for assessing how cultural texts are used politically. Critical analyses of *Saving Private Ryan* show how dominant discourses of the past function to justify particular social, political, and economic orders. These memories are cultivated both publicly and privately through schooling, books, television programs, etc. Dominant versions or public memories of the past legitimate social, political, and economic structures and simultaneously delegitimize alternative interpretations of the past (Fentress and Wickham 134). This does not mean that alternative memories are completely absent or that subversive interpretations of dominant memories are nonexistent. These orders are not fixed or natural; thus "the dominated have a potential for resistance that might produce change, perhaps even a different hegemonic order" (Pearson 180). Recollections of the past are part of these political struggles. Control over the presentation and interpretation of the past becomes important for those who wish to change the current social and political order.

DISPUTING IDEOLOGY: THE POLITICAL POSSIBILITIES OF COUNTER-MEMORY

All history is rhetorical, but some stories get more airtime than others. Mass mediated, commercial popular culture inundates people with stories telling them what and how to remember. These interpretations are rhetorical and ideological constructions

that foreground elements consonant with existing social arrangements. These social relations are maintained by "structures of commodity production and exchange" as well as "through structures of ideas, or ideologies" (Cloud "Oprah" 118). By appearing as common sense, intersubjective popular memory is naturalized as truth. Through repetition and use, dominant memories appear to be the only way to understand the past. Dominant or public memories bolster ideological formations and social stability by absorbing and reframing challenges" (Cloud "Oprah" 118). They obscure the history of the "struggle for power" and the way in which "power is exercised and maintained" (Foucault 219). Ideologies create cultural expectations and exploit cultural contractions to resolve social crises" (Cloud "Spenser" 319). For example, in her work on the rhetoric of silence in worker uprisings, Cloud explained how mill owners evoked the "ideology of workplace paternalism" to exonerate themselves "for exploiting workers on the basis of a familial metaphor" ("Null" 190-191). Workers also thought of themselves in terms of a family. Mill owners exploited connection and relied on kinship metaphors in their discourse, and they encouraged workers to take care of each other, rather than raise wages (Cloud "Null" 191). In this way, the ideology of the family was used to maintain social stability and resolve social conflict in favor of the mill owners.

For groups who find themselves at the bottom of the social and political totem pole, the normal functioning of memory is an injustice. Popular memory, like history, "all too often conceal[s] the inhuman oppression of race and class upon which the triumphs of 'civilization' rest" (Lipsitz *Time* 212). Memory practices of those dominant in a given culture are not objective or self-reflective (Havelock 43) and, therefore, are

conservative in nature. They provide no grounds for alternative interpretations of the past and fail to account for rupture, conflict, and change" (Lipsitz "Counter-Memory" 165).

Counter-memory, then, is the idea that the stability of history and public memory must be fundamentally ruptured. Counter-memory disrupts the ethos of a singular, stable, and unified past (Foucault 140). It must delicately negotiate "between local, immediate, and personal experiences and global, indirect, and social reality" (Lipsitz *Time* 214). In this way, counter-memory subverts the legitimacy of a symbolic order. However, for me, the political purpose of rupturing dominant memories is not simply to offer another perspective among many perspectives. While it may be impossible to have an all-inclusive shared memory of the past, we certainly need to recognize that there are multiple interpretations of the past; some are more honest than others, but all of them are rhetorical and political. For as Lipsitz notes, "We may never succeed in finding out all that has happened in history, but events matter and describing them as accurately as possible (although never with certain finality) can, at the very least, show us whose foot has been on whose neck" (*Time* 214). For example, Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize winner and widely read novel, *Beloved*, addresses the silences of slavery as they impact an African American woman and her community in post Civil War Cincinnati. Through the novel, Morrison enacts a scathing critique of the physical and psychological horrors of slavery that began in the Middle Passage. Americans continue to live in a state of denial about the centrality of slavery to American identity and its legacy. Even after two hundred years, our federal government has failed to issue even so much as an apology for the practice of slavery in the United States. Morrison's novel counters this occlusion by dedicating the novel to the "Sixty Million and More" who died en route to the Americas

and her use of the novel to re-member the horrors of slavery in order to move on. In this way, Morrison reintroduces the fundamental rupture of African American identity and conflict of slavery through literature that is, for the most part, denied in public memory. Thus, the rhetorical potential of counter-memory for historically oppressed groups is the possibility of disrupting the ethos of and offering counter-narratives to the stories that have previously been allowed to dominate the public landscape.

OPENING UP OPPOSITIONAL READINGS: POLYVALENCED MEMORIES AND RHETORICAL INVENTION

For Giambattista Vico, memory is integral to rhetorical invention and closely associated with imagination and ingenuity or invention. Vico's ideas are useful in understanding not only individual memory but public memory as well. For Vico, the process of knowing individually is bound to the collective. Much of his work is based on his *verum-factum* principle: We can only know what we have ourselves made. For Vico, human cognition is based on corporeal experiences in the world and communication is an extension of that base experience. The unifying theme of Vico's writing is "the idea that symbolic behavior is an extension of bodily experience" (Danesi 34). The ability to recall information is essential to rhetorical invention because it stores the information that can be used for invention. The available information stored in memory becomes important to the process of social intervention. Thus, polysemic memories that honor the complexity of the past offer the rhetor enriched rhetorical possibility.

In *The New Science*, Vico articulates three aspects of memory: "memory when it remembers things, imagination when it alters or imitates them, and invention when it gives them a new turn or puts them into proper arrangement and relationship" (819). He

argues that the "interlocking faculties of imagination, perception, and memory help rhetors develop eloquence and discover some of the probabilities in life" (Williams and Enos 196). Memory and imagination allow the rhetor to "connect past experience with present apprehensions, conceive [of] new configurations in rhetorical settings, and see previously unperceived relationships when relying on topical strategies to discover multiple points of view and to employ the dimensions of rhetorical circumstance" (Williams and Enos 196). Given that texts and fragments of texts "contain the potential for *polysemic* rather than *monosemic* interpretation" (McKerrow 107), even public memory has the potential for rhetorical invention for social change.

The idea that popular memories have the potential to be polysemic, or have multiple interpretations, is based on the idea of excorporation. Excorpoaration, according to Larry Grossberg, is the opposite process of incorporation, a process whereby a text or practice "claiming a certain externality" is "relocated within the context of hegemonic relations" (232). Exporporation, then, is a strategy "by which members of subordinate classes can take the cultural products of dominance, turn them against the cultural producers and [turn] them into resisting discourses" (Fiske 394). Cultural texts contain "unresolved contradictions" which can be exploited by "various subcultures to generate meanings from it that meet the needs of their own subcultural identities" (Fiske 392). The ethos of public memory is a rhetorical construction that, like most cultural texts, cannot contain all of the unresolved historical contradictions and ruptures it attempts to suppress. However, the number of resisting discourses is numbered.

Celeste Condit rightly argues that there are limits to interpretation and that audiences are constrained by a variety of factors including: "audience members' access to

oppositional codes, the ratio between the work required and pleasure produced in decoding a text, the repertoire of available texts, and the historical occasion" (103-104). In place of polysemic interpretations, Condit offers the term "polyvalence" to describe what "occurs when audience members share understandings of the denotations of a text but disagree about the valuation of those denotations to such a degree that they produce notably different interpretations" (106). Whereas polysemy is a term that implies the possibility of multiple readings, polyvalence denotes the importance of power relations in the reception and interpretation of texts. This awareness is an important departure from polysemy, especially for the study of memory as a resource for rhetorical invention. Oppositional readings of dominant memories may meet the psychological needs of "subcultural identities," however, the purpose of investigating rhetorical invention is to consider how collective recollection might move beyond the constitution of an identity and imagine ways in which public memory enables people to use alternative versions of the past to participate in public argumentation in contemporary American society.

Using these ideas as a means to critique a particular text is to question whether a particular text offers single dimensional memory that likens the act of remembering to the "witnessing mode of consciousness" (Goestch 43), or if the text encourages the "triangular invention of memory, imagination, and perception—the three faculties that allow rhetors to make connections among common sense, topics, and tropes" (Williams and Enos 193). In this way, public memory also has significant productive potential for those who lack other forms of agency, but seek social change. For example, based on the idea of the civil rights Freedom Rides, in 2003, immigrant workers boarded buses and crossed the United States to raise awareness about the importance of immigrants to the

United States culturally and economically (McCallister 4). In another example, students at Gallaudet University, an institution that caters to the specific needs of deaf students, used the memory and forms of the civil rights movement in the "Deaf President Now" strike. They marched behind posters that said, "We Still Have a Dream" and cartoons that depict a figure wearing a Gallaudet University shirt signing "We Shall Overcome." By using the rhetoric of the civil rights movement, the students of Gallaudet were able to "tap into a great wellspring of history, memory, equity, and justice" (Edwards 318). The public memory of the Freedom Rides and civil rights slogans afford agency to other groups.

THE RHETORIC OF DOCUMENTARY FILM

The persuasiveness of documentary film is derived from its narrative form and social commentary. The word "narrate" can be traced "from the Latin *narrare,* "to tell," and Latin *gnarus,* "knowing," both derivative form the Indo-European root *gna,* "to know" (Turner 86-86). Narrative knowledge is "enacted, reconfigured, tested, and engaged by imaginative summonings and interpretive replays of past events in the light of present situations and struggles" (Conquergood 337). Stories are a means to understand the world and act in it by engaging "the whole mind in concert with itself" which includes the necessary "moral constructs" that influence communities and personal behavior (Fisher 68). Narratives, then, offer "good reasons," which are "*those elements that provide warrants for accepting or adhering to advice fostered by any form of communication that can be considered rhetorical* (Fisher 58). Documentary filmmakers create their own narratives about how to interpret the world by assembling texts that tell a particular story and become the warrants for seeing the world they way they do.

Documentary is closely associated with collective memory, for a documentary filmmaker "can only make a film within the historical present" and thus makes "a cinema of memory" (Rabinowitz 119-120). But unlike memory, the tradition of documentary films is rather self-reflexive. John Grieson, who is credited as the first person to use the term "documentary" in relation to his review of Robert Flaherty's *Moana,* felt that documentaries were texts of advocacy. While studying moral philosophy at Glasgow University, Grieson was already thinking about film and "sensed that film and other popular media had acquired leverage over ideas and actions once exercised by church and school" (Barnouw 85). For Grieson documentary was to enlighten the masses. Thus, documentary "must have a social purpose" (Plantinga 27). In this way, documentary film is different than non-fiction film or a news show like *60 Minutes* that generate an ethos of objectivity. For example, it was no secret that documentary filmmaker, Michael Moore, had a particular political bent in his film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*. Indeed, much of the criticism Moore received was his lack of objectivity, a value prized by journalists who offered space and wrote criticisms of Moore.

The status of truth in cinema seems to be at stake here. People often assume the veracity of still or moving pictures. They do not take into account the framing of the camera or the lighting involved that may hide or reveal important variables for interpretation. Crafting a story out of real events and people leads viewers to believe that reality speaks for itself, that the kind of framing directors, like Michael Moore, engage in is heavy handed and wrong. However, the history of documentary points to the need for subjective interpretation. Pictures, even moving pictures, must be contextualized for audiences. In referring to the documentation of Nazi concentration camps, Rabinowitz

argues that "simply displaying the horror—skeletal remains of the Nazi holocaust . . . without comment . . . is not enough; raw footage needs editing; bodies need historicizing" (126). Documentary filmmakers do not just report the facts. In the case of *Eyes on the Prize*, Henry Hampton uses voiceovers, oral history, and newsreel footage to make an argument. He is framing the past for a contemporary audience so that they will remember the black freedom struggle in a particular way. As such, the process is wholly rhetorical, as he picks and chooses evidence for his argument that he hopes will persuade an audience to adhere to his interpretation.

THE STRUGGLE FOR REPRESENTATION AND DOCUMENTARY FILM

Documentary film for African Americans presents an interesting opportunity to represent their community on their own terms. There is an "urgent desire to convey black life in ways that counter the relatively uninformed and often distorted representations of mass media film and television productions" (Klotman and Cutler xvi). Compared to their white counterparts, African Americans have had little access and control over the production and interpretation of their images in the United States. During the civil rights and Black Power movement, the media played a significant role in interpreting to the nation the motivation and tactics of blacks seeking freedom.

The subject of civil rights has been widely documented. Since the late 1960s, "a significant body of films and videos has documented the history of the civil rights movement. These documentaries fall into three general categories. First are those that attempt to present a historical overview of the movement. . . . the second type are documentaries that focus on a specific incident or element. . . . The third category contains documentaries that focus on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (Brasell ¶ 13). The

problem with many of these representation, according to St. Clare Bourne, are the "white male spokespeople who attempted to tell white America what those people were doing, and usually what they said was wrong, or distorted, for their own psychic needs" (qtd in Klotman and Cutler xvi-xvii). Henry Hampton also believed that the black freedom struggle needed to be put in "proper historical context" (Norris ¶ 6).

Many African American documentary filmmakers see documentary film as "the most compelling mode with which to present an alternative, more authentic narrative of black experience and an effective critique of mainstream discourse, [as well as] a welcome site for challenging the authority of mainstream American history and culture" (Klotman and Cutler xvii). *Eyes on the Prize* is an attempt to tell the story of the black freedom struggle for the purposes of social critique. For Hampton, the documentary series was not just another story of the historical period for the sake of itself; "at its center is the notion of reforming American democracy," (qtd. in Norris ¶ 6). Documentary film enacts a critique of public memory about the black freedom struggle while simultaneously offering another vantage point from which to understand the movement.

As one of the most robust and widely used documentaries about the black freedom struggle, *Eyes on the Prize* tells the story of the black freedom struggle through the use of televised news coverage and interviews from the actual events as well as oral histories collected afterward. Brought together in the documentary and the narration by Julian Bond, these two forms of evidence invite viewers to "discover an underlying logic" to the set of events in the documentary through a "single narrative framework" (Griffin 202). However, each form of evidence has unique rhetorical constraints that I will discuss below.

IMAGING EVIDENCE: VISUAL RHETORICS AND ARGUMENT

Documentaries embody both discursive and presentational forms of memory. Images are particularly important forms of memory because images, particularly mechanically recorded images, like photographs pass for "incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort; but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what's in the picture" (Sontag 6). Moving images also represent the past and "increasingly, Americans participate in the witnessing of history through camera images; 'where we were' when it happened in front of the television screen" (Sturken 25). These images, in part, constitute what we know about the past. Iconic images come to "reflect social knowledge and dominant ideologies, . . . shape understanding of specific events and periods, . . . influence political action both topically and by modeling relationships between civic actors, and they provide figural resources for subsequent communicative action" (Hariman and Lucaites 7). These images are so powerful that Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites conclude that iconic images "provide crucial social, emotional, and mnemonic material for democratic identity and action" (7). Through sharing the values and "experiences" of images like the Challenger Disaster or the images of 9/11, United States citizens come to think of themselves as members of what Benedict Anderson calls an "imagined community" (15-16).

Scholars disagree about the way images affect people. Some rhetorical scholars conclude that images can function as rational argument and can even refute other images (Lake and Pickering 81). Other visual theorists believe that images function less rationally. Unlike arguments that progress consecutively, images "do not present their

constituents successively, but simultaneously, so the relations determining a visual structure are grasped in one act of vision" (Langer 93). It is probably safe to say that some images have the capacity to function like argument, while other images evoke more abstract meaning.

What is clear is that images have an enormous impact on the publics and how their members are encouraged to interpret a particular event. For these reasons, "Western philosophers and social critics alike have expressed a deep and abiding fear of the threat that visual practices pose to the public's deliberative capacity for rational decision making" (Luciates and Hariman 38). Because photographs and moving images are taken in "all at once" they leave "less critical space with which to approach them" and we often tend to "read [them] not as representation but as *evidence* (Dauber 656; 654). Viewers sometimes forget that images are constructions and interpretations of events, not the event itself (Clark 27). Moreover, interpretation often accompanies images, which means there are multiple possibilities for reading images. The image or discourse may "carry" the argument, while other times "visual and discursive arguments are at odds" (Lake and Pickering 83).

Images were an important component of the black freedom struggle. In general, authors and scholars agree that these kinds of "mediated visual images aided in the pace of social change sought by movement activist" (Gallagher & Zagacki 175). Through image, the civil rights movement made the realities of segregation visible to the nation in a way that discursive argument could not. The distribution of the images of racist violence was important to contradicting the culture of segregation as an accepted practice by both blacks and whites in the South. These spectacles "could convey contradiction

and evoke oppositions like white racial supremacy, white racial innocence, and white racial dependency more easily and persuasively than a carefully plotted story" (Hale 7-8). People and politicians who, through television, "witnessed" the use of attack dogs and fire hoses on children in Birmingham, Alabama and the beatings on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Mississippi were affected by the displays of racism. After the beating on bridge, Senator Ralph Yarborough of Texas chastised the state of Alabama: "Shame on you, George Wallace, for the wet ropes that bruise the muscles, for the bull whips that cut the flesh, for the clubs that broke the bones, and for the tear gas that seared the eyes and the nose and the nostrils and the lungs and choked people into insensibility. This is not the American way" ("Bridge to Freedom"). However, these images do not have fixed meanings. Viewing these images back in the 1950s and 1960s may have been grounds for social change, while viewing these images in the 21st century may be reason to believe racism does not exist because it is not manifest in that way. Thus, the framing, selection, editing, and arrangement of subjects becomes important to interpreting these memories.

TELEHISTORY AS EVIDENCE

It is standard practice for documentary filmmakers to use televised news coverage in their films. Michael Moore used this technique in Fahrenheit 9/11 to critique the "ideological nature of the news and the self-serving structures of government institutions . . . by contextualizing fragments of old news coverage, into a cinematic op-ed" (Aguayo 2). Not all documentary filmmakers use news coverage for this reason, but the use of news clips is a legitimate way to capture historical footage of an event. Thus, the media becomes a kind of telehistory of important local, national, and international events. These

images play an important role in the construction of memory, especially for those who were not present at these events. In this way, the news media allows non-participants to witness events as they unfold contemporaneously and generations later. However, the media is in the business of selling news, which significantly impacts the kinds of stories reported and the way in which they are framed.

Media Framing and Official Memory

The assumption in a democratic society is that the news media educate the populace so that they may make informed decisions. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the "media do not matter that much—that they merely reflect reality, rather than shape it. In fact, media are a social force in their own right, and not just a reflection of other forces" (McChesney 7). Indeed, the media have "become the core systems for the distribution of ideology" (Gitlin 2). This is accomplished through media frames which are "*persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual*" [emphasis in original] (Gitlin 7). Media frames make the content and presentation of a particular order appear natural and normal.

The choices about what is natural and normal are decided in the interest of the corporate media. Before the 20th century, there were many local news sources that had clear political bents. But during the Gilded Age, the commercial press became less competitive, with fewer and fewer owners of differing news publications. To sell more newspapers, a new kind of professionalism emerged. Instead of partisan politics, journalists became "objective" reporters of the news so that "readers could trust what they read and not worry about who owned the newspaper" (McChesney 64). However,

this model of reporting did not create objective reporting. Instead the values of professionalism "were formed in response to the commercial and political needs of the owners, although they were never framed in such a manner" (McChesney 69).

Television news broadcasts fall into the same trap. In the post World War II era, the media have "fashion[ed] a symbolic order conducive to the interests of corporate America" (Lipsitz *Time* 259). Indeed, journalists overwhelmingly report the world in a pro-American democracy and pro- business framework. Dana Cloud's analysis of Gulf War coverage demonstrates the pro-American coverage of the war and how media coverage of the war influenced people's response to the war. The media garnered support by eliciting emotional responses that encouraged Americans to "unite and adapt" not question and protest (Cloud *Control* 92). Coverage of the 1999 Seattle, Washington World Trade Organization protests was overwhelmingly pro-business. The nightly news reports focused on the small number of protesters who engaged in symbolic violence, like breaking a window of a Nike store. Although police force against the protesters began before the symbolic violence, the media coverage framed the police force as a response to the anarchists (Deluca and Peeples 138). In both instances, the media's pro-American, pro-business framing encourages viewers to uncritically engage events.

Media frames are important; however, the corporate media may have less of a stranglehold on the dissemination of knowledge because media audiences have themselves become producers (Lule 339). No doubt, corporate media will continue to hold sway,

> but their dominance is likely to erode as new technologies enable small-time media producers to create and distribute their own content via the mainstream

> channel of the Internet. There will also be a wide range of producers, including start-up commercial enterprises, independent non-profits, religious groups, hobby enthusiasts, political organizations, ethnic groups, and the informal efforts of individuals or small group of friends. (Corteau 340)

Moreover, scholars are now reconsidering the effect of the distance between the media viewer and the actual event. Witnessing the news from a safe distance on the television or on a computer screen creates allows for viewers to be noncommittal toward the individuals whose lives are effected by historical events. Many scholars have criticized the media for allowing viewers to gaze at a safe distance the tragedies and triumphs of humanity. However, Paul Frosh argues that this distance actually "creates a social space of uncommitted observations and impersonal witnessing in which people are *sufficiently the same*—sufficiently interchangeable and equivalent—for each person to be able to imagine what it might be like to be in another's shoes" (281). And if we can think about what it might be like to be in another person's shoes, we can "care about them because we can car about anyone" (Frosh 282). Frosh's argument may account for the negative reactions many American's had when they "witnessed" the brutal beatings of civil rights workers. However, it is important to note that the dissonance created by troubling events that create a sense of empathy toward an unknown other may not be a product of the anonymity of media, but of the values and stories that the news story violates. In this way, the manner in which the story is presented remains important. So while the corporate media may be less determinate, the frame or form of the story remains important to interpretation.

The Ambivalence of News Coverage of the Black Freedom Struggle

The mass media are not always enemies of social movements. The civil rights movement was one of the first ongoing national stories that the news media followed. Civil rights organizations, such as the SCLC and SNCC found that national coverage of police beating marchers and allowing their attack dogs free reign as well as fire marshals using their hoses to disperse a children's march could be useful to gain public support for their cause. The newspaper photographs and television images of snarling police dogs and powerful fire hoses unleashed on black marchers "seared the conscience of the nation and the world" (Bobbitt 21). This support was important for motivating average Americans to call or write their representative in support of civil rights legislation.

Media coverage was not always beneficial to the movement (or movements in general). The need to create spectacles for media coverage also diverted important grassroots resources towards national image spectacles. For "what is not a crisis is not usually reported, and what is not or cannot be made visual is often not televised. . . . But for the most part [the media] disregard the problems that seethe beneath the surface until they erupt in the hot stream that is a 'love news story" (Fisher and Lowenstein 5). King and his aides realized that if their nonviolent direct action did not elicit violent overreaction from police or sheriff's deputies, the media soon lost interest and public sympathy swung to the governmental authorities (Bobbitt 20). The media are concerned with high ratings, not necessarily with historical significance. The chief concern of television, including news shows, is with holding the viewer's attention, so he or she can be delivered to advertisers at the next commercial break" (Brasell ¶ 23).

The emphasis on the spectacle did not lead to in-depth coverage of African American grievances. The media "devoted too much time and space to 'enumerating the wounded' and too little to describing the background problems of the Negro in America and the aims and goals of the Negro revolution" (Fisher and Lowenstein 5). Thus, sympathy for protesters seemed to be the result of incommensurate responses to their nonviolent protests, not necessarily because of the deplorable conditions they were living under.

Even with the corporate constraints, nightly news coverage can be a reservoir of footage for documentary films. However, not all that is significant is reported. Because documentary film is a highly visual medium, the gaps in reporting may make it difficult for a documentary filmmaker to represent an important event. For example, there was a night march outside of Selma, Alabama that resulted in the death of Jimmy Lee Jackson. There was no news coverage of the event, but it was a motivating factor in the decision to march to the capital. This march resulted in Bloody Sunday. Without the context of Jackson's death, the march to the capital loses some of its significance and meaning. An over reliance on media footage in documentaries skews our public memory by neglecting the stories of the rank-and-file activists who struggled daily against racial apartheid in America. The drawback of television news reporting has a significant impact on the public memory of national events because it "plays a crucial role in creating the foundations of *common*, or near universal public discourse and public memory within a culture" (Morgan 138). In other words, what is absent from television news record becomes the foundation of public forgetting.

ORAL HISTORY AS EVIDENCE

To supplement the images of the movement recorded by the news media, *Eyes on the Prize* uses oral history. Interviews with movement leaders and members add an emotional element absent in the news clips. The oral history interviews conducted and used for *Eyes on the Prize* allow movement participants to talk about their personal experiences. The interviews also provide cathartic release at pivotal points in the documentary as well as "augment the public face of the civil rights struggle with a more intimate, human portrait of those caught up in it" (Griffin 204). Henry Hampton wanted to capture the story of the "courageous, nameless individuals, locked are-in-arm in a battle to uphold the promise of the American constitution" from an African American perspective (Crossley 95). To do so he gathered oral histories "not from the perspective of whites thought to be the enablers of civil rights, but from the point of view of foot soldiers in the trenches. Henry wanted to tell the *black side* of the story" (Crossley 95). These narratives are both powerful and accessible to audiences. In relying on participant narratives, Hampton "empower[s] the people who actually make social history in their lives and struggle to reappropriate it for their own purposes" (Frisch 159). In this way, oral history is an important tool for documentaries because it allows the audience to identify with the people involved as well as add to an incomplete historical and telehistorical record.

Ultimately, all history depends on its social purpose. The hope of oral history is the opportunity to let the average individual shape cultural understanding of a particular time or event. Oral history "functions as a source of historical information and insights, to be used, in traditional ways, in the formulation of historical generalizations and

narrative" and "can be understood as a way of bypassing historical interpretation itself, avoiding all the attendant elitist and contextual dangers. It seems to provide a way to communicate with the past more directly, to be presented with a somehow purer image of direct experience" (Frisch 9). The "use of oral evidence breaks through the barriers between the chroniclers and their audience; between the educational institution and the outside world" (Thompson 9). Oral history can be characterized as vernacular discourse because it "resonates within local communities" (Ono and Sloop 20). Essentially, the value of oral history is its potentially (although not necessarily) egalitarian approach to our understanding of the past and its affect on our collective future.

The process of re-interpreting the past is a complex subject. Oral history re-introduces the complexity of past events by including a multiplicity of voices. Oral history makes the judgment of the past "a fairer trial" because the people who were directly and/or adversely affected can help to provide a "more realistic and fair reconstruction of the past, a challenge to the established account. In so doing, oral history has radical implication for the social message of history as a whole" (Thompson 7). Oral history constructs its ethos by creating a history that is by and for the people it claims to represent. In creating a black oral history of the movement, Hampton has created *Eyes on the Prize* in opposition to popular media. These narratives do not proffer a unified narrative of the civil rights or Black Power movements, as evidenced in the tension between different organizations and approaches to the goals and methods of the movement. They do allow movement members to narrate their perspectives and interpretations of the black freedom struggle.

The goals of oral history are laudable. However, "oral history is not necessarily an instrument for change; it depends upon the spirit in which it is used" (Thompson 3). The benefit of oral history seems so self evident that many professional and lay historians rarely stop to consider what oral histories accomplish, beyond the evident, that make them worth studying (Frisch 8). The possibility of social empowerment due to access to personal stories of the past is easily and romantically exaggerated (Frisch xxi). Moreover, "whether top-down or bottom-up, most of the energy in public history has been directed toward what could be called the 'supply side' dynamics of the presumably unbalanced market for historical intelligence" (Frisch 15).

Experience does not endow a particular story with validity, nor does it mean that narrators have an historical perspective in which to situate their personal experiences. Researchers must be mindful of the "propensity of human memory to retain more vivid memories of dramatic events . . . [and] also possess a tendency to move themselves to the center of a political event or conflict even when other individuals or a collectivity may have been more important in generating the event" (Rogers 569). Individual memory is also influenced by the larger culture. Vernacular memories are not necessarily liberatory (Ono and Sloop 38). An interviewee might frame their personal experiences in the accepted framework of the civil rights movement. It is also important to consider how the interviewee was prompted to respond. For example, if an interviewee was simply asked about the events of the civil rights movement, he or she may talk about King or Malcolm X instead of relaying their personal experiences.

The use of oral history is further complicated when excerpts of interviews are used in documentaries. In most cases, the questions asked of the interviewee are edited

out of the film. The impression left on the viewing audience is that the response is unmotivated or shaped by the interviewer. The negotiation of memory that results in the final document is hidden from the viewer. Without the entire interview and/or transcripts it is difficult to ascertain if an interviewee does not remember, if the question was never asked, or if it was asked and edited out of the film. Moreover, memories also change depending on when and to whom it is narrated.

Even with its drawbacks, oral history is an important resource for scholars who seek to understand the individual and collective motivation of a movement (Rogers 568). These stories are retold, preserved, and presented in new contexts to add, contradict, and complicate the history of the black freedom struggle.

OLD SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: INSTRUMENTAL ACTION, MATERIAL CHANGE

The Black Freedom struggle has been a hybrid of New and Old Social Movement strategies, tactics, and goals. The civil rights and Black Power movements were composed of multiple groups that were, at times, at odds with one another. *Eyes on the Prize* connects the efforts of these groups and constructs a coherent narrative that frames their efforts in a larger black freedom struggle (Griffin 207). Thus, the memory of the black freedom struggle is a memory of a blended movement, one that was guided by old and new social movement perspectives.

To name a social movement an Old Social Movement is not necessarily to designate time, or historical period, but simply to designate it as a movement that "coalesced around shared grievances and perceptions of injustice. Programs for amelioration of these grievances and attribution of cause constituted the ideological base for mobilization. In the movement context, the link between ideology and grievances

was strong" (Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 21). In other words, OSMs attempt to create historical blocs. Historical blocs, as conceived by Antonio Gramsci designate "the dialectical unity of base and superstructure, of theory and practice, of intellectuals and masses" (Forgacs 424). An historical bloc has both economic and cultural solidarity. It promotes analysis of social notions of class embedded in the Marxists tradition: it promotes analysis of social formations that cut across categories of ownership and non-ownership and that are bound by ideological ties (Lears 571). Thus, OSMs seek material/economic change such as pay, benefits, and working conditions in relation to exploitation and oppression via instrumental action, such as strikes, walkouts, and sit-ins.

Movements that sought material change faced many obstacles. The multi-ethnic composition of the United States labor force lead to "a fragmentation of the working class" which was exacerbated by "a system where the competition between ethnic groups created obstacles to class solidarity (Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 26). In addition to the ethnic and racial differences between workers, perhaps the larger American culture, with a longstanding "tradition of individualism and self-help/self-improvement movements" was also detrimental to labor solidarity (Johnston, Laraña, and Gusfield 26-27). Additionally, following World War II, Fredric Jameson argues that a "new kind of society began to emerge" that fostered "new types of consumption; planned obsolescence" the feeling of a "disappearance of history" and the "transformation of reality into images, the fragmentation of time into series of perpetual presents" (19-20). In the wake of these events and the perceived failure of OSM models of social change, new forms of activism emerged.

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: SYMBOLIC ACTION, CULTURAL CHANGE

In contrast to widespread conviction that instrumental social movements characterized by system focus and mass action are untenable in today's capitalism (see Melucci, Greene, e.g.), I believe that New Social Movements represent "a retreat from the kinds of reformist and revolutionary struggle that have driven social change throughout capitalism's history" (Cloud "Suharto," 243). The term New Social Movements "covers a broad range of movements which originated in the 1960s and 1970s, including those against the oppression of women, blacks and lesbians and gays, as well as those organised around ecology, disarmament and a variety of other issues" (S. Smith 3). In contrast to OSMs that form around ideology, NSMs unite around identity. Framed as such, oppression takes specific from and should be handled on a case-by-case basis (S. Smith 3). These movements represent a "shift from economic grounds to cultural grounds . . . , in part because the domination which is challenged controls not only 'means of production' but the production of symbolic goods, that is, of information and images of culture itself' (Deluca 25-26). Thus, the goal of such movements is no longer antagonistic in a global sense. There is "only pressure to join a system of benefits and rules from which one has been excluded" (Melucci 107).

As the real "battleground" for social change, culture shifts from a means to an end (as it was in OSMs) to an end in itself. Instead of mobilizing groups in society to take instrumental action, NSMs use the media to change people's consciousness. With a shift in consciousness comes change in daily activities. Thus, unsuccessful instrumental actions, such as Greenpeace's "Save the Whales" campaign, can turn into a success via media images that turn public opinion against the practice of whaling. Success is no

longer achieving material gains, but in "reducing a complex set of issues to symbols that break people's comfortable equilibrium" and getting to ask "whether there are better ways to do things" (DeLuca 3). These tactics rely on "large scale communications in order to matter" (Gitlin 3) in the minds of people whose consciousness NSMs seek to transform.

Although rhetoric is central to any social movement, the goal of a movement's rhetoric differs significantly between old and new social movements. Nancy Fraser explores of the differences between economic injustice (OSM) and cultural injustice (NSM). Economic injustice is rooted in the political economy of a society while cultural or symbolic injustice is "rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication" (Fraser 14). These analytical categories are not mutually exclusive. In practice, the two are interconnected. There is benefit is differentiating the two when discussing the forms of redress. Economic injustice requires a redistribution of wealth. Cultural injustice requires "some kind of symbolic change. This could involve upwardly revaluing disrespected identities and the cultural products of maligned groups" (Fraser 15). The dilemma for many groups seeking both cultural and economic justice is how to work toward both simultaneously. For example, for feminists to change the distribution of wealth, they must "undermine gender differentiation, while also pursuing cultural-valuational remedies that valorize the specificity of a despised collectivity" (Fraser 23).

THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE: INSTRUMENTAL AND SYMBOLIC CHANGE

The memory presented in the *Eyes on the Prize* is also the memory of social change. The great social upheaval it documents is about how members of a society

worked through formal and informal channels to change a system of government. The black freedom struggle as presented in *Eyes on the Prize* came at an interesting period for social movements. The threat of communism and the rise of mass media influenced the tactics chosen by movement leaders. At the beginning of the 20th century, much of the effort to produce social change was through the courts. Groups like the NAACP focused their attention and resources to change the laws that affected African Americans. A sustained effort was needed to overturn the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* "separate but equal" ruling with the *Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka* decision. Social change via court precedent requires abundant resources. It is a slow, time consuming, and grueling process. But the courts were not the only avenue for social change. Boycotts, like the Montgomery bus boycott, were used to put direct and material pressure on institutions to effect change. These kinds of methods are instrumental in nature and characteristic of Old Social Movement model of change.

According to the accounts of leading activists, members of organizations like SNCC grew tired of waiting around for gradual change and took to more direct methods to effect change. Many acts of nonviolent direct action created media spectacles, which dramatized the evils of segregation and influenced the nation's attitude toward *de jure* segregation. Media spectacles became a new source of political capital and method for change and are more characteristic of New Social Movements.

The kind of social movement may also determine the purpose of remembering. For a new social movement, the study of public memory might focus on how challenges to dominant memory produce shifts in consciousness. However, I argue that these sources for rhetorical invention for the purposes of social change should not be

abandoned for the politics of cultural symbolism. Consciousness is crucially important to social change, my project, however, wants to link shifts in consciousness to shifts in action, resulting in change in legal and economic structures involved in racial oppression. Thus, this work is based in an Old Social Movement framework that calls upon memory to function instrumentally. The struggle over memory is not to produce a "truth" about the past, but to inspire and inform contemporary racial struggles. Dominant memory is a powerful tool of oppression and contesting that power is an important political act. In this way, "struggles over the memory of the civil rights movement are not a diversion from the real political work of fighting for racial equality and equal rights in the United States; they are key sites of that struggle" (Raiford and Romano xxi). However, there are race scholars who argue against the utility of this struggle. In the next section I will present the arguments against civil rights memory, but will maintain my overall argument for the strategic and creative use of the past as an important resource for rhetorical invention.

DEBATE OVER THE F[UTILITY] OF RE-MEMBERING THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE

I argue that public memory yields symbolic agency; however, it also descends and emerges from a "myriad [of] past arrangements" which means that "collective memory places limitations on the invention of new forms of rhetoric" (Stormer 275). In other words, there is a memory of memory. The public remembrance of the black freedom struggle is contentious. There is no consensus on how to tell the story or the meaning of the black freedom struggle, much less an agreement on the effect of evoking these memories. Todd Boyd argues that the emphasis on the memory of the civil rights

movement is a cause for concern. He claims, "Black people have become too complacent, with their heads stuck in the sands of a previous era. Many black people still think we are in the 1960s, stuck on We Shall Overcome. They cannot imagine themselves, or any other Black people for that matter, doing anything but suffering" (Boyd xx). The memories of the civil rights movement have been reduced to "a series of mediated images" that "obscure contemporary manifestations of racism" (Boyd xix). Yet "many African Americans now hold so tight those memories that they have squeezed all the life out of them, and many Whites assume that the end of this era means the end of racism" (Boyd 42-43). These memories have "been enshrined into the public psyche in ways that would be hard to refute" (Boyd 8). In his critique of the past, Boyd specifically references *Eyes on the Prize* and argues that those memories will always be a part of black politics, but does not find contemporary utility in those memories. Instead, Boyd argues for a hip-hop or cultural politics to address the continuing problems of racism in America.

Boyd's concern about the use of the black freedom struggle memory is valid. The memory of Martin Luther King Jr., specifically, has been politically appropriated as "a convenient icon" for "our own distorted political images" (Dyson 3). For example, in 1996, on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, conservative businessman Ward Connerly began a national campaign to end racial and gender based affirmative action. Connerly said, "We do no disrespect to him (King) by acknowledging what he wanted this nation to become . . . and we're going to fight to get the nation back on the journey that Dr. King laid out" (qtd. in Lempinen A17). Taking King's words out of the immediate context of the rest of the "I Have a Dream" speech as well as its historical context, Connerly distorts

King's vision of a color-blind society. Invoking the idea of "color blindness," King referred to the need for white Americans to break with their own racism and for new laws and institutions that would create and protect actual rights for Black Americans. Moreover, if, as Boyd claims, the images of the black freedom struggle constitute African Americans as a group that only remembers itself as the recipients of violence and not political actors, then the memory of the black freedom struggle is indeed a hindrance to contemporary struggles.

Others scholars who study the struggle of African Americans in the United States find the memory of the black freedom struggle to be enabling. Whereas Boyd's concerns center around how the popular memory of the black freedom struggle is used for political purposes, these scholars see potential in the way that recollections of the past *could* be used. Houston A. Baker agrees that for the past forty years, a "rich, white American minority" and "cadres of black neoconservative and centrist footsoldiers" have waged a "war against decency . . . in the name of *race*" (Baker *Critical* 20). Yet, Baker argues for "critical memory", a process of repossessing the memory of the black freedom struggle for the purpose of counteracting conservative revisionism and nostalgic recollections of the movement and its leaders (Baker "Black" 8). In contrast to the ameliorative uses of black freedom struggle memory, critical memory "hurts and outrages" but also "produces critique, strategic collaboration, intervention, and public-sphere institutions such as Ida B. Wells's newspaper for the people, *Free Speech*, and Louisville's Henry Heyburn Building" (*Critical* 19). The work of critical memory, then, is a process of claiming the power of the black freedom struggle memory. An example of critical memory may be Michael Eric Dyson's call for a moratorium on Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a

Dream Speech." To rediscover the complexity of the man and the movement and to consider the theoretical development in the thought and speeches King made toward the end of his career, Dyson argues that we have to put away the naïve hopefulness that has come to represent King's theory on race relations. There are other ways to teach King's magnum opus critically. Dana Cloud offers a critical reading of the speech to her students, focusing on the banking metaphor and the call for the redistribution of wealth. David A. Frank and Mark McPhail argue that speech teachers have done a disservice to the "I Have a Dream Speech" by teaching it as a poetic masterpiece, leaving unquestioned the actual status of King's "dream." They recently argued at the 2007 National Communication Convention in San Antonio that instructors can right their wrongs by teaching the speech as an instrumental failure. King calls for the nation to find the funds to make good the promissory note due all citizens: the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Thus, the ways shared public memories are presented and framed become important symbolic struggles over racial inequality and social change in the United States.

My argument for the importance of recalling memories of the black freedom struggle is not only a question about how political and economic forces shape what is remembered, but more specifically is about how memories of the black freedom struggle can become a rhetorical resource to address contemporary political problems. Memory, especially for social movements, is "never an end in itself but rather a tool to make sense of history, declare lineages, clarify allegiances, and mobilize constituents" (Raiford 233). The legacy of the black freedom discourse is so powerful that other groups, ranging from the Deaf Rights movement to the Christian Right's, have adopted this rhetoric. The

possibilities for using this memory are numerous. The imagery and use of American ideals as well as critiques of those ideals is a wellspring of rhetorical possibility.

AGENCY, PUBLIC MEMORY, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

To argue that representations of the past can intervene politically is to engage the question of agency. The study of social change is about the interrelationship between "subjective agencies and objective structures" (Aune 143). These objective structures are "external to language motivate, shape, and delimit human activity and strategies for social change" and "often require extra-verbal actions to transform (Triece 240; 256). Societies are also rhetorical constructions maintained through patterns of social relationships that are reproduced both consciously and unconsciously on a daily basis. This kind of social knowledge is the result of memory traces, of "of 'how things are to be done' (said, written), on the part of social actors" (Giddens 64). Contested memories shared in public are shaped by both experience of the world and the structures that shape how the experience is remembered. Memory of the black freedom struggle is formed by the values and racial meta-narratives manifest in the United States. Together these two frameworks constitute the dominant political order against which publicly shared memories conform or run counter to.

Americans are unique insofar that they order their political rhetoric and thought in terms of values, not political theory. In general, Americans believe in "liberty, equality, individualism, democracy, and the rule of law under a constitution" (Huntington 14). These concepts constitute American ideographs: "culturally biased abstract words[s] or phrase[s], drawn from ordinary language, which serves as a constitutional value for a historically situated collectivity" (Condit and Lucaites xii). In the United States, these

values are not rank ordered, but are instead bundled together and cross-cutting (Pride 20). Together they constitute a "complex and amorphous amalgam of goals and values" with no existing political theory "for ordering these values in relation to one another and for resolving on a theoretical level the conflicts that inherently exist among them" (Huntington 15-16). In study after study, Americans consistently attest to their adherence to this abstract set of values. This consistency has not resulted in the lack of strife within in the United States. Instead, when there is social upheaval it has been quite tumultuous because most Americans have a stake in the definition and political practice of these values. The ideograph <equality> represents a value that has been struggled over in American public discourse for over 22 years. These struggles have, at times, resulted in legislation that aims to address the attendant problems of inequality: resource distribution and individual and economic opportunity (Condit & Lucaites xv).

Meta-narratives about race also influence the ordering of shared memory because they are "fundamental texts from which individual life stories and collective history emerge" (Pride 5). These types of stories provide "contexts for defining rationality, meaning, value, truth" (Daniel 596). Meta-narratives shape public, political, and personal recollections. In the United States, attributing blame for racial inequality depends on the meta-narrative used. Historically, the following have been the most frequently used justifications for racial inequality:

1. Divine Segregation: Sometimes people say that God established the inequalities between blacks and whites for some divine reason.

2. Pseudoscientific Darwinism: Throughout the slave period in the United States whites thought that blacks were biologically inferior, incapable of critical thinking.
3. Culture of Poverty: Many blacks have self-destructive cultural values and behaviors. To people who take this perspective, it accounts, for example, for bad choices (early pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and criminal acts) by those who should know better and could do better.
4. Individual Failings: The absence of individual effort and responsibility as a subcultural value is central to another variant of the culturalist critique.
5. Oppression by White Americans: This definition of the problem sees blacks as victims of white oppression on a grand scale.
6. Legacy of Slavery: Still another view sees blacks not actively oppressed so much as freighted by the losses suffered during slavery and Jim Crow segregation (Pride 7-9).

These justifications for racial inequality influence how the values that constitute the American symbolic order arrange themselves on issues of race. Arguments about the failure of the United States to achieve its professed value of equality for African Americans must also contend with meta-narratives that account for these inequalities. A brief example should demonstrate how these two orders have influenced the term <equality> in light of race.

RACE, EQUALITY, AND THE AMERICAN SYMBOLIC ORDER

The United States prides itself as an egalitarian nation where anyone, regardless of background, can succeed. One of the most important stories of the twentieth century

was the tale of equality (Condit and Luciates 1). African Americans were a large part of that story and in the 1960s "began to argue for a substantive version of Equality that focused on culture and economics and that culminated in Equal Power" (Condit and Lucaites 214). It seemed, for a while, that the movement had won cultural adherence. When President Johnson addressed the issue of civil rights in 1965 he took up the civil rights definition of equality in a speech made at Howard University. There he proclaimed that equality not just "a right and a theory" but it also needed to be "a fact and result." This interpretation of equality "laid the groundwork for the idea of affirmative action by suggesting that equal opportunity required special efforts to overcome the effects of unequal history" (Zarefsky 231). However, the broad based support needed to fully realize the goals of affirmative action dwindled.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, President George H. W. Bush moved the conversation about affirmative action from addressing historical evils to equating affirmative action to a quota system. He vetoed bills that supported affirmative action and argued "his understanding, rather than that of the supporters of the vetoed bill, as consistent with the original and true understanding of civil rights in America" (Zarefsky 250). By the 1990s, in a number of reverse discrimination lawsuits, the Supreme Court began to explicitly worry that "affirmative actions plans impose unacceptable burdens on 'innocent' third parties (read white)" (Brown, Carnoy, Currie, Duster, Oppenheimer, Shultz, Wellman 37). Affirmative action may not be the linchpin of racial equality, but what is important here is to notice how the past (or the denial of it) intermingles with American symbolic order on issues of race to make public policy. So although most Americans believe in the value of equality, the practice is dependent on the interpretation

of equality within the symbolic order at any given time. Moreover, this example demonstrates the power of elites to use their resources and position to realign interpretation of the past to fit their own political agenda.

Public memory, then, functions ideologically as it uses parts of the past to serve a particular purpose. Moreover, when a particular purpose concerns issues of race relations in the United States, "the historical rhetoric continues to intrude into the contemporary campaign" (Bormann 241). As a rhetorical critic interested in how the past is used to justify or critique contemporary social relations, the question becomes how to use the past productively.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that representations of the past are important rhetorical resources for political contestation and have reviewed literature on collective memory, the rhetoric of documentary film including telehistory and oral history, and finally located myself within the contemporary debate over the use of the memory of the black freedom struggle. Representations of the past

> can be mobilized to serve partisan purposes. . . commercialized for the sake of tourism; . . . shape a nation's sense of identity, build hegemony, or serve to shore up the political interests of the state; and . . . influence the ways in which people understand their world. (Raiford & Roman xxi)

However, these representations function within a hegemonic order that influence both the content and reception of particular interpretations of the past. We receive much of this memory in mass mediated form, which "invariably reflects fundamental economic,

organizational, and ideological forces at work within a capitalist economy" (Morgan 138).

In the following chapter, I will use scholarly, popular, and educational texts to substantiate what constitutes public memory and argue that these memories become the ideological standard against which all other narratives about the civil rights and Black Power may be compared. I will also discuss the narrative trajectory of *Eyes on the Prize* and argue that the arc of the narrative is politically conservative—but not without critical and polyvocal moments. Chapters three through six then explore the negotiation of the segregation-integration and violence-nonviolence tensions in specific episodes. While popular texts of memory like *Eyes on the Prize* are produced within a system that would constrain rhetorical potential, they also present the possibility of rhetorical invention and political action. *Eyes on the Prize* contains important lessons about the power of citizens to create social change. In an historical moment where good citizenship is defined in terms of buying power, *Eyes on the Prize* has the potential to offer Americans alternative "equipment for living" (Burke *Philosophy* 293-304).

[1] In addition to the film, Saving Private Ryan, Biesecker's piece also analyzes Tom Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation* as well as the women's World War II memorial. She argues that there is a consistent pattern among the memory artifacts reconsolidate and naturalize conservative logics.

Chapter Two:

Public Memory of the Black Freedom Struggle and *Eyes on the Prize*

Heritage tours, museums, history classes, memorials, television, film, and the Internet are some of the ways public memories are created and come to dominate how a society understands the past. It is in culture that memories "vie for a place in history" (Sturken 1). Those memories that are repeated more often in classrooms, ceremonies, and in popular culture become common-sense. People do not work to learn these memories; they are "simply *there*. The common-sense of people becomes common-sense 'naturally' as they go about their daily lives" (Apple 15).

As the United States "routinely looks to the 1960s as a turning point in the nation's own historical narrative, the civil rights movement will always be an inherent part of that story" (Boyd 7). On Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday and in the month of February, the images and stories of the black freedom struggle are re-presented to American audiences. The dominant version of the black freedom struggle "chronicles a short civil rights movement that begins with the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, proceeds through public protests, and culminates with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Then comes the decline" (J. Hall 1234). This version of the black freedom struggle is conveniently packaged, decidedly uncontroversial, and disconnected from the present.

The rest of this dissertation will consider how *Eyes on the Prize* presents memories that are counter to and more complex than the public memory of the black freedom struggle. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate what constitutes the public memory of the black freedom struggle as a basis for comparison for the rest of the

dissertation. But more importantly, this chapter describes the "common-sense" of the black freedom struggle that a viewer may have when she or he watches *Eyes on the Prize*. I will use the History Channel's Black History Month webpage, the film *Forrest Gump*, and the proposed memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the national mall to explain the contours and consistencies of the public memory of the black freedom struggle. With those texts as a basis for comparison, I will analyze the narrative arc of *Eyes on the Prize* and argue that the narrative's rhetorical potential for resistance may differ between its release in the late 1980s and the mid- to late 2000s.

PUBLIC MEMORY OF THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE

The United States narrative of progress is the major structuring force in the public memory of the black freedom struggle. The public memory of the black freedom struggle touts the "progressivism of the American master narrative, with a message that celebrates the moral righteousness of nonviolent protest, the potential of interracial unity, and the success of qualified integration" (Eskew 29). Fashioned in this way, the public memory of the black freedom struggle is a story of "regional struggle in the South in ways that legitimize rather than challenge national traditions and institutions," that belies "persistent national issues like racial inequality" and "reduces the public to spectators identifying with or cheering for one or another public representation of conflicting sides" (Morgan 140). The public memories of the black freedom struggle offer a "Manichean tale" in which "good" white people and "long-suffering pure-of-heart African Americans," as well as "the Kennedy administration and the FBI—vanquished the evil forces of fear, ignorance, and intransigence embodied by Klansmen, Bull Connor, and lone white gunmen" (Raiford 236). In separating the good white people from the bad

white people, this narrative ignores the "larger culture of racism at the time" (Romano 99) and thereby allows whites today to identify with the "good" whites, which absolves them from the guilt of past and present racism. Also "absent is a sustained treatment of the more mundane and insidious forms of racism that valorize whiteness over other social identities and reinforce it as a way of knowing and negotiating difference" (Dwyer 17). The dichotomies at work in the public memory of the black freedom struggle create a split between the civil rights and Black Power movements. This distinction labels Black Power as "the 'evil twin' that wrecked civil rights" (Peniel 2).

The characters in this drama are most often male; the shining star among them is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. According to Fred Powledge, "In the mind of untold numbers of Americans. . . the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *was* the civil rights movement. Thought it up, led it, produced its victories, became its sole martyr. Schoolchildren—including Black schoolchildren—are taught this" (xiv). King's most famous speech, and the number one rated and requested speech on americanrhetoric.com is the "I Have a Dream" speech that he delivered at the march on Washington. As a result of the success of the speech, its message has become "axiomatic or creedal, . . . Its images . . . appealed to, its logic is . . . authorizing, and its narrative is viewed as the only proper path for race relations in America. In short, it has become a powerful piece of American mythology in its own right" (Bobbitt 3-4). Subsequent generations of Americans believe the speech to be the "authenticating" discourse of the civil rights movement because its "equalitarian" ideology, "assimilationsist" objectives, and "emphasis on individual rights" is "consistent with traditional American values" (Bobbitt 3).

This is not the only story told about the black freedom struggle, but it is the most common. Remembering the black freedom struggle in this way obscures the importance of the hundreds of rank-and-file activists who suffered, struggled, and died in the name of freedom. Moreover, by "confining the civil rights struggle to the South, to bowdlerized heroes, to a single halcyon decade, and to limited, non-economic objectives, the master narratives simultaneously elevates and diminishes the movements" (J. Hall 1234). These erasures equip citizens with poor resources for thinking about contemporary racial issues. However, many Americans continue to embrace simplistic lessons and one-dimensional characters as the common sense of the black freedom struggle. The contradictions between American promise and practice recede into the background of the public memory of the black freedom struggle. And where amnesia fails our national memory, nostalgia quickly follows.

The following texts are touchstone samples of information about the civil rights movement available to U.S. citizens. None renders a full account of the black freedom struggle. They are fragments that contribute to a general narrative that hovers around conversations about race, citizenship, and social change. Indeed, the postmodern condition requires us to piece together "fragments from the multiplicity of discourses, making sense of them, making arguments with them, and making judgments through them" (Corbin vii). By considering a website, a film, and a proposed memorial, the dominant narrative of the black freedom struggle becomes clear. Moreover, the public memory about the black freedom struggle forwarded in these texts is what I will be referring to as the public or dominant memory of the black freedom struggle in the rest of this dissertation. Thus, when I am arguing that the memories in *Eyes on the Prize* are

more complex than or counter to public or dominant memory of the black freedom struggle, it is the narrative constructed in fragments in a variety of contexts to which I am referring.

THE PAST COMES ALIVE? THE HISTORY CHANNEL ON THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE

The History Channel clearly articulates its purpose with its mottoes "all of history, all in one place," "where the past comes alive," and most recently, "the official network of every millennium." Programming includes various types of documentaries, but its presentation is "not the specialized one of the academy of social science, but instead a form of popular history, similar to the standard presentation of nineteenth-century school books" (Taves 262). Although The History Channel claims to present all there is to know about history, it does a terrible job with black history. The History Channel featured only two programs about African Americans during Black History Month. In 2007, from 9pm to 10pm on the 1st of February The History Channel featured, "George Washington Carver and His Scientific Contributions" and a program about the civil war, "USS Constellation: Battling for Freedom" on February 10th from 8pm to 9pm. On January 15th, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, there were no programs that addressed the man or the movement for which he died.

Although The History Channel offers little black history by way of programming, its accompanying website includes a section devoted to Black History Month. The George Lucas educational foundation, Edutopia, includes the website as an online resource for teachers.[ii] The web page offers a number of features including: "The history of the civil rights struggle," "Did you know," "African American Icons," "Video Clips,"

"Great Speeches," "Maps," "Related Exhibits," "Resources," "More Holidays," and "Shop Black History Month DVDs." I will examine the "History of the Civil Rights Struggle" and the "Video Clips" which include interviews with Jesse Jackson, Maya Angelou, and Dick Gregory because each offers a story or stories about the black freedom struggle.

Video Clips of the Black Freedom Struggle

Clicking on "Video Clips" opens up a 54 second video that begins with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I Have a Dream" speech accompanied by patriotic music. King's speech becomes the voiceover for the images. As the video clip features familiar black-and white-images of peaceful protesters marching with signs King says,

> I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal. . . This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality.

After the excerpt from King's speech, the narrator concludes, "Dr. King's speech highlighted the great civil rights march on Washington D.C. But only after the assassination of John Kennedy could Lyndon Johnson push through Congress civil rights legislation that made discrimination against blacks in public areas a federal crime." As the narrator makes his concluding remarks about civil rights legislation, the video clip moves from black-and-white images of a white woman and a black man entering a bus, to color images of a graduation ceremony in which the graduates are all black.

For further explanation the website includes a caption for the video. The first one explains that on

August 28, 1963 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., the African American civil rights movement reaches its high-water mark when Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his famous "I Have a Dream" speech to more than 200,000 people attending the march on Washington. The demonstrators—black and white, poor and rich—came together in the nation's capital to demand voting rights and equal opportunity for African Americans and to appeal for an end to racial segregation and discrimination.

The second video clip is about Rosa Parks. The caption below her video reads: In Montgomery, Alabama, Rosa Parks is jailed for refusing to give up her seat on a public bus to a white man, a violation of the city's segregation laws. The successful Montgomery Bus Boycott, organized by a young Baptist minister named Martin Luther King, Jr., followed Park's historic act of civil disobedience.

The video opens with images of whites in the front of a bus and blacks in the back. The narrator begins: "December 1st 1955, Rosa parks refuses to take a back seat on a Montgomery bus." The next image is of a rally where a man at a pulpit says to an enthused crowd, "We want freedom now!" The narrator then explains: "A massive march on Washington by leaders like Rosa Parks set the stage for Lyndon B. Johnson's signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. But subsequent urban riots threatened the progress of nonviolence." The corresponding image is mismatched with its verbal counterpart. The riotous action featured in the video clip is of young black men blasted by water hoses. A speech by President Johnson follows, but the statement is in reference to urban riots. Johnson states, "Looting, murder and arson have nothing to do with civil rights." The video clip ends with a montage of images of integration. The narrator

concludes that "racial tensions and social injustices have not disappeared but most schools, public facilities, and higher income neighborhoods have achieved a level of integration unthinkable when Rosa Parks had to endure a jail term for bravely asserting her right to a seat in the front of the bus."

The last segment is a newsreel archive of President Harry Truman delivering a speech in 1952. A narrator introduces the clip: In a Lincoln's Day address to a gathering of 10,000 before the memorial of the Great Emancipator in Washington, President Truman strongly advocates freedom and equality for all United States citizens." Truman's speech follows:

> Recent events in the Untied States and abroad have made us realize that it is more important today than ever before to ensure that all Americans enjoy these rights. When I say all Americans, I mean all Americans. Our immediate task is to remove the last remnants of the barriers which stand between millions of our citizens and their birth right. There is no justifiable reason for discrimination because of ancestry, or religion, or race, or color.

The caption simply states that the video clip is "President Harry S. Truman speaking about civil rights for all Americans."

The rest of the footage in that section is about the struggle in South Africa or African American sports figures, like Muhammad Ali and Jessie Owens. The striking fact of these three clips is that in just under three and a half minutes combined, these three clips retell the basic story of the civil rights movement: Blacks were unsatisfied with second-class citizenship; and through nonviolent direct action and the help of the

federal government, they have been able to significantly improve the status of blacks in the United States.

In addition to the video segments about civil rights are interviews with Jesse Jackson, Maya Angelou, and Dick Gregory. The content of the interviews varies, but each talk briefly about Martin Luther King, Jr. and their perceptions of civil rights. And each in their own way supports the public memory of the black freedom struggle. Dick Gregory recalls King's message of love and says, "When you really feel and understand what that's about, there wouldn't be no other way. And that's where he was, he was so far ahead." Jesse Jackson says that King:

> changed the social order in this country. He changed the way people saw themselves the world over. People in South Africa singing, "We Shall Overcome," in Lithuania, the Soviet Union singing, "We Shall Overcome." . . . No single man in the 20th century quite effected the world in a fashion as great as and substantial as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Finally, Maya Angelou confesses that she is "unable to celebrate [her] birthday" because King was assassinated on that day. These narratives substantiate the public memory surrounding the importance and impact of Dr. King. The statements about King are not false, but they neglect the complicated history of struggle against white supremacy and the thousands of individuals who also marched and died for the sake of freedom. The inclusion of these interviews and their focus contributes to the hero worship that surrounds the public memory of King. Moreover, these videos and interviews reinforce a short memory of the black freedom struggle that began with Rosa Parks' resistance to segregation and ended with King's death. It portrays the federal government as a politicl

body actively seeking to change the nation's inequality rather than a hesitant enforcer of Supreme Court rulings. And finally, these memories of the black freedom struggle present the past as disconnected from the present and that the struggle for racial equality ended with King's death

Tracing the Movement: The Chain of Events on The History Channel Website

The timeline offered on the website contributes to the public memory of the black freedom struggle by presenting the movement in broad, causal, and simplistic terms. The narrative begins with the arrival of slaves with Spanish explorers, but I will begin with the section labeled, "Struggle for Freedom: Increased Understanding Among Whites" and conclude with "Cultural Dichotomy." The article is a reproduction of Funk & Wagnall's article in New Encyclopedia. The narrative offered is fairly typical. Wanting the same freedoms as their fellow Americans and their migration to the North, black Americans began to change the political system. Their efforts were aided by the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision and they worked to dismantle legal segregation in the South and gain voting rights. There is little mention of the resistance to these efforts. The synopsis does say that, "southern white officials sought to obstruct implementation of the Brown decision;" that in 1957, "black children defied white mobs in Little Rock, Ark., until Eisenhower sent troops to protect their right to attend an all-white high school;" and that federal troops were needed throughout the 1960s in certain areas to secure blacks the right to attend classes on college campuses. However, the summary also suggests that the resistance may have been the result of blacks pushing too fast because they were "Unwilling to wait for firm federal action" ("Struggle" ¶ 6). There are no other instances where the document includes white resistance to civil rights challenges.

The "best-known black leader" during this time was "Martin Luther King, Jr." whose "commitment to nonviolence garnered favorable press for his protests" ("Struggle" ¶ 7-8). However, there were a number of organizations that also were a part of the black freedom struggle. The summary mentions the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). They used freedom rides, sit-ins, and peaceful marches to "force federal intervention in the South" ("Struggle" ¶ 9). These methods brought about slow, but important changes to the South.

The activism in the South led to "militancy" among African Americans all over the United States. The goals and tactics of the movement were shifting, so much so that in 1966 the SNCC announced that their goal was for "black power" which was only possible through developing positive images of blacks. These "sentiments coincided with a trend toward black militancy . . . spearheaded by Black Muslims. . . . [T]he best-known advocate of black nationalism, Malcolm X, had attracted only modest support at the time of his assassination in 1965" ("Struggle" ¶ 11). However, his ideas succeeded him and his "calls for armed self-defense reflected widespread anger among urban blacks that burst forth in extensive racial violence in Los Angeles in August 1965" ("Struggle" ¶ 11).

The new militancy among blacks in the United States also led to other militant "outspoken radicalism" which resulted in "considerable federal repression, and by the late 1960s most of the black militant groups had been weakened by police raids as well as internal dissension" ("Struggle" ¶ 11). King was also a target of federal surveillance "as

he responded to the new mood of militancy with forceful attacks on U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and with calls for economic reforms." ("Struggle" ¶ 11).

The decline of militant and radical groups gave "more moderate black leaders a chance to reassert themselves" and their method of change that "did not threaten the American social order" ("Late" ¶ 1). For example, "Thurgood Marshall, the first black appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, symbolized the possibilities for working within the political system ("Late" ¶ 1). In 1972, 8,000 delegates attended The National Black Political Convention in Gary, IN that "marked an effort to broaden black participation in discussions of political alternatives" ("Late" ¶ 2).

Blacks also asserted themselves culturally. The pursuit of a positive black identity was especially evident in colleges that introduced black studies curriculum and in sports. In the 1960s "black athletes brought into college and professional sports a distinctive, individualistic, and spontaneous style of play, often over the objections of white coaches and sportswriters" ("Struggle" 12). One such athlete was heavyweight boxer Muhammad Ali, whose "refusal to be inducted into the army temporarily cost him his world championship but also made him a hero to many blacks ("Struggle" ¶ 12).

The synopsis of the black freedom struggle concludes the section by reminding the reader that, "despite setbacks, the black activism of the 1960s produced some lasting political gains." It then details the number of blacks elected to office and discusses some of the current issues in employment and income. The document concludes that the "common historical experiences and cultural values that made possible previous black movements for racial advancement remain a source of creative energy and cultural innovation. Many blacks have become enmeshed in middle-class society, with its

pervasive institutions that supplant or absorb the distinctive aspects of African-American culture. Nevertheless, poverty and alienation continue to shield segments of the black populace from complete cultural absorption" ("Late" ¶ 9).

For the most part, this summary mimics the standard universalizing public memory of the black freedom struggle. It argues that African Americans who used nonviolent methods were eventually successful in securing their equality and freedom. There were some militants along the way that the government suppressed, but their militancy gave way to more level headed individuals, including some who have been successful from within the system. The discussion of the black freedom struggle differs from the dominant memory of the black freedom struggle only in its conclusion. Instead of suggesting that remaining racism will eventually disappear under the current political and social system, the summary leaves open the question of the future of African Americans and the measure of their equality in the United States. The analysis is incomplete in that it does not account for the material factors that contribute to racism. Black joblessness and poverty are essential to understanding how and why racism persists.

INNOCENT WHITES: FORREST GUMP AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR RACISM

On July 6, 1994 Paramount Pictures released *Forrest Gump*. Ranked 22nd on the All Time Most Popular Film Charts, nominated for 13 awards of which it won six including: Best Picture, Director, and Actor, the film traces the life of Forrest Gump, a Southerner of low I.Q. who always sees the world through rose-colored glasses.[iii] Accidentally, Forrest becomes involved with most critical events in the United States between 1950 and 1980 including: civil rights, the Vietnam War, Watergate, Anti-

Vietnam protests, and the computer revolution. Forrest also meets Elvis Presley, John Lennon, and three American presidents.

The film's creators describe it as "the romantic, rollicking tale of an innocent at large in an America that is losing its innocence" (Glass 24). To create this memory, the film uses familiar images of America's recent past which are digitally altered to include Forrest Gump. This is not simply an aesthetic move to visually incorporate the narrative's hero; it becomes a "site at which a new, shared experience of modern history is written" (Wang 96). Thus, through Forrest's adventures, the audience is encouraged to interpret the recent past from the perspective of the film's director and producer.

Forrest lives through a turbulent era of race relations in the United States. However, race is not an issue for Forrest. On his way to boot camp, he sees Bubba, a black man looking for a place to sit. Forrest immediately scoots over to offer Bubba space. The two become best friends and after Bubba's death, Forrest carries out Bubba's dream to own a shrimping boat and saves Bubba's family from poverty by giving them what would have been Bubba's half of the Bubba-Gump fortune. Perhaps the implication is that Forrest, in his innocence, lives a color-blind existence. Given that Forrest is from and lives in the South, it would be difficult to believe that Forrest really did not recognize race, but the perspective of the film suggests that is the case.

All the civil rights protests and social upheaval in the 1960s notwithstanding, the film includes only two scenes about the black freedom struggle. These scenes are telling, however. The first scene is of Alabama Governor George Wallace attempting to maintain segregation at the University of Alabama. Forrest, a student at the university, seems completely unaware of the event taking place at his school. He has to ask an on-

looker what is happening, to which the young man replies, "Coons are trying to get into the school." Still confused, Forrest says that his mother simply uses a broom to keep raccoons off of their porch. As he says this, a black woman walks by and drops a book. Forrest picks up the book and hands it to the woman as she continues her march toward the front steps of the school.

The second scene takes place after an anti-Vietnam demonstration in Washington D.C. at a Black Panther "party." Forrest, decked out in his Army dress blues, decorated with a medal of honor attends the "party" with his life-long friend, Jenny. While at the Panther headquarters, Jenny's boyfriend, a member of the Students for a Democratic Society, becomes angry and hits Jenny. Forrest punches Jenny's boyfriend, causing a scene. Forrest and Jenny leave with Forrest telling the angered Panthers, I'm sorry I had to fight in the middle of your Black Panther party."

These two scenes are consistent with mainstream U.S. public memory of the black freedom struggle. Forrest's unwitting helping hand in the process of integration legitimizes the goals and tactics of the earlier civil rights movement, while it negatively portrays the Black Panthers who do nothing after Jenny's boyfriend strikes her and then usher Forrest and Jenny out after the scuffle. The oversimplification of both events coupled with Forrest's "color-blind" innocence misrepresents the movement and its successes and struggles. It also suggests that the people who still have a problem with race exist at the margins with George Wallace or the Black Panthers (Wang 98). Thus, the average, innocent white American is not responsible for problems of race today.

BUILDING A COLORBLIND DREAM: THE PROPOSED MEMORIAL TO DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ON THE NATIONAL MALL

Approved by Congress in 1996, the proposed memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. broke ground in November of 2006, and will be dedicated in 2008, the memorial is

> conceived as an engaging landscape experience to convey three fundamental and recurring themes throughout Dr. King's life – democracy, justice, and hope. Natural elements such as the crescent-shaped-stone wall inscribed with excerpts of his sermons, and public addresses will serve as the living testaments of his vision of America. The centerpiece of the Memorial, the "Stone of Hope," will feature a 30-foot likeness of Dr. King. (buildthedream.org)

The vision for the project draws from "the deep well of America's potential for freedom, opportunity, and justice . . . [and] challenges each of us to recognize that America's true strength lies in its diversity of talents" (buildthedream.org). The sponsoring organization, King's college fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha, hope the memorial will honor the message of King, which affirmed the "commanding tenets of the *American Dream — Freedom, Democracy and Opportunity for All*" (buildthedream.org). To be located in the Tidal Basin of the National Mall, the memorial will situate the popular memory of King and the civil rights movement in the company of Lincoln and Jefferson.

The national memorial to Dr. King will be unlike any other memorial to King or the civil rights movement because of its official approval and placement. He will be the first non-president and first African American to be memorialized on the National Mall.

The values the memorial espouses will become an important component in the ongoing national conversation about race. According to Buildthedream.org, the memorial will reflect the recurring themes in King's life: "democracy, justice, and hope." The vision for the memorial was motivated by King's belief in "America's potential for freedom, opportunity, and justice" that was anchored in his "hope and possibility for a future." This message will be reinforced by its surroundings. Therefore, the memorial should be read in relation to the other monuments and memorials that compose the National Mall because they "are as much a part of the 'text'" as the memorial itself (Blair, Jeppson, and Pucci 270). The physical relation to the Lincoln, Washington, and Jefferson memorials are powerful indicators of how the King memorial should be read.

People associated with King and the civil rights movement have also commented on the power of placing the King memorial within the space of Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson. Yolanda King, Martin Luther King's daughter, spoke to the significance of the space her father's memorial would occupy. She commented:

> I often say that George Washington birthed the country and certainly Jefferson was a part of that birthing. And then Lincoln was the one that allowed the country to move to the next level in terms of the unifying. And my father was the force that served to move us closer to actually being true to what was originally conceived on paper. So it is extremely significant. (qtd. in Molotsky A22)

The irony of the memorial's association with Jefferson, a slaveholder, was not lost on Representative John Lewis D-Georgia, who was also a civil rights activist. But he concluded that the site is "so fitting a tribute to Dr. King, his message and his legacy," and reminds us that King had said, "there would be a day when the sons and daughters of

slaves and slaveholders would join hands together" (qtd. Molotsky A22). The memorial's website encourages this kind of reading, stating that the tidal basin location "places this memorial directly in line with larger democratic ideals that form the context for King's words and deeds" (buildthedream.org).

The composition of the memorial also confirms public memory of the black freedom struggle. The composition of the King memorial encourages visitors to move past despair and dwell on hope, justice, and democracy. The memorial's design seems to be inspired by King's quote, "With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope;" a quote that appears on numerous web-page links. The online virtual tour of the memorial shows how the memorial is to be used. The virtual tour walks through the "Mountain of Despair," passing by the unfulfilled American promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The tour then proceeds toward King's vision of hope and his belief in the American system composed through stone, water, and trees. In this way, the memorial erases both white and black agency. There is no sense of the on-the-ground struggle that took place during the civil rights movement. Instead, the memorial appeals to disembodied democratic ideals and instills a sense of hope that the forces of history are simply leading the nation closer to the realization of its founding values.

THE BLACK FREEDOM STRUGGLE: THE SAME OLD STORY

The public memories of the black freedom struggle are reinforced in history classes at school. The appropriateness of nonviolence is not just taught through negation on the news. It is part of our political lexicon and educational system. In a speech on the anniversary of the march on Washington, President Clinton reminded Americans,

"'whenever possible peace and nonviolence is always the right thing to do" (qtd in Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles 424). The same message is given to young schoolchildren who are encouraged to forget the violence involved in the civil rights movement and remember the value of nonviolence.

In an ethnographic analysis of two second-grade classrooms in the Rochester, New York area, David S. Wills found that the teachers deflected or redirected children from discussing violence and the civil rights movement. To celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday, the teachers had a two-week unit that included readings, worksheets, and the creation of a "Peace Puzzle" to hang on the bulletin board. The teachers use the holiday "as an occasion to remember King's experiences of discrimination and his advocacy of non-violent protest to end segregation" (Wills 115). The formation of memory about the past at such a young age is important. As Zerubavel notes,

> Children's early socialization in collective memory precedes their introduction to the formal study of history and can exceed its influence. . . . These commemorations contribute to the early formation of sentiments and ideas about the past that might even persist even in the face of later exposure to history. (6)

Thus, teachers have tremendous influence as they instruct children about their shared past.

The classroom is not the only place children learn about the past. However, formal education still influences how to use outside information as is demonstrated during class discussion when one student comments that during the civil rights movement some people died. The teacher affirms the comment and allows the student to continue, but ultimately, the teacher uses the moment to talk about King's belief in nonviolence

and its origins in Mahatma Gandhi's struggle against the British. While the teacher did not stop the student from talking about violence, she chose to redirect the conversation back to King and nonviolence. When the teachers were asked about how they handled student questions about violence one teacher feared that following those lines of thought would "take things too far, to 'too intense a spot' that could make her students fearful," while the other teacher was concerned with keeping an "upbeat" attitude and "to focus on how things are getting better, and how people can make the world a better place" (Wills "Some" 127). The instruction in these classrooms encourages students to remember King and nonviolence in a particular way, one that occludes the violence of whites. They do this not by telling them what to think, but by guiding what they should be thinking about.

Neglecting the role of violence and economics in the civil rights movements has important consequences. This kind of history lesson "provided students with a poor resource for thinking historically about contemporary race relations" (Wills "Some" 128). When asked why they studied both King and the Underground Railroad one student responded, "Because they're both about black people." John Wills argues that these methods obscure the agency of white Southerners and the violence enacted on civil rights activists (Wills "Missing" 60). However, given the federal neglect that allowed the violence or white Bostonians resisting school integration, the claim could reasonably be made that these methods obscure white American's agency in the violence against civil rights workers in general. These are not simply silences in the classroom, but are indicative of larger cultural silences surrounding violence during the black freedom struggle. Although the children's knowledge of violence points to the fact that culture is not monolithic and that the memory of the black freedom struggle is contested, it is also

true that those who would pacify King and neglect the role of violence in the black freedom struggle often have more access and power to shape popular memory.

Eyes on the Prize documents the events and activists who created a social crisis by marching, boycotting, and voting to achieve social change. Given its extensive coverage and social import, it is surprising that *Eyes on the Prize* has warranted so little scholarly attention. Most journal articles about the documentary discuss the pedagogical utility of *Eyes on the Prize*. No matter how extensive the documentary is, it is necessary to understand how its construction of the past may effect viewers. Thus, I offer a review of the documentary and then argue for the importance of considering the documentary in different historical moments to assess how it both enables and constrains audiences' potential use the past as a rhetorical resource for contemporary social change.

THE LONG MEMORY OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ON FILM: *EYES ON THE PRIZE*

Eyes on the Prize I: America's Civil Rights Years (1954-1965) was released in 1987 on the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS). There were six segments: Awakenings (1954-1956); Fighting Back (1957-1962); Ain't Scared of Your Jails (1960-1961); No Easy Walk (1961-1963); Mississippi: Is this America? (1962-1964); and Bridge to Freedom (1965).

The series begins with the outrage from the Emmett Till murder and ends with the passage of the Voting Rights Act. This period of the movement seemed morally "clear-cut" from the vantage point of the documentary, telling the story 20 years later. The "laws that kept the races separate were evil; tearing them down was good" (Kantrowitz ¶ 2). Thus, the documentary ends with a hard-fought, but clear-cut victory for social justice.

EYES ON THE PRIZE: AMERICA'S CIVIL RIGHTS YEARS

Awakenings (1954-1956)

The first documentary in the series establishes the deplorable conditions African Americans, particularly in the South, suffered because of racism. The example of Emmett Till's lynching demonstrates the terrorism used to enforce Jim Crow Laws. Emmett Till was only 14 years old when he visited his great-uncle, Mose Wright, in Money, Mississippi. On a dare from his friends, Emmett went into a store where there was a white woman. As he walked away he said, "bye baby." That night two men came to Mose Wright's door and demanded the child. They took Emmett, shot him in the head, mutilated his body, and threw him in a river. The two men were tried, but the jury found them not guilty. In that trial, Mose Wright testified for the prosecution. His act of courage was unsuccessful, but there were others in Montgomery who would stand up as a community and force change.

The Montgomery bus boycott began with Rosa Parks' arrest and ended a year later with a Supreme Court decision that ruled bus segregation to be unconstitutional. The victory was both material and moral and demonstrated the power of African Americans united.

Fighting Back (1957-1962)

The second documentary deals with white resistance to the integration of grade schools. One of the first major victories of the black freedoms struggle was the Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board of Education, Topeka* decision to desegregate grade schools. This decision took the battle of civil rights to the classrooms. White Southerners put up significant resistance in Alabama and successfully kept Authrine Lucy from attending the

University of Alabama. The next outburst came in Little Rock, Arkansas at Central High School, where nine black children were chosen for their excellent scholastic record to attend Central High. The governor of Arkansas, Orval Faubus, had been a moderate, but took up the cause of segregation to win his third election. He ordered the Arkansas National Guard to admit only white students. A mob of white men and women also gathered outside to resist integration. Eventually, Eisenhower had to send in troops to restore order and to protect the high school students on a daily basis. It was a difficult year, but at the end of it Ernest Green became Central High's first black graduate. The next year Faubus closed down the schools to halt integration. A similar instance took place in Mississippi. James Meredith attempted to enroll in the University of Mississippi. Again, federal troops had to be summoned to Mississippi to control rioting segregationists, but not before 35 United States Marshals had been shot and two reporters killed. Eventually, Meredith was allowed to register and the Constitution was upheld against mob rule.

Ain't Scared of Your Jails (1960-1961)

The third documentary begins a new phase in the civil rights movement. John Lewis and three of his friends devised a plan to integrate the lunch counters. They would sit down and asked to be served. At first, local authorities were unsure of how to handle the problem. Soon local men took matters into their own hands, pulling the protesters from the counters and beating them. The protesters were then arrested for disturbing the peace. Within two months the idea of sit-ins spread across the South and more than 2,000 people had been arrested. In addition to the arrests, whites also used terrorism to dissuade and punish protesters. In Nashville, the attorney representing the

protesters, Z Alexander had his home bombed. The act was so outrageous the black community marched militantly down the street, demonstrating their courage and unity to all onlookers. The students who led the sit-ins would eventually form SNCC (the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee). SNCC was based on a new optimism that youth could be a real force for change. Although separate from his organization, King lent his support to the sit-ins and was arrested. Bobby Kennedy called in support of King and the next Sunday, black preachers supported John F. Kennedy in the presidential election. Kennedy won.

Another student run group, the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) wanted to test the interstate transportation laws that prohibited segregated seating and traveled down to the South on buses. On the bordering states the interracial teams were met with little or no resistance. But as they traveled down into the heart of Dixie the riders took beatings from angry mobs outside. Jim Zwerg, a white man, took the brunt of one of the beatings. He was hospitalized. The state government refused to act and the federal government was too timid. The Freedom Riders were determined to go on. After seeing the uproar in Mississippi, the federal government made a deal with Alabama. The riders were not to be touched, but they were unloaded and arrested. In the jails they sang and annoyed the guards, who eventually used black convicts to "discipline" the riders.

No Easy Walk (1962-1966)

The fourth documentary demonstrates the growing tension between SNCC and SCLC. In Albany, Georgia, the tactic of non-violence was for the first time ineffective. The police chief, Laurie Pritchett, had read King's book and understood what had to happen for non-violence to be effective. He made arrangements with local jails to

eliminate the possibility of overflowing Albany's jails. King came to Albany, was arrested, and then released. The display was nothing short of unspectacular. King and the SCLC abandoned the project in Albany. The city remained as segregated as it had been before the protests. Albany, Georgia is thought to be one of King's greatest failures. The incident also highlighted the differences in goals and tactics between SCLC and SNCC, further driving a wedge between the two organizations.

The SCLC moved on to Montgomery, Alabama, home of short tempered Bull Connor. The city had been embarrassed by the national attention Connor's behavior had brought and elected a new mayor and new chief of police. But the old guard refused to recognize the exchange of power. The city was being run by two completely different sets of people, but Connor remained in control of the police and firefighters. The SCLC's plan to address racism in Montgomery was called project "C", for confrontation. There were many who were angry that King would not wait to see what the new officials could do for the civil rights movement. King, eventually arrested, answered these critiques in the new famous, "Letter from Birmingham Jail" correspondence. In the letter, King explains that African Americans have always heard the word wait and it has always meant never. The frustration King and the SCLC felt lead to a new tactic, to use children who could fill jails just as well as adults, but children did not have the economic responsibilities that their parents did. The children's march led to one of the most iconic moments in the black freedom struggle, the image of children being attacked by dogs and fire hoses. The public was outraged. Kennedy spoke to the nation and called civil rights a moral issue and one that must be addressed as a country. He called for new civil rights

legislation. It was at this time that the march on Washington was also planned. Eighteen days later a church in Alabama was bombed. Four girls were killed in the explosion.

Mississippi: Is This America? (1962-1964)

The fifth segment begins with the accusation that in all the states in the United States, Mississippi, by far, is the most inhumane. Mississippi is also a very important state for African Americans who were born and raised on the Delta and really felt that the land was their home. However, Mississippi was essentially run by the Citizen's Council, a group committed to the legal preservation of Jim Crow laws. Their power was buttressed by the illegal acts of its members, like Byron de la Beckwith, who was accused of killing NAACP president, Medger Evers. It became apparent that change in Mississippi necessitated the vote. In the summer of 1964, Freedom Summer, the NAACP, CORE, SCLC, and SNCC organized a large group of young people to teach in Freedom Schools and work to register black voters. The participants came from the North and the South, were both black and white, and worked in extremely dangerous conditions. This was also the summer that Freedom Summer workers Andrew Goodwin, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner were murdered by Ku Klux Klan members. In addition to the murder of Goodwin, Chaney, and Schwerner, 80 civil rights workers were beaten and 1,000 arrested.

The second section of the documentary details the rise of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) and its attempt to participate in the Democratic National Convention. Fearing he would lose Southern votes, President Lyndon B. Johnson put a stop to their legitimate claim. In the end, they were only offered two seats at large, a proposal rejected by the MFDP because as Fannie Lou Hamer stated, "we didn't come

down here for no two seats when we all tired." In hindsight a member recalls that they didn't understand the give and take of politics. For the MFDP the issue was clear cut: disenfranchisement was an issue of right and wrong. This was a moral, not a political issue.

Bridge to Freedom (1965)

The final episode in the first *Eyes on the Prize* series is about the boiling point for many protesters in SNCC and SCLC. Hoping to create media attention, protesters counted on Selma, Alabama's Sheriff Clark to use excessive force against would-be voters. Around the same time there was a night march in Marion, Alabama. People knew it was dangerous, but they carried on anyway. That night an Alabama State trooper shot Jimmy Lee Jackson at point blank range. He was only trying to protect his mother from a police beating. The black community was outraged. In an attempt to harness their anger for a positive goal, a march to Selma was proposed. Governor Wallace was determined not to let the march take place. As they approached the Edmond Pettus Bridge, marchers were tear-gassed and severely beaten. Determined to carry out their march, SNCC members decided to march again. However, there was an injunction and King was hesitant to violate it. SCLC called out to its white brethren to come and support the second march. They did, but the march was, according to many SNCC members, a sellout. King led the march up to the bridge kneeled to pray and turned the march around. That night Jim Reid, a white minister, was killed by a group of white men. The country was outraged. Viola Liuzzo, a white northerner, was also killed while transporting SNCC members from the march in Selma. These two incidents raised questions about the use of white people in the movement because it played into the hands

of racism. This would be the end of SNCC's connection to SCLC. The country and the movement were at a turning point.

EYES ON THE PRIZE II: AMERICA AT THE RACIAL CROSSROADS

The second set premiered on January 15, 1990 on PBS. *Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads* includes: The Time Has Come (1964-1966); Two Societies (1965-1968); Power! (1966-1968); The Promised Land (1967-1968); Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More (1964-1972); A Nation of Law? (1968-1971); The Keys to the Kingdom (1974-1980; and Back to the Movement (1979-mid 1980s). Hampton had more difficulty getting this set of documentaries funded and it was received less critical acclaim. The moral clarity of the first series is muddied in the second. Questions surrounding the rise of Black Nationalism, the rhetoric and use of violence on the part of protesters, and the challenge to *de facto* racism in the North are never reconciled for many of the interviewees or at the series conclusion. Decades later, "these are memories that make many white Americans jittery" (Barol 63). Henry Hampton says "The ending for '*Eyes II*' is still in people's hands. . . . Americans haven't made up their mind about race yet" (Kantrowitz ¶ 2). Thus, *Eyes on the Prize II* may be less satisfying than *Eyes on the Prize I* because it raises more questions than answers and offers no clear-cut victories.

The Time Has Come (1964-1966)

The seventh film in the series introduces the Northern responses to racism and the diversity of African Americans in their struggle for equality. African Americans in the North were following a different path to political engagement. The Nation of Islam was very popular amongst northern blacks and was particularly effective in prisons. Their most famous convert was Malcolm X. He became the Nation's spokesperson. After the

assassination of Kennedy, Malcolm claimed that it was a case of the "chickens coming home to roost," meaning the violence that whites had used in the past as a means of control was now being used against them. He was reprimanded by Mohammed and soon thereafter broke with the Nation of Islam. He then formed the Organization of Afro-American Unity to address the problems of the black community. He worked with other civil rights organizations, but was assassinated shortly thereafter at the age of 39.

Malcolm had a large impact on groups like SNCC who were becoming more militant and nationalistic. They were beginning to call for black power. They began in Lowndes county, and had a voter registration and began a new party, whose symbol was a black panther. A man of 106 voted for the first time in his life. The next event is James Meredith's march against fear. He was shot two days into the march. Civil rights leaders, most notably, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Stokely Carmichael, continued the march. This was the last great march of the Southern civil rights movement. SNCC was moving away from nonviolence and towards black power, while King remained committed to nonviolent principles.

Two Societies (1965-1968)

The eighth segment in the series is about SCLC's campaign in Chicago to determine whether or not the principles and tactics of nonviolence used in the South to dismantle *de jure* segregation would work against *de facto* segregation. Many blacks had moved to Chicago with the promise of opportunity. However, through unofficial segregation, real estate companies moved whites out of neighborhoods where blacks lived and into other areas of the city. The services to black parts of town steadily declined. King tried to highlight these problems, but mayor Richard Daly was always

one step behind. For example, if King showed the trash and debris strewn about a housing complex, Daly would send the trash collectors the next day to remove the refuse. For six months the SCLC tried unsuccessfully to create a spectacle or event to demonstrate the need for the movement in Chicago. Then, in the midst of the July heat, city officials closed the fire hydrants people were using to cool off. The resulting skirmish between residents and the police heightened the racial tension in the city. Mayor Daly wrongfully blamed King for the incident, but King used the moment to proclaim that "those who would make this peaceful movement impossible will make a violent revolution inevitable." The next tactic was to march through white parts of town. Three days of marching exposed white resistance. The marchers reluctantly remained nonviolent in the midst of 5,000 angry white resisters. To continue the pressure Jesse Jackson announced a march through Cicero. Both King and city officials knew that there would be trouble if this happened and each side looked for a way out. The city decided to meet with King in exchange for the cessation of marching. On August 26th 1966, a ten-point agreement was made between movement leaders and the city and the march into Cicero was "officially" canceled. The agreement split the movement in Chicago because it did not offer plan a of action or projected results. After King left, the citizens decided to march anyway. This time when people threw rocks and bricks, marchers threw them back. While the march did not result in policy changes, it was a personal victory for many.

The second segment in this documentary was about the Detroit riots. Urban renewal had created new freeways and opportunities for some residents of Detroit, but not for African Americans. Freeways divided their neighborhoods. Their hope for good

paying jobs and upward mobility dwindled. In 1967 Detroit, Michigan a raid on the Blind Pig, an after hours club, resulted in a riot that required 17, 000 soldiers from the National Guard to restore order. The riot demonstrated the extreme frustration in the black community and struck fear in the hearts of white people, who believed that their community would also be embroiled in a race riot. Community members discussed how they would protect themselves against the rioting African Americans. When the riot finally ended 43 people were dead, 33 of them black. That year President Johnson created the Kerner Commission to study the causes of racial unrest. They found that there were two societies in America, separate and unequal. The answer to these problems may not be more government programs, but a new willingness amongst Americans to change. Because of the escalating war in Vietnam, Johnson refused to listen to the commission's findings.

Power! (1966-1968)

There are different kinds of power. This ninth segment is about political and educational power. The first segment is about the election of Carl Stokes as the mayor of Cleveland. His election demonstrated the power of the ballot. He challenged white Republican, Seth Taft. But because the city was only 35% black, Stokes had to reach out to the white community and run a non-racial campaign. He argued that he was the best-qualified candidate and implored people not to vote for him because he was black, but not to vote against him because he was black. He was eventually elected the first black mayor of Cleveland and first black mayor of a major US city. Soon after Richard Hatcher would be elected in Gary, Indiana.

In the schools, communities tried to take control over the education of their children. In Brooklyn, New York the Ocean Hillside-Brownsville school district community board took control over the school to prevent the mis-education of their children. In that effort, several union teachers were transferred to other school districts. These teachers protested and the Teachers Union went on strike. Many crossed the picket lines, but charges of anti-Semitism and the public disruption lead to the suspension of the community board and community control over the schools. This video demonstrates multiple attempts to have America stay true to its promise of power to the people.

The Promised Land (1967-1968)

The Promised Land is about King's last struggle. He had voiced his opposition to the Vietnam War and lost his influence with President Johnson. He was beginning to see that the issue of race would not be satisfactorily dealt with unless there was a radical redistribution of wealth. The FBI worked to discredit King. King looked towards the rights of the poor as the next obstacle to tackle. Marion Wright suggested a poor people's campaign and King agreed. While working to energize the poor to march on Washington, a sanitation worker's strike was going on in Memphis, Tennessee. King was asked to make an appearance. He agreed and led a march that turned violent. It was the first time that he had not been able to conduct a peaceful march. But he promised to return. Upon his return, King delivered his, "I May Not Get There With You" speech. He was assassinated the next day. Determined to continue King's struggle, the SCLC went forward with the plans to build a city in Washington of poor people. The organization suffered from grief and lack of direction. They marched on Washington and

created Resurrection City hoping it would be meaningful. Soon after Robert Kennedy was murdered, Congress grew tired of the poor people and had the city destroyed and the people removed. Everyone in the movement felt a sense of hopelessness.

Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More (1964-1972)

The eleventh documentary begins with African Nationalist and poet Amiri Baraka, who spoke of the double consciousness of blacks in America. The segment is about the rise of black culture, the back to Africa movement, and blacks being accepted for who they were on their own terms. The paradigmatic example of this was Muhammad Ali, a member of the Nation of Islam, boxing champion of the world, and contentious dissenter to the Vietnam War. Originally convicted of draft dodging, Ali lost his title, but was eventually vindicated and returned to claim his rightful place as boxing champion. Other areas of assertion were black colleges, like Howard. The students at Howard demanded that the college become more responsive to the needs of the black community. The students took over the administration building to force administrators to make a commitment to the struggle of black people. The protests at Howard were somewhat successful and ended peacefully. However, not all black colleges faired so well. Three students in Orangeburg, South Carolina were killed. Twelve days later Dr. Martin Luther King was shot. In the wake of the deaths was the election of Nixon who began to dismantle the Great Society programs.

African Americans were looking to control their own political destiny without the direct help of a white government. The new vision emerging came to fruition in Gary, Indiana at the National Black Political Convention. The convention helped to articulate a common black agenda, which was difficult given the diverse groups represented there.

But in the end, the call for "Nation Time" was heeded as blacks went out and got themselves elected in record numbers.

A Nation of Law? (1968-1971)

The twelfth film questions the desire of Americans to maintain law and order. The documentary offers two cases that undermine the legitimacy of law enforcement in the United States. The first is the case of Fred Hampton's murder in Chicago. The FBI and the police used informants and illegal acts to infiltrate and neutralize the Black Panther Party. Based on information by an informant, police entered Hampton's apartment and shot and killed Fred and Mark Clark. The official report claimed that the Panther's had shot back, but forensic evidence proved otherwise. Eventually, the aggrieved parties received 1.8 million dollars to settle out of court for the wrongful deaths of Clark and Hampton. Documents stolen from FBI headquarters showed that *all* civil rights organizations were targets for their operations. This brought to the fore the connection between law enforcement agencies, the courts, jails, and economic oppression.

The second major event in the video is the take-over of the Attica prison. The prisoners took hostages and tried to bargain for basic human rights. Eventually, the Governor grew tired and sent in the state troops with tear gas and gunfire, killing 29 inmates and 10 hostages. The violence and lawlessness of law enforcement forced people to consider if order was worth all of this.

The Keys to the Kingdom (1974-1980)

The thirteenth film is about the *de facto* segregation in the Northern schools. Black parents in Boston, Massachusetts took their grievances to the school board which

included: the disrepair of the school buildings, the lack of funding for teachers and supplies, the racist hand-me-down books they were given for the children to read, and the lack of black teachers. Louise Day Hicks, the chairperson of the school board, was very powerful in the district and didn't feel that segregated schools were necessarily substandard. So the NAACP took the case to the courts. On June 21, 1974 Judge W. R. Gearty found that the Boston school system was guilty of maintaining two separate school systems and mandated citywide busing as a remedy. No one thought that busing was a good idea, but in September the children were bused out of their neighborhoods to desegregate the schools. In many areas of the city, the plan went off without a hitch. However, in South Boston parents and students resisted. South Boston was a class conscious and race and ethnic conscious part of town. While many immigrants had prospered in the United States, the residents of South Boston had not progressed very far. They were working class families trying to make ends meet. Busing seemed like an assault on what little they had. On December 11th there was a fight between a black and a white student. Michael Faith, the white student, was stabbed but lived. The event polarized the city, but Gearty was steadfast. Eventually Boston accepted desegregation, but the biggest change came on the school board. Hicks failed to win re-election in 1977, losing her seat to a black candidate.

In Boston, blacks were outnumbered and had to depend on the courts for redress. In Atlanta, however, blacks were the majority. They elected the first black mayor in the South, Maynard Jackson. Jackson upheld affirmative action policies and tested its viability with the airport expansion project. The project was completed on schedule and on budget. However, not all hopes of the black community were fulfilled in Jackson. A

sanitation workers strike ended in failure. Many felt that Jackson rebuffed the mostly black union to demonstrate that he could keep a balanced budget. Nonetheless, blacks who were joining the establishment were finding that getting elected was only half the struggle and that positions of power were not ends in and of themselves.

The second segment of the film is about affirmative action in schools. As a result of affirmative action policies in college admittance, in 1977 the attendance rates for black and white students were about equal. However, Alan Bakke's challenge to those policies would change the nature of affirmative action debates forever. Berkeley did not accept Bakke into its medical school, but he argued that the reason he was denied admittance was because others had been allowed in under affirmative action policies. Moreover, those students allowed in under affirmative action were less qualified than he was. The rhetoric of affirmative action had moved from equal opportunity to preferential treatment and for many Americans the cost of remedying the history of discrimination was too high.

Back to the Movement: (1979-1983)

The fourteenth and final segment of the documentary begins in the spring of 1983. Cuban and Haitian refugees flooded into Miami in search of political and economic freedom. Miami was a segregated city. Internationally known black performers would perform in premiere hotels on Miami Beach, but were not allowed to stay there. They would go to Overton and would entertain at after hours clubs like the "Sir John." However, Overton would soon be taken over by the expanding city under the clause of "eminent domain." The city was lost and people were moved into large housing complexes. Some moved into white neighborhoods. Frank Legree was the first to move

into a white neighborhood. He was harassed and his house was picketed. But what set off the black community was the death of Arthur McDuffie. McDuffie was an exemplary Marine, married his high school sweetheart, and became a successful businessman. One night he was pulled over by police. The police claim that he was trying to get away and wrecked his motorcycle. McDuffie died that night in the hospital. Forensic evidence proved that McDuffie had not crashed his vehicle. Instead, McDuffie's wounds suggested that he had been beaten to death by police officers. Some of the officers were charged with the murder of McDuffie, but a change in venue resulted in a "not guilty" verdict for all officers involved. A riot ensued. By the end of the riot there was over 100 million dollars in damage and 17 people had died, 10 black, 7 white. No one seemed to be addressing the cause of the uprising. It was an election year and there were aggressive shifts in priorities, like cutting 13 billion dollars to programs for the poor.

In Chicago, blacks were still fighting for political power. Although Mayor Daly was out, there was not much change for African Americans. Jane Byrne, the first woman mayor in Chicago decided to live in a housing project, Caprini Green, to assess the problems of the poor. She found that it was a very woman dominated society and claimed only she could save the children in the projects. The residents were outraged, but found that their complaints were ignored, in part, because "their people don't vote." A large voter registration campaigns ensued, hoping to elect the reluctant Harold Washington to office of mayor. Many blacks felt that liberals had abandoned them and the only way to make them pay attention to the needs of black people was to become their peers. The campaign was a success. The people in Caprini Green danced in the streets and finally felt that they "were a part of something."

The series ends with a cautionary note. It details the rise and resistance to the movement and its goals. It details a few of the successes: that in 1960 blacks had to "crash" the Democratic National Convention, but in 1984 Jesse Jackson was asked to speak. The movement is connected to global struggles for freedom by showing the Berlin Wall. Julian Bond ends by saying that the movement is not yet finished.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND AUDIENCE INTERPRETATION

Eyes on the Prize bookends the black freedom struggle with the murder of Emmett Till and the election of Senator Harold Washington as Mayor of Chicago. According to the documentary, the black freedom struggle evolved from protest to electoral politics. For the most part, the series seems to celebrate this only-partial trajectory. This is not to say that African Americans should not have entered electoral politics; rather it is to say that the emphasis on electoral politics instead of protest politics may symbolically constrain the range of resources for citizens seeking to transform society.

In the 1980s, black political power looked decidedly different than in the 1960s. The emphasis on individualism and capitalism to address social problems had important consequences. Black leadership focused on cultural Black Nationalism that encourages "consciousness" with an emphasis on "self-help" and programs for black capitalist development. Focusing on these issues admonished blacks to make demands on the state and attributed the problems of poverty to the poor's own laziness and pathology (Lang 31). According to a longitudinal study, Luke Tripp argues that the destructive social and economic policies of Reganism, college students, who had once been the vanguard of the black freedom struggle, demonstrated low levels of political participation. The study

suggests that although the students had cultural nationalist leanings, they were less concerned with social issues than they were with entering the ranks of the middle class (Tripp 45-51). The emphasis on electoral politics instead of protest politics opened the door to individualizing the problems and solutions of discrimination that have been detrimental to the progress of African Americans.

In the documentary's original context—one of social conservatism and demoralization among the oppressed—"settling" for quietude self-help, and electoralism may have realistically reflected the conditions of possibility prevalent at the time. In my view, the nearly-total eclipse of agitation with a resigned electoralism is troubling even so. And instead of questioning the move to electoral politics, the documentary presents the absorption of the movement into mainstream politics as a natural progression.

Audiences are not static; they live in and experience the world according to a particular historical moment. Given the political events of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, there is reason to believe that *Eyes on the Prize* may be read more critically and offer different lessons. As Marxist theorist Gerog Lukács argues, "Lived experience is the dialectical springboard for the production for oppositional truth and action" (169).

A number of relatively recent events may cause audiences of *Eyes on the Prize* to question the emphasis on electoral politics because of their personal experiences. First, the 2000 election disenfranchised black voters in Florida. Choicepoint, Inc., the company hired to create voting rolls in Florida, improperly and incorrectly identified a disproportionate number of African-American registered voters as felons (Palast BO1). The Congressional Black Caucus attempted to challenge the 2000 election results, but needed one vote from a single U.S. Senator to proceed. Not one Senator agreed to help.

Featured as one of the first scenes in the 2003 documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11*, U.S. Senators looked on stoically as members of the Black Congressional Caucus made pleas for assistance. This same administration callously ignored the desperate need of thousands of mostly poor, mostly black citizens of New Orleans before, during, and after the Katrina disaster. Moreover, the failure of Democrats to represent their wishes in Congress demonstrates a significant weakness of the American political system. Although Americans overwhelmingly voted for Republicans in 2004, their opinion of the Grand Old Party has soured because of a series of scandals and an unpopular war in Iraq.

At the beginning of 2007 "The number of those who approve of Bush's handling of the war is now roughly half of those who approved his handling of Hurricane Katrina. According to a recent Army Times poll, more troops disapprove of Bush's handling of the war than back it" (Younge 25). So in 2006, voters "made it overwhelmingly clear . . . [that] the prime reason they elected Democrats and kicked out Republicans was to get U.S. troops out of Iraq" ("Dems" 27). However, Democrats failed to stop the war. On 24 May 2007 "Congress voted overwhelmingly . . . to give President Bush his Iraq funding, with Democrats abandoning their demands for a time line to end the war. The House voted 280 to 142, and the Senate approved the spending 80 to 14" (McAuliff 6). The dissatisfaction with both the Republicans and the Democrats may give viewers of *Eyes on the Prize* cause to consider the forms of civic engagement and protest politics that brought success for the movement in its earlier stages. Thus, the lessons of the documentary may change as people's personal experiences challenge or accept possible readings of the text.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that public memory of the black freedom struggle emphasizes its integrationist and assimilationist goals achieved through nonviolent means. This narrative is consistent with the dominant narrative of the United States that suggests the nation is naturally and inevitably heading toward a more egalitarian society. These lessons are found in a variety of texts that reinforce the dominant interpretation and values of the movement. I included three different areas where public memory of the black freedom struggle finds expression: a website, a popular film, and a memorial. Each of these memory texts reinforces the same basic story about the black freedom struggle: it began with Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat on the bus and ended with the death of King and the passage of the 1968 Voting Rights Act. These achievements were the result of nonviolent direct action and were primarily confined to the Southern States. Each virtually ignore the importance and ideological foundations of the Black Power Movement and all neglect the intersections between class and race. In this way, the public memory of the black freedom struggle provides poor resources for thinking about or addressing the persistent problem of racism and its connection to the past.

I offered a summary of the documentary as a whole and argued for the need to consider *Eyes on the Prize* in the present political context, when its implications for consciousness and movement may have shifted in ways that enable viewers to acknowledge the complexity of some of the film's representations. Today's widespread criticism of political unaccountability across both mainstream parties, alongside the disaffection of voters in the wake of Katrina and the grueling Iraq war, may encourage a different reading of *Eyes on the Prize*. When it was released in the 1980s, electoralism

was the dominant form of political action for African Americans. The move to strictly electoral politics significantly limits the rhetorical possibility of the films because it frames all political struggles through the framework of liberalism. However, it may situate viewers in ways that foreground the film's partial acknowledgement of the extra-electoral politics that were the catalyst for many of the gains in the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, the rhetorical possibility of the documentary—as of all rhetorical action—lies in the intersection between its presentation of the past and the present political context. Moreover, the study of this intersection may well be a source of invention for potential political intervention.

[ii] http://www.edutopia.org/black-history-month-teaching-resources.

[iii] http://boxofficemojo.com/alltime/adjusted.htm. This website ranks films by their adjusted gross income. The top ranked film is *Gone with the Wind*, which has an adjusted gross of $1,329,453,600. *Forrest Gump*'s adjusted gross income is $516,830,100.

Chapter Three:

Experiencing Resistance; Polyvalenced Memories of Integration in *Eyes on the Prize*

More than fifty years have passed since the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education Topeka*[iv] decision. The "hearts and minds of Americans" may have been "won over on the issue of segregation" (Verdun 67); however, the extent to which Americans and the United States political system is willing to create educational equality is uncertain. The concept of equality is at the heart of the integration debate. If separation is inherently unequal, how is equality achieved through integration? Is it equal access, outcome, opportunity?

Eyes on the Prize considers these questions in an educational context. Tracing the development of the debate over equity in education in the documentary reveals that arguments against integration shift from personal rights to property rights. Herbert Gintis explains the difference in this way:

> A *property right* invests in individuals the power to enter into social relationships on the basis and extent of their property. This may include economic rights of unrestricted use, free contract, and voluntary exchange; political rights of participation and influence; and culture rights of access to the social means for the transmission of knowledge and the reproduction and transformation of consciousness. A *person right* vests in individuals the power to enter into these social relationships on the basis of simple membership in the social collectivity. Thus, person rights involved equal treatment of citizens, freedom of expression and movement, equal access to participation in decision-making in social institutions, and reciprocity in relations of power and authority. (193)

Although the documentary demonstrates the shift in resistance to integration in its trajectory, it supports the project of integration rhetorically through the subjective experiences of black students, teachers, and community members. Through affective visual and verbal displays, the documentary frames the debate over educational equity in terms of community that privileges *person rights* over *property rights*.

I begin with a discussion of the Brown decision and the failure of the United States to integrate its schools. Then, analyzing two episodes of *Eyes on the Prize*, "Fighting Back" and "The Keys to the Kingdom," I trace the victory of the *Brown* decision and its degeneration in the *Bakke* decision and then examine the use of affective appeals used in the documentary to invite viewers to identify with African Americans struggling to assert their right as citizens to an equal education. Public discourse in Western democracies is "constructed, studied, and policed according to a general suppression or suspicion of emotional display" (Hariman and Lucaites 6). Conversely, I argue that these narratives constitute emotional agency in the public sphere that are "complex composites of factual beliefs, moral evaluations, physical sensations, and social narratives" (Koziak 164). This use of affective appeals constitute "good reasons" for integration, especially when juxtaposed with the emotional outbursts of hatred and spite, which are the emotional rationale for segregation. Thus, *Eyes on the Prize* presents an emotionally complex memory of integration that complicates the struggle through personalization.

LOSING GROUND: THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF *BROWN VS. BOARD OF EDUCATION*

The hope of the *Brown* decision was that the African American students would receive a better education. At the time of the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling, many African Americans saw a bright future. Charles U. Smith recalls that after hearing the Brown decision in 1954, he was "so elated that I was confident that 50 years later public school racial desegregation would be a thing of the past" (19). However, the 50th anniversary of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* was met with praise, debate, and concern. As African Americans reflected in 2004 on the state of education post-Brown, they continually found that schools across the United States are segregated and children of color, especially in lower income areas, continue to perform at lower levels than their white counterparts. In his research on race and education, Jonathan Kozol found that in the South Bronx, Chicago, Paterson and Camden, N.J., Washington, D.C., San Antonio, Cincinnati and Boston, public schools had "minority enrollment upwards of 90 percent. In the South Bronx, of 11,000 children in the district, just 26 were white. A teacher who had been at one school for 18 years taught one white student" (Baldacci 12). Some cities have tried legally to re-segregate their schools. In 1982 the Little Rock School Board "petitioned the court for approval to change school attendance areas in such a way as to create four all-black elementary schools. The announced reason was to keep white parents from fleeing to the suburbs in an effort to avoid what has now become a predominantly black public school system" (Branton 250).

The failure to create integrated schools in the United States is a legal, social, and political problem. This is especially evident in the affirmative action debates. The *Bakke*

decision marked a turning point for the Supreme Court that had, from the time of the Brown decision, upheld laws that supported integration based on past harm to people of color. Presently, the courts have backed off from their outright support of integration. In an analysis of Supreme Court perspectives, Alan Freeman argues that after a brief period of taking the perspective of the victim, the Court reverted to a "perpetrator perspective" on issues of race. The perpetrator perspective is the vantage point of whites and is "preoccupied with white guilt or innocence" (Freeman 1049). In a number of reverse discrimination lawsuits the Supreme Court began to explicitly worry that "affirmative action plans impose unacceptable burdens on 'innocent' third parties (read white)" (Brown, Carnoy, Currie, Duster, Oppenheimer, Shultz, Wellman 37). In an effort to be equal, many of the courts have turned a blind eye to the effects of historical discrimination.

Official segregation is socially unacceptable to most Americans, although most Americans continue to live in segregated neighborhoods and schools (Verdun 68). Educational "diversity" and "multiculturalism" maintain wide public support. Manning Marable points to neo-conservative Ben Wattenberg's remark that "we are all multiculturalist now" and the Pentagon's submission of *amicus* briefs in support of affirmative action in the *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Gratz v. Bollinger* as evidence of the widespread acceptance of the virtues of the Brown decision (Marable "Promise" 34). However, segregation remains a social fact. Thus, it appears that "we have the 'Big Disconnect' between the legal and social wrong of segregation and the means of achieving integration, whether that comes in the form of school integration plans or affirmative action" (Verdun 68). The confusion stems from the fact that Americans claim

to believe in personal choice as well as equality, yet we have no political theory that presents a hierarchy as to which value should be privileged over the other. So while most Americans believe that integration has a positive impact, they do not believe that achieving integration is worth violating an individual's personal choice.

George Lipsitz also argues white people gain from segregation. In his book, The *Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, he argues,

> Whiteness has a cash value: it accounts for advantages that come to individuals through profits made from housing secured in discriminatory markets, through the unequal educations allocated to children of different races, through insider networks that channel employment opportunities to the relatives and friends of those who have profited most from present and past racial discrimination, and especially through intergenerational transfers of inherited wealth that pass on the spoils of discrimination to succeeding generations. (vii)

These justifications for segregation or anti-affirmative action arguments are rarely, if ever, voiced in the public sphere. Mark McPhail argues that "rhetorically, modern white racism is committed to denial, denial marked by the silencing of race, the presencing of color blindness, and dehistoricizing of difference as a contributing factor to the stratifications and inequities that mark America[n] difference" (196). In contemporary politics, racism is often cloaked in the rhetoric of colorblindness that sounds like the rhetoric of individual rights. Republicans and Democrats alike eschew the issue of race by framing discussions about race in terms of "*fairness, open access,* and *equal opportunity*" (Holmes 26). However, these catch phrases only address half of the issue of

equality. Integration was not just about gaining access to certain school buildings, but receiving the resources that those institutions bestowed on its students. Denying students access, therefore, also denies resources that have an economic impact. When King argued for a colorblind society, he did not mean that color did not matter, but that people's opportunities should not be limited because of their race. As long as resource distribution remains skewed, race will matter socially, politically, and economically.

It is within this so-called "colorblind" social and political context that *Eyes on the Prize* presents the issue of integration and affirmative action. Through the personal testimony of individuals who were affected by the separate and unequal standards of American education the documentary focuses on a central issue: the *Brown* decision was a check on the "pervasive injustice rendered by public educational institutions on people of color, particularly African Americans" (Willie 11). This revolutionary decision was controversial because it "nullified and reversed so much of the content, character, and spirit of American constitutional history, jurisprudence, and moral philosophy on the status, rights and privileges of blacks" (Cook 3).

DISMANTLING DESEGREGATION: THE NARRATIVE TRAJECTORY OF INTEGRATION IN *EYES ON THE PRIZE*

The story of integration that *Eyes on the Prize* tells is primarily about the process of school desegregation. African American parents and community members fought hard for a quality education because it represented the possibility of a better future for their children. Boston community activist Ruth Batson explains,

> When we fight about education, we're fighting for our lives. We're fighting for what that education will give us, we're fighting for a job, we're fighting to eat, we're fighting to pay our medical bills, we're fighting for a lot of things. So this is a total fight with us. (Keys)[v]

In *Eyes on the Prize* the struggle for a better education is the struggle for integration. Integration was as much a personal struggle as it was a legal battle. The story of integration in *Eyes on the Prize* presents the experience of the conflict in and out of classrooms. The narrative arc of integration in *Eyes on the Prize* begins on a hesitant, but hopeful note and ends in disappointment with the Bakke decision.

Eyes on the Prize first presents the issue of integration in the second episode, "Fighting Back." In this episode, the documentary demonstrates the difficulty of desegregating Southern schools. However, it supports the overall project of integration because of the greater opportunities education offers black people. The arguments against integration are overtly racist. Historical footage of the riots outside and on school campuses provides visual evidence for the racial basis of the resistance to desegregation. White bodies literally prohibited black bodies from an equal education. Authrine Lucy's attempt to attend the University of Alabama is the first story. Although she gained entrance, the university suspended her after the white students rioted. The university claimed that the decision was made in the interest of Lucy's safety. Lucy took her case to court and won, but never attended the University of Alabama. The board of Trustees expelled Lucy for arguing that the motivation for her suspension was the rioting students. The outcome of the Lucy situation gave hope to resisters: if they were willing to use violence they could halt integration.

After the Lucy case, the desegregation of Little Rock, Arkansas' Central High became a political struggle with national importance. In 1957, the Little Rock, Arkansas School board chose nine exemplary black students to begin the process of integration in schools. On the eve of the first day of school, Arkansas' governor Orval Faubus announced that he would deploy units of the National Guard to "maintain or restore the peace and good order of [the] community" (Fighting).[vi] The real purpose of the guards was to keep the black students out of the school. All of the black students were turned away on the first day by state troops. Governor Faubus' actions were open violations of federal law.

President Eisenhower convinced Faubus to withdraw the troops, leaving only the city police to control the angry crowd of whites gathered outside of the school to enforce segregation in the school. A riot ensued. Eisenhower had to respond. He told the Congress that

> An extreme situation has been created in Little Rock. This challenge must be met, and with such measures as will preserve for the people as a whole their lawfully protected rights. If resistance to the Federal Court order ceases at once, the further presence of federal troops will be unnecessary, and that blot upon the fair name and high honor of our nation in the world will be removed. Mob rule cannot be allowed to override the decisions of our courts. (Fighting)

The federal troops brought order to Little Rock. Some of them stayed on to become the body guards of the Little Rock Nine. They escorted the teenagers from class to class to ensure their safety.

At the end of the school year, the Little Rock's Central High graduated "601 white students and Ernest Green" (Bond, Fighting). The students would not return the next year. Rather than maintain integrated schools, Govenor Faubus closed the schools. Governor Lindsay Almond Jr. followed suit. He stated: "There will be no enforced integration in Virginia. I have the highest respect for the President of the United States. If troops are sent into Virginia, they will patrol empty school houses" (Fighting). The segment ends with commentary from Bond, who tells the viewer "the children, especially the black children, paid the price. So, the crisis in school desegregation continued" (Bond, Fighting).

The issue of school integration is not taken up again in *Eyes on the Prize* until the 13th episode, "The Keys to the Kingdom." The episode brings the issue of segregation in schools to the north, to Boston, Massachussets. In Boston, the white school board labels the practice of segregation in schools, "racial imbalance," but its impact on black students remained the same. The documentary does not include whites making overtly racist arguments. However, the images presented contradict the silence on race. It features black students and parents who attest to the violent and racist language of anti-busing protesters. There are also signs that say, "The Fourteenth Amendment is for White People Too" as well as graffiti on a building that reads: "Kill the Niggers." White people also attack the buses carrying black students. A group of white girls raise their middle fingers at the buses of black students. The documentary also includes footage of a black man pulled from his car and beaten by an angry mob. Thus, the documentary provides plenty of visual confirmation of the racial element of the anti-busing protests. Black

students in Boston went to schools that were ill equipped and the quality of education lagged behind predominantly white school. Juanita Wade explains that

> Parents saw that public education was not offering young people not only the strong education they needed, but the social relationships or recognition of who they were as African-Americans, just wasn't happening in the Boston public school system. So there was a real move, community-wide, to develop institutions that would meet both of those needs. (Keys)

Parents took their complaints to the school board, but were rebuffed by the board's most prominent member, Louise Day Hicks. At a school board meeting, Hicks told a group of black parents, "Many of the Negro parents believe that predominantly Negro schools is inferior, per se. But we here in Boston do not believe that premise" (Keys). The school board refused to admit that it was consciously maintiaining two systems and thereby violating the mandates of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision.

African American parents tried to elect their own representatives to the school board, but as a minority in Boston, they were unable to secure the necessary votes. Feeling as though they had no other form of recourse, the parents sued the Boston school district with the help of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Judge William J. Garrity ruled in favor of the parents and ordered busing children to different schools to produce integrated schools.

Whites, especially in South Boston, protested the decision. Some white parents claimed that busing was not an issue of race. However, at an anti-busing rally, Janet Palmariello tells the crowd, "just because I'm white doesn't mean that the 14th amendment doesn't refer to me either. I'm white and I want my rights." Another

comment by school board members John McDonough exposes the racial undertones of the debate. He tells a group of anti-busing parents, "It seems to me that Judge Garrity is going to bring us this plan with the boot of official authority and the uniforms. In a certain sense, you can say that reconstruction has finally come to the North with a vengeance" (Keys).

In the summer months before school began, the mood in the city was "one of confusion, concern, and fear because the elected officials during that summer of 1974 after the order had been given by Judge Garrity were very often making statements that this would not happen" (Bond, Keys). But it did happen and in most areas of the city, busing began without problems. However, in South Boston parents and students gathered outside the school and harassed the black students as they walked into the building. White parents resisting integration took a lesson from civil rights tactics and organized a boycott of the school and opened up their own Freedom Schools.

Tension in South Boston's high school ran high. There were multiple fights on a daily basis between blacks and whites. One of the fights got out of hand and Michael Faith, a white student, was stabbed. A riot ensued outside of the high school. School officials arranged for decoy buses to get the black students home. Michael Faith did not die, but the incident further polarized the parents. The school board also "stiffened its resolve not to comply with the court order. In response, Judge Garrity placed three members in contempt of court" (Bond, Keys). Because of the school board's unwillingness to follow the judge's order, Garrity had to take on the responsibility for curriculum, hiring and firing, in the schools. The resistance to integration in some

Boston schools continued, but the court remained firm. Change came gradually, "but the cost remained high" (Keys).

Eyes on the Prize also explores the issue of integration in higher learning. Black students and educators alike feared the *Bakke* decision would threaten minority access to higher education. The argument against affirmative action was that it harmed whites, who also deserve protection under the 14th amendment. There is little evidence that lends support for this claim. In contrast to African Americans who visually and verbally attest to the harms of racism, Bakke is noticeably absent from the documentary. The imagery of the legal battle differs from the other political battles over integration because it happens in a courtroom. The featured characters of this dispute are all white men. While explaining the legal arguments forwarded in the *Bakke* case, the documentary provides drawings of the lawyers, both of whom are white. When the *Bakke* decision is announced, the documentary features a photograph of an all male, all white Supreme Court. The documentary also includes a picture from a newspaper of lady justice, holding a scale. One side holds five white men, the other a single black man. The title reads, "No One Lost." These images of whiteness and its power are juxtaposed with the oral history interviews and black students protesting and speaking out for affirmative action. While the *Bakke* case contended that whites were harmed because of affirmative action, the images and testimony by African Americans in *Eyes on the Prize* suggest the opposite.

The opening scene is a rally of black college students holding signs saying, "Stop Bakke" and chanting, "We won't go back," The segment begins with the positive impact affirmative action had on African American enrollment in universities. However, Mary

Frances Barry recalls that by 1977 the language surrounding the Bakke was that affirmative action was "preferential treatment" which sets up a situation where "anybody who is the beneficiary of preferential treatment will lose. If you say reverse discrimination against somebody, it already sounds like a bad thing is happening and you don't focus on what the injustice was" (Berry, Keys).

The University of California Davis denied Alan Bakke's application to medical school. Bakke sued the university contending that the Davis' Affirmative Action policy was the cause for his rejection. The university's lawyer, Archibald Cox, argued that the university used "race as a factor in selecting qualified applicants, not to discriminate against whites, but to remedy the effects of generations of discrimination against blacks" (Bond, Keys). Reynold Colvin, Bakke's lawyer, "presented his client as one discriminated against because of his race" (Bond, Keys). The Supreme Court handed down a decision that "backed off from its unequviocal support" by arguing that Affirmative Action was "acceptable but not mandatory" (Bond, Keys). The episode ends questioning the nation's commitment to remedying the history of racism that kept blacks out of schools.

The contours of the narrative of integration presented in the film demonstrate the consistent resistance on the part of large groups of whites to the project of educational equity for African Americans. The level and duration of white resistance to integration has denied African Americans their right to both basic and advanced education. *Eyes on the Prize* projects a pessimistic view about the future of educational equity. After the decision, a reporter asks two students, "Do you think it's [the *Bakke* decision] going to be

bad for minorities?" (Keys). The first student confirms that he believes it will be bad for minorities. The second student concurs:

> I think people instead of, you know, the sincerity involved in really going out and getting minority students into different professional schools, that sincerity will be lost, all right, since there is a legal precedent stated now that, you know, it sort of kills the thrust of the program. (Keys)

The debate had moved from *person rights* of "equal access to participation in decision-making in social institutions" to property rights which ensure "rights of access to the social means for the transmission of knowledge" (Gintis 193). Thus, the documentary ends its treatment of integration on a pessimistic note, suggesting that the hard fought gains of the 1950s were already eroding in the 1980s.

THE POLITICS OF AFFECT: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF INTEGRATION

The attempt to integrate public schools evoked strong emotions for both blacks and whites. *Eyes on the Prize* reveals the emotional relation between individual and community. Resistance to integration, explains reporter Joe Azbell, was

> what kept whites going . . . . Don't break the old way. Don't break this fabric. Don't break down segregation. Don't take this away, this old South. Don't take back the things that we've always known and that we fought a war over these things, and that our forefathers would have us do this. (Awakenings)

For blacks, integration in education represented the possibility to improve the living standards not just for themselves, but for their community. Toni Johnson-Chavis, the black woman who supposedly kept Alan Bakke out of medical school due to affirmative

action, argues that affirmative action programs give people of color access to education in order to benefit underserved communities of color.

Craig R. Smith and Michael Hyde argue for the need to understand the emotional connection between the individual and the community. Using Heidegger and Aristotle's concepts of community, they argue that the individual is essentially a communal being. Indeed, the

> communal character of our existence registers itself as the historically informed and common ways that members of a community see, interpret, and become meaningfully involved with others, thereby sustaining a world of common sense and common praxis, a world of "publicness." (448)

Publicness is not a choice. We are "'thrown' into the world through birth and subjected from then on to the manners in which the members of our community employ its emotional dispositions in order to maintain a world of publicness" (449). The basis upon which a society develops its own sense of "a good, just, and truthful society" is, in part, a rhetorical construction of community morality (449). Human emotion "plays a fundamental role in sustaining the indelible communal and public character of our everyday being-with-others (460). Attempts to change and/or maintain the moral standards of community necessarily have an emotional component because of the emotional stake each individual has in his or her community. I would also argue that the material requires consideration in this equation as moral standards of the community may affect the conditions of living and working in society. These questions are also imbued with the emotional because they pertain to the well-being of friends, relatives, and other loved ones.

Suspicion surrounds the use of emotion in politics, although politics is clearly an emotional pursuit. Emotional containment is the basis of modern civic order and its actors who are chiefly driven by "rational motives such as norms of justice or economic self-interest" (Koziak 4). However, recent work on emotion suggests that emotions play a necessary role in good moral judgment. A study of patients with brain injuries revealed that those who lost their capacity for emotion also lost their ability to "reason and make decisions about practical, social, personal, and moral affairs" (Koziak 17). Another study of emotions revealed that emotions are social in nature. Ronald de Sousa studied the rationality of emotion and found that "dramatic narratives learned in childhood, reinforced by oral and printed stories, and by visual art, refined by literature, teach us when and how to feel which emotions" (qtd in Koziak 27). So it seems that "for better or worse, the individual, the public, and human emotion, go hand in hand" (Smith and Hyde 449).

These observations are important in understanding how *Eyes on the Prize* presents the issue of integration. The use of personal testimony in the documentary to tell the story of integration is an example of how private emotion becomes important to public decision making. Their stories are examples of political emotion or a display of emotion that can "become a mode of political dissent" (Hariman and Lucaites 6). The use of personal testimony from black students, parents, and teachers adds insight to the political process of integration through political emotion. Raymond Williams coined the phrase, "structure of feeling" to capture a "felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time" and offers "a new way of seeing ourselves and our world" (*Long* 63-64; *Drama* 17). Although conceptually similar to ideology, the structure of feeling attends more

specifically to the actual lived and felt experience of the time (*Marxism* 132-133). This parallels the concept of *La facultad*, which is

> the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface. . . . Those who are pounced on the most have it the strongest—the females, the homosexuals of all races, the dark skinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign. (Anzaldua 60)

Taken together, these concepts offer a way of "seeing" the issue of integration that is bound to the experience and injustice.

Being with others is not always easy. The documentary concedes that the 1950s and 1960s were a "time for anger and fear, a time when a gain for blacks was sometimes seen as a loss for whites" (Bond, Time). However, the issue of integration foregrounded in *Eyes on the Prize* is a question of civic morality: what are the standards of being in the world with others? The pro-integration argument in *Eyes on the Prize* suggests that equality based on common humanity should guide community goals and behaviors. There are also economic elements, but these are secondary in the documentary. Both kinds of arguments find expression in the personal experiences and emotional responses of students, parents, and teachers who work to desegregate schools in the United States. The communal basis for segregationists in *Eyes on the Prize* shifts from inequality benefiting whites to inequality harming whites. In any of these cases, however, the arguments against desegregation are attempts to protect white privilege and power in the United States. Anti-integrationists also use emotion politically, but their responses are framed as irrational and disorderly.

Emotional Responses as Rationales

The *Eyes on the Prize* account of the Little Rock crisis contributes to our public memory of integration by remembering the impact the resistance to integration had on individuals and communities. The documentary presents the story of integration through news broadcasts of interviews with children at the time of the crisis and their reflections on the experience as adults in oral histories. Little Rock was an important legal battle that had significant implications for the entire nation. However, this segment offers the personal perspective of the struggle and captures the physical and mental suffering of the children on the front lines of this battle. "Fighting Back," puts human faces to legal issues like interposition and the fourteenth amendment. [4] I will begin with the Southern resisters' irrational uses of emotion that will, in turn, highlight the political emotions of the black students in the Little Rock crisis.

The episode, "Fighting Back" begins with a proclamation from Julian Bond, "In 1954, the Supreme Court said black children would go to school with white. The South said, never." Implementing the *Brown* decision was an instance where emotion and law came into conflict. When the University of Alabama accepted Authrine Lucy, the students rioted. In response, Dwight D. Eisenhower argued,

> I personally believe, if you tried to go too far, too fast in laws in this delicate field that has involved the emotions of so many millions of Americans, you are making a mistake. I believe we've got to have laws that go along with education and understanding. And I believe to go beyond that at any one time, you cause trouble rather than benefit. (Fighting)

For most of the South, any movement toward desegregation in public schools was too fast. Sherif Mel Bailey, still quite serious about the issue, explains the resons for resistance in an oral history interview:

> It wasn't funny then, it's still not funny. But suddenly we have the Fourteenth Amendment that took 100 years, brought on by the Civil War, suddenly must be complied with. Equal treatment under the law. And that was a resistance. They are not going to get equal treatment. What do you mean? Go to school with my little darling? That is why resistance. (Fighting)

To protect their "culture" and "traditions" local and state officials argued for resistance based on their sense of community committment. Senator James Eastland argued, "All the people of the South are in favor of segregation. And Supreme Court or no Supreme Court, we are going to maintain segregated schools down in Dixie" (Fighting). Governor Ross Barnett makes the same argument more passionately, "I love Mississippi. I love her people. . . . I love and I respect our heritage" (Fighting). In a series of statements, Governor Barnett called upon the people of Mississippi to join with him "in refusing, in every legal and every constitutional way, and every way, every matter available, my friends, to submit to illegal usurpation of power by the Kennedy administration" (Fighting). Myrlie Evers recalls that the Barnett's statements were part of an "effort to instill fear in the hearts of blacks, and it was also an effort, and a very successful one to arouse fear and a kind of frenzy in the white community to fight back" (Fighting). State and local officials opposed to integration based their arguments against desegregation in an affective connection to a particular structure of community. And, as Evers' quote suggests, they were successful in emotionally rousing fellow resistors to action.

The documentary features rowdy and uncontrollable crowds of whites attempting to prevent desegregation. Rioting students in Alabama necessitated the use of troops to restore order. The same is true at Central High in Little Rock, Arkansas. The crowd was angry when they heard the black students had entered the school. One man with a brick turned his fury on to Alex Wilson, a member of the black press. The documentary shows the white man chasing Wilson and hitting him with the brick. Another riot ensued over James Meredith's attempt to enroll at Ole' Miss. Ross Barnett personally blocked one of Meredith's attempts to register and called upon all white Mississippians to join him in resisting desegregation. On September 30th 1961, Kennedy finally decided to register Meredith. Federal troops descended on Ole Miss. That day, the students were returning from a football weekend and saw the law enforcement and knew what it meant. Although they did not know where Meredith was, "they knew he was on campus. And at eight o'clock . . . Ole Miss turned into a battlefield" (Bond, Fighting). The white students were completely out of control. The rioters "were shooting and throwing Molotov cocktails. And [they] were targeting the media, smashing cameras and attacking reporters" (Bond Fighting). The news footage of the event is a chaotic scene. A white student at the time, Jan Robertson says that she "got angry" when she saw the marshals because it "seemed a betrayal. . . . And I caught myself really with some of these feelings" (Fighting). She also recalls

> one freshman girl that had been this little flower of Southern gentility when I had met her. And she came up to me, and her face was absolutely contorted, and I almost didn't recognize her. And she was absolutely furious, because she had

> picked up a brick and thrown it at a marshal, and it had only hit him in the head and scratched him, and she had not put his eye out. (Fighting)

The riot worsened and Kennedy finally sent in troops. That night "35 marshals were shot, and two people–a French journalist and an Oxford worker–were killed" (Bond, Fighting). Through the use of historical news footage and oral histories, *Eyes on the Prize* depicts white Southern resistance as irrational, dangerous, and deadly.

To portray the personal impact of white Southern resistance, the documentary offers historical footage and oral histories of two of the Little Rock Nine: Ernest Green and Melba Patillo Beals. One of their primary recollections is that of mob violence. Eight of the nine students went to school on the first day together. Armed soldiers and a mob blocked their entry. Elizabeth Eckford missed the call to go to school together. She faced the mob by herself. The historical footage shows Eckford in a white dress and sunglasses approaching the school. The mob follows her constantly shouting, "Go home Nigger!" She sits down at a bus stop and a reporter attempts to interview her. "Could you tell me your name please? Are you going to go to school here at Central High? You don't care to say anything, is that right?" Eckford makes no reply and then while still standing in front of her says, "This girl here is the first negro, apparently, of high school age to show up at Central High School the day that the Federal Court ordered it integrated. She was followed in front of the school by an angry crowd, many of them shouting epithets at her" (Fighting). The scene ends when a white woman emerges from the crowd to escort her to a bus. The mob follows them, still shouting epithets. Ernest Green interprets Eckford's silence:

> it has to be the most frightening thing, . . . because she had a crowd of white people behind her threatening to kill her. She had nobody. I mean, there was not a black face in sight anywhere, nobody that she could turn to as a friend. (Fighting)

Beals and Green also experience the terror of a mob on their first day they were able to enter the school. As they rode to school Beals remembers hearing a report on the radio that there was a mob and Beals recalls "I could just get a glimpse of this group[.] . . . And I knew what a mob meant, and I knew that the sounds that came from the crowd were very angry. So, we entered the side of the building very, very fast." Ernest Green remembers that day and describes it like a war zone. He says,

> the convoy that went from Mrs. Bates's house to school had had a Jeep in front, a Jeep behind, and they both had machine gun mounts. And then the whole school was rained with the paratroopers and helicopters hovering around. And we marched up the steps with this circle of soldiers with bayonets drawn. (Fighting)

Later that day, the mob kept the students from leaving the building. Beals remembers the terrifying experience:

> The mob was getting passed the wooden sawhorses, because the police would no longer fight their own in order to . . . protect us. And so, someone made a suggestion that if they allowed the mob to hang one kid, they could then get the rest out. And a gentleman, whom I believe to be the Assistant Chief of Police said, "How you going to choose? You going to let them draw straws?" He said, "I'll get them out." And we were taken to the basement of this place, and we were put into two cars, grayish, blue colored Fords. And the man instructed them, he said, "Once you start driving, do not stop." (Fighting)

These experiences provide valuable information about the process of desegregation and the impact of mob violence on the Little Rock Nine. They testify to the very real danger that these children found themselves in while trying to dismantle the system of racism in the United States.

After the federal government finally stepped in to forward the process of integration, verbal and physical abuse by white community members and students continued. Although federal troops protected the Little Rock Nine members, "they couldn't be with us everywhere" recalls Beals. "They couldn't be with us, for example, in the ladies' bathroom. They couldn't be with us in gym. You'd be walking out to the volleyball court and someone would break a bottle and trip you on the ball. I have scars on my right knee from that." Beals also remembers the psychological stress of school: "I worried about silly things like keeping my saddle shoes straight . . . . But also, which part of the hall to walk in that's the safest? Who's going to hit me with what? Is it going to be hot soup today? Is it going to be so greasy that it ruins the dress my grandmother made for me?" The stress became too much one day for Minnie Jean Brown. After being taunted by a group of white students calling Brown and her companions, "nigger, nigger, nigger," Minnie Jean poured a bowl of chili over the boy's head. She was eventually expelled from school. In response, white students brought cards to school that read, "One down, eight to go." Although saddened by the fact that Brown would no longer be her classmate, Beals recalls that the chili incident happened at a time when no one wanted to be in school. By the school year's end, Beals had "settled into [herself]" and "could have gone on like that for the next five years. It didn't matter anymore. [She] could have gone on for the next five years. It didn't matter anymore. [She] was past feeling." After the

last day of school, Beals burned her books in the backyard while crying. She wondered if she would go back to Little Rock High the next year, but did not want to return.

The Political Use of Emotion

In opposition to the images and sentiments of unruly white Southern resisters, *Eyes on the Prize* presents historical footage of young black students in overcrowded classrooms quietly and orderly learning. The respectability of the project of desegregation is also captured in the student's poise in the face of turmoil. The students also base their claims in cultural pride, but on a national rather than regional basis. In a public statement defending her right to attend the University of Alabama, Authrine Lucy argues that her expulsion is the result of "lawless elements outside the campus [who] set themselves over and above the law. Their actions were a big discredit to our nation" (Fighting). At a Thanksgiving press conference, the children explain what attending Little Rock means to them:

> Gloria Ray: My name is Gloria Ray. I am thankful for having a chance to fulfill my educational desires, and for being a citizen in a country where the federal government respects and protects the rights of all its people.
>
> Terrance Roberts: My name is Terrence Roberts and I'm a Seventh Day Adventist, and I would like to say that I know that communists enjoy taking advantage of situations such as these to twist the minds of peoples of the world. But I am thankful that in America their actions are being foiled through the efforts of many democratic-minded citizens.

> Minnie Jean Brown: I'm Minnie Jean Brown. I'm thankful for the many people who have stood by us and worked diligently in our struggle for a perfect democracy. (Fighting)

James Meredith was so reserved in public that people thought he was almost too cold and calculating. Myrlie Evers recalls that she believes his austere exterior was a "facade that he would present to the public was one that was somewhat cold, somewhat cocky. But it was necessary to do that in order to protect himself. Because, after all, he was a human being with feelings, with fear" (Fighting). Compared to the white resistors, the black students presented themselves and their position based in national patriotism.

Reformulating Community

The political victory of desegregating Central High for the year is also expressed as a victory in communal terms. There are moments of triumph that, in part, justify the struggle of integration in the "Fighting Back" episode. The first is the arrival of the federal troops. Melba Patillo Beals remembers feeling a sense of "pride and hope, that, yes, this is the United States, yes, there is a reason I salute the flag. And it's going to be okay. You know, if these guys just go with us the first time, it's going to be okay." Ernest Green remembers marching up the steps into school encircled by "soldiers with bayonets drawn. I'd figured that we had really gone into school that day. And walking up the steps that day was probably one of the biggest feelings I've ever had. I figured I'd finally cracked it." Later that year, Ernest was interviewed about his experience at Little Rock High School. He tells the reporter: "Well, from the beginning it wasn't quite what we expected, . . . I think it's turned out to be . . . an interesting year. . . . [B]ut when you put all the sides together, we've had some nice times as well as some rough times. And I

think, all in all, it's worked out rather nicely." In an oral history interview, Ernest again reinforces his personal victory over segregation at his graduation. Although a silence fell over the crowd when his name was called Ernest says, "Nobody clapped. But I figured they didn't have to, because after I got that diploma, that was it. I had accomplished what I had come there for." These moments of belief in the American system and the personal success of black students contribute to dominant memories about the possibilities and prospects presented by integration for black children.

There is also evidence in the documentary that the experience of desegregation changed the views of some white students. Included in the recollections of the Little Rock Nine episode is the oral history of Craig Rains. Rains recalls that his exposure to to black students changed his thinking about racism and integration. He says,

> I began to change from being somebody who was -- I considered myself a moderate to, if I had my way, would have said, "Let's don't integrate, because it's the state's right to decide," to someone who felt a real sense of compassion for these students, and felt like they deserved something that I had. And I also developed a real dislike for the people that were out there that were causing the problems. It was very unsettling to me. (Fighting)

Other white students who were interviewed by the press also demonstrate a willingness to accept integration.

> Interviewer**:** Do you think you could get used to going to school with colored children?
>
> Student[1]: Yes, sir, I think so. I mean, if I'm going to have to do it, I'm going to have to get used to it.

> Interviewer: Do you think that the trouble is with the students here in the high school and in the schools of Little Rock? Or is it with the parents? Or is it with outsiders? Or where is the trouble?
>
> Student[1]: I think it's the parents. I mean, I saw it, you know, all these parents out here and the man kicking that negro and everything.
>
> Interviewer: And you don't sympathize with that sort of action at all?
>
> Student[1]: No, sir, I don't.
>
> Interviewer: What do you think?
>
> Student[2]: Well, I think it was just downright un-American. I think it was the most terrible thing that has ever been seen in America. I mean, yeah, I'm guessing . . . [it's] patriotic or something like that, but I always thought that all men were created equal.

These recollections and interviews at the time of the incident demonstrate the power of integration to influence and change people's minds about racism and equality in the United States. Furthermore, Melba Patillo Beals, Ernest Green, and Minnie Jean Brown's stories of struggles become a sacrifice for the larger social good. This is not to say that it justifies the violence and resistance to integration demonstrated through visual evidence and testimony. But the changes that occur in some of the white students and Ernest Green's victory in graduating from a formerly segregated school validate the idea of integration as an appropriate means to remedy racial inequality. This oral historical evidence allows viewers to understand the personal sacrifices and abuse suffered by the children involved in the project of integration. Malba Patillo Beals' oral history is especially telling. Unlike Ernest Green, Beals' memory of integration is bitter. The

thought of having to continue to struggle against a system that clearly did not want her was a price too high for a "better" education. Moreover, these recollections of these students implicitly answer back the dehumanizing rhetoric of Southerners who would keep students like the Little Rock Nine from a quality education.

THE RACIAL POLITICS OF ANTI-BUSING IN BOSTON

Eyes on the Prize presents the Boston busing crisis as another instance of white resistance to African American children trying to obtain quality education. This segment differs from the Little Rock Nine narrative in that it is told primarily from the perspective of parents. The documentary continues to provide oral historical evidence that frames the debate over integration in schools in terms of community.

Eyes on the Prize includes arguments community members and political officials make against busing to create integration. Most of the other arguments against busing concern the community. A white woman interviewed by a television reporter says, "It's tearing them apart. People. As a community, it's tearing them apart. They may say this is helping, it's tearing them apart. I'm not bothered, I don't care. My one will not go to school, but it's tearing them apart!" (Keys). Another woman tells a reporter, "I wouldn't care if they were green or purple, it's the idea of putting my kid on a bus when I have a school right across the street from where they should go. I don't care what color they are" (Keys). But perhaps the most interesting turn in the Boston busing segment is the beginnings of the reverse discrimination arguments. At an anti-busing rally Janet Palmariello argues: "Just because I'm white doesn't mean that the 14th Amendment doesn't refer to me, either. I am white and I want my rights" (Keys). Similar to the Southern resisters who argue against desegregation in order to maintain their culture, the

Boston busing resisters also frame their responses as violations of their communities and their rights as white people.

Through oral histories, *Eyes on the Prize* establishes that the official response to the crisis made a dangerous environment for blacks in Boston. The mayor during the resistance to busing, Robert Kiley recalls, "I think it's not unfair to say that the business community, the financial community and I would say the religious community took a walk in the early 1970's, leaving really only the politicians and the parents as the people who cared about the issue" (Keys). President Ford also took a hands-off approach. Whites who opposed busing took heart after Gerald Ford's first press conference as president in which he stated: "I have consistently opposed forcing busing to achieve racial balance as a solution to quality education. And therefore, I respectfully disagree with the judge's order" (Keys). Moreover, the city officials did little to ease the situation. Jean McGuire recalls that during that time there was the "fear that if you stepped out of your place, you could be attacked. There was no leadership that said it's off limits" (Keys). Ruth Batson says, she "never heard any public official on the state level or on the city level come out and say, 'This is a good thing, we should all learn together, we should all live together.' There was no encouragement from anybody. I call it complete, official neglect" (Keys).

Black parents and teachers knew that their children's futures were at stake and recognized the need to respond. Their testimony reveals the racial element at work in the anti-busing rhetoric. Jean McGuire, describes her frustration as a black teacher trying to educate black children in a public school system that did not care about her students. She explains the demeaning learning environment for black children in Boston:

> I walked into this old building built in 1842 . . . and I had 42 students, 36 seats. We didn't have new crayons, we had a box of old, nubbly crayons. Pencils had to be collected at the end of the day so you would have enough for the children for the next day. There wasn't enough white paper. . . . And here was this book I found which had um -- It had the word niggers in it, ten little niggers sitting on a fence, nine little niggers playing in a line, and it was just like ten little Indians, nine little Indians, and it was very offensive. (Keys)

McGuire's testimony powerfully establishes the plight of a young black person in the educational system in Boston. Parent and teachers of black students interpreted the problem as a community wide issue and addressed it as such. Boston's National Association for the Advancement of Colored People president, Tom Atkins recalls reading through forms from students. As he read through and realized that these children "could not write a simple declaratory sentence. And as I read these forms, none of which were grammatically correct or spelling proper, I just started to cry. It was impossible to explain the feeling of pain on the one hand, but on the other hand, I knew we were right" (Keys).

SUFFERING FOR RACIAL BALANCE

The students bused from Roxbury to South Boston were treated in similar fashion as the Little Rock Nine. Both students and community members speak to the verbal and physical pain of integration. On their first day of school, white people had gathered to harass the students. At the end of the day, the mob attacked the buses as they left South Boston. The documentary includes images of whites throwing objects at the buses and the subsequent broken windows of the buses. One of the young riders tells a reporter

“they were throwing eggs at the windows and trying to hit people with them and they called us black niggers” (Keys). Former student Phyllis Ellison recalls riding the bus to school. As the bus would come over the Hill the students could “hear people saying, ‘Niggers, go home.’ There were signs of -- They had made a sign saying, "Black people stay out, we don't want any niggers in our schools." And there were people on the corners holding bananas like we were apes” (Keys). Ruth Batson rode with the children to school and also attests to the verbal abuse heaped on her students. She remembers that as they approached the school the students would quite their laughing and talking and would get “very, very quiet. And then they would have to stay there until the police came over, escorted them out the bus and in through the metal detectors into the schools. . . . It killed me to see our black students go through that procedure” (Keys). Students were also in physical danger. Because of all the tension that surrounded the busing, fights broke out on a daily basis, sometimes 10-15 fights a day (Ellison, Keys). One fight got out of hand and a white boy was stabbed. The white mob that had formed outside after hearing the news was so angry that police had to use decoy buses to get the children home.

Parents feared what the impact of the hate would do to their children. Sandy Young makes a particuarly compelling argument about the damage to children. Indignant she tells the audience:

> We don't teach our kids to hate anybody. All we want for our kids is to love and to get a decent education and to live decently as human beings. But we're not even distinguished as human beings as far as East Boston goes, or South Boston. We're niggers! And I would be damned if I had any child of mine exposed to anything like that. I wouldn't want my child to sit beside it, because see, I'm not going to

> teach it to hate. And that's what's happening. That's the lesson that those kids have been getting out there in South Boston. "Stand beside Mommy, sweetie, and throw a rock at the nigger." (Keys)

Another concerned parent tells a reporter that "My little boy got back safe but the only reason I don't think why they should bus all the kids across the -- They get all hurt when they can't defend themselves. I feel like they should go over here to our school over here. Instead of busing them way across because they can't defend themselves, they can't fight, they can't do nothing" (Betty Johnson, Keys). A little girl interviewed by a reporter says she thinks that

> When we go up there, we're going to be stoned. It's not fair to me because why is it the other way around, when they come up here? When they come up here, we won't mess with them, so why when we come up there, they mess with us? . . . I don't think it's fair. It's not fair to me. (Keys)

Each black parent, child, and community member testifies to the pain of having their rights denied. The Boston busing issue ends with Bonds concluding: Over the next few years, resistance continued. In the first two years of desegregation, almost a third of the white students left the system. Over time, the court gradually forced changes in the Boston public schools, but the cost remained high" (Keys). Although the segment ends with a picture of a black student heading up the stairs of a school, fist held high, and with a smile, the documentary encourages the viewer to identify with the plight of black children by explaining what racial discrimination feels like, how it sounds, and looks. While anti-integrationists used less racially specific language, the images that

accompanied the protests—confederate flags and signs with racial epithets is still recognizably racist.

REVERSE DISCRIMINATION: THE COMMUNITY IMPACT OF *BAKKE*

The *Bakke* case moves the issue of educational equity into higher learning. The documentary primarily relies on the oral histories of three African American women involved in education and the *Bakke* case to question the central argument: that white people were suffering racial discrimination because of affirmative action. Their testimony suggests that the arguments in the *Bakke* case neglect the historical violations of the African American community. Their pro-integration arguments stem from the need of the larger American public to make reparations for the damages of slavery and Jim Crow.

Eyes on the Prize presents Bakke's argument as an attempt to reverse the gains of Brown. In an oral history interview, one of Bakke's lawyer argues that "these programs like the Davis program are great things because they include people and bring them into the class. And I think the shortcoming of that analysis is they forget that when you bring in one person, you're keeping out another person" (Keys). In other words, affirmative action is reverse racism. This argument is echoed in the political arena and is represented in the documentary by a comment from Senator James Buckley:

> think we were making enormous progress before anyone conjured up this perversion of affirmative action. I believe there's been a good faith effort, too, on the part of most Americans to comply, to drop the blinders that too many of us have worn over the years. Progress has been made. But what we are now seeing, and what I feel, frankly, is a backlash and a very serious backlash. You see this in

> unions, for example, you see this in colleges, even in colleges, where people are saying we must discriminate against someone who happens to be white and happens to be male. (Keys)

Three women involved in the case explain the problems with the *Bakke* case and the possible outcomes. Assistant Secretary for Education Health, and Education and Welfare, Mary Frances Berry argues that the use of the term "preferential treatment" to explain affirmative action to the public shifts the focus of the debate away from past injustice and suggests that recipients of "preferential treatment" are undeserving (Keys). Eleanor Holmes Norton, a former delegate to Congress, also focuses on the need for affirmative action programs to address past injustice. She asks, "If in fact women, blacks, Hispanics, have been excluded, the question becomes how do you include them? How do you make up for the legal wrong" (Keys). However, the central case revolves around Toni Johnson-Chavez, a woman who, at first, did not know that her presence was a matter of controversy. Johnson-Chavez was admitted to the Davis medical program, but she did not know that she was there because of affirmative action rather than because her scores and grades were better than some of her white colleagues. Johnson-Chavez graduated; in *Eyes on the Prize*, she articulates a pro-integration perspective:

> There are a large amount of poor people and there are only two pediatricians in that whole city. The two pediatricians here are both black. If the two of us had not been trained in that era and were not here, who would have fulfilled that need?
>
> That's the question I asked then, and that's the question that I ask now. (Keys)

The documentary reinforces Johnson-Chavez's question by accompanying her comments with footage of her examining infants in a doctor's office. Thus, the documentary

suggests that the questions she raises are central to the integration, even though the debate over the concept and programs in the public sphere on the face of it seem to have little relevance.

Framing the controversy over affirmative action in terms of its effects on communities of color demonstrates the negative impact of anti-affirmative action decisions. The documentary frames the Supreme Court decision as a significant blow to the struggle for educational equity and marked a shift in American moral philosophy. Julian Bond ends the episode observing: "For many Americans, the cost of remedying a history of discrimination was too high. For others, the cost of turning back were all too clear" (Keys).

CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that the narrative progression of the documentary forwards the claim that elements of the white community have consistently, and in some ways successfully, resisted integration. The documentary makes this argument through affective appeals that encourage adherence on the part of viewers. This rhetorical approach does two things. First, it focuses the debate on racial issues that are at the heart of the controversy. White arguments against educational equality are revealed for what they are—distractions from the issue of equitable resource distribution in education. Second, it brings America's commitment to equality into question. Most Americans ignore the "big disconnect" between belief and practice on the issue of integration. The use of political emotion in *Eyes on the Prize* exploits the disconnection that surrounds the ethics of being-with-others in an unequal society. These polyvalenced memories of

integration have the potential to create dissonance in a viewer that may lead to a re-evaluation of integration.

The resistance to integration in a society that values equality requires an explanation for the cause of racism. While white racism is a consistent feature in the documentary, the visceral hatred of white racists is a specific trait of the integration debate. Images and explanations for resistance to integration implicitly argue for a theory of racism based on psychological factors and have psychological and emotional benefits. Indeed, racism may have these effects. In *The Wages of Whiteness*, David R. Roediger, in accordance with Franz Fanon, argues that the white racism of Irish Americans against blacks in the 1800s was a product of 'the prelogical thought of the phobic.' Racism, then, was the result of placing blacks

> within the category of the 'biological', defining them as sexual but also as without history and as natural, erotic, sensual and animal. Whiteness took shape against the corresponding counter-images, shunting anxieties and desires regarding relationships to nature and sexuality onto Blacks. (150-151)

Roediger also agrees that the struggle for jobs was important, however Roediger (and perhaps all theorists who pin racism on psychological factors) fails to differentiate between the causes of racism and its outcomes.

In his analysis of Black Nationalism and socialism, Ahmed Shawki argues that racism is a consequence of capitalism and not inherent to the human psyche. Instead, racism came into being at a particular historical moment to justify and naturalize slave society and colonialism (7). This fundamental material relation defined African and African American experience in the United States and justifications for racism. So while

I do not disagree that some people find psychological reward in racism, I would argue that neglecting the function of material relations in racism has important consequences. The documentary's implicit assumption about the emotional and psychological foundations of racism may distract poor and working class whites from their real interests. Racism, in the end, does not pay. There is significant evidence—in the form of wage and employment data, for example, that it is primarily employers (and, perhaps, the stability of class society itself), not working class whites who benefit from racial divides (Bloom 9). Racism allows economic elites to keep working class people from uniting. In the famous words of Benjamin Franklin, "We must hang together or assuredly we shall all hang separately." More appropriate, maybe, is Frederick Douglass' iteration of this idea: "They divided both to conquer each." He elaborated,

> Both are plundered and by the same plunderers. The slave is robbed by his master, of all his earnings above what is required for his physical necessities; and the white man is robbed by the slave system, because he is flung into competition with a class of laborers who work without wages. (Douglass 188)

Moreover, it is not clear that racism is a psychological inevitably when people of different races interact (Shawki 7).

The connection between racism and capitalism is directly related to the integration debate because education is a resource. Integration was not about black desire to share public space with white people. It was about gaining a resource that was systematically denied and ensured that a group of people would, with few exceptions, remain within the ranks of the lower class. Thus, the racism that motivated working class and poor whites to keep blacks out served the purposes of upper class whites who

benefited from the divide. By presenting racism as the result of an emotional and psychological attachment to a particular culture and tradition, *Eyes on the Prize* limits the possibilities for rhetorical invention and lines of argument that would stem from a material analysis of racism.

Conversely, the use of political emotion on the part of African Americans allows them to articulate the impact of limiting their possibilities as humans. The presentation of integration in *Eyes on the Prize* demonstrates the difficulty of overturning two hundred years of legal, social, and political tradition. Appeals to the common humanity of African Americans and thus, the imperative to protect their rights as equal citizens gets lost in the shuffle of legal and political reasoning whose traditions are based in racism. Both before and after the Civil War the Supreme Court and American political system consistently denied the humanity of blacks. The three-fifths compromise and the *Dred Scott vs. Sanford* case in 1957 established that African Americans were not included in "the people" and therefore not citizens before the Civil War. After the Civil War the 14th and 15th amendments were designed to guarantee blacks the privileges of a citizen. However, through a series of critical cases these protections were "reduced and nullified by the Supreme Court and the Southern 'Redeemers,' with the complicity of the North" (Cook 5). The infamous *Plessy vs. Ferguson* case established the "separate but equal" clause. Moreover, the Court argued that "the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this is so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it" (qtd in Cook 6). The documentary's consistent focus on the

subjective experiences connected to community improvement refutes the logic of racism at the heart of the American political and economic system.

The twisted and racist logic utilized in these cases demonstrates the difficulty of using legal reasoning to combat racism. This difficulty is evident even in the *Brown* decision, as judges looked to sociological and psychological evidence, not necessarily legal reasoning to make their decision to desegregate the schools. Even now, the importance of integration is sometimes confused in public discourse. At a commemoration of the 400th year of Jamestown, Al Sharpton explains the impact of this misinterpretation of the goals of integration,

> The fight was about desegregation and self-determination. There is a difference. We said if we are going to pay the same dollar to get on the bus, we're going to sit where everybody else sits. We weren't trying to sit next to whites. We were trying not to be limited by our seating based on everybody else's seating. If we are going to pay taxes we are going to enjoy the same rights. So it is almost a white supremacist notion that we went to jail and graves to sit on a toilet with white folks. We went to graves and we went to jail so that our dollar and our rights was regarded like anybody else. We never wanted to get with others. We wanted others to stop limiting us at the same amount of dollars. (State of Black America)

Sharpton's comment connects the economic and social purposes of integration. The use of political emotion does not preclude arguments about the relation between capitalism and racism, but it does obfuscate the greater connections between access to a vital resource and the economic impact on African Americans as a whole. These issues

become important lines of argument and political alignment with others facing economic disenfranchisement, especially as they are remembered during a political effort to winnow away at the mandates of *Brown*.

[iv] Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954). Also, from this point on I will refer to the case as *Brown.*

[v] All quotes from the documentary are from the Public Broadcasting web page http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/about/pt.html last accessed 16 July 2007.

[vi] In this chapter, I analyze "Fighting Back," and "The Keys to the Kingdom." From this point on, I will cite the episodes as "Fighting" and "Keys" for clarity.

Chapter Four: Counter-Memories of Black Nationalism

Keeping blacks and whites separate was an idea supported by both blacks and whites before the Supreme Court articulated the Separate but Equal doctrine in the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* case.[vii] Booker T. Washington, a Black Nationalist of the early 20th century, argued for the separation of the races believing that African American advancement could be accomplished through patience, industry, thrift, and usefulness. However, these goals were significantly curtailed by a racist society that refused social, economic, and political advancement for blacks. The harsh realities of the practice of the separate but equal doctrine lead many African Americans to "demand both the right to interact with whites as equals in the public sphere and the recognition that whites and blacks were 'equal races'" (Condit and Lucaites 148-149). However, the violent and legal opposition to integration led many African Americans to believe that separating themselves from white culture and power structures would be the only way to produce black self-definition and self-determination.

Eyes on the Prize presents Black Nationalism as a rational response to racism in the United States. Religion, education, and politics are particularly important to the question of separation or Black Nationalism within the documentary. The Nation of Islam, the educational controversies at Ocean Hill-Brownsville and Brown University, as well as the Black Nationalist convention in Gary, Indiana all constitute varying forms of Black Nationalism. The unifying theme among the episodes is the desire to constitute a black political subject. It is an attempt to create separation from the "totalizing discourse of Eurocentrism" and replace it with "its own new totalizing system—a replacement of one epistemology with another, one ontology with another" (Gordon 13). Intriguingly,

even though the overarching story of the documentary underscores integration as a goal, it actually provides audience members with a rationale for separation. In support of this observation, I begin by providing a brief overview of Black Nationalism as it pertains to the physical separation from whites, followed by an introduction to The Nation of Islam. I then analyze the narrative progression of Black Nationalism beginning with the Nation of Islam up to the Gary, Indiana convention to demonstrate the documentary's implicit assertion that Black Nationalism creates agency by constructing a black identity. Following that analysis, I examine three ways in which the documentary rhetorically constitutes a black identity: the absolution of guilt, self-love, and black epistemology.

SEPARATION AND BLACK NATIONALISM

Black and White Americans perceive the subject of black separatism divergently. Whites often treat black separatism "disparagingly, if at all, implying that black separatism is an illogical and misguided reaction to white oppression" (Hall "Introduction" 1). Black people, on the other hand, often view separatism as "utopian," a "once-and-for-all solution to the complexity of race relations in the United States" or as an impractical way of understanding and addressing the problem of racism (Hall "Introduction" 1). Although the most recent push for black separatism was during the civil rights and Black Power movements, separatism is "deeply rooted in American history" (Hall *Black* 1). Booker T. Washington advocated separation between blacks and whites with the exception of "all things essential to mutual progress." Other people of African descent had more drastic changes in mind. Marcus Garvey, the Jamaican born founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, headed the back-to-Africa campaign with the hopes of creating an independent African state. Black intellectual,

W.E.B. Dubois who also rejected integration as the only solution and, instead observed that separation may be necessary to African American survival (Hall *Black* 87). Of the three, only Garvey advocated separation based on Black Nationalism.

Black Nationalism is a subcategory of separatism. Black Nationalism is a complex and diverse ideological construct that incorporates "political, cultural, territorial, and economic factors" (Hall "Introduction" 1). Based on the idea of racial solidarity, Black Nationalism "implies that blacks should organize themselves on the basis of their common experience of oppression as a result of their blackness, culture, and African heritage" (Hall *Black* 1). There are multiple manifestations of Black Nationalism: *Cultural nationalism* asserts that black people have distinctive culture, life-styles, values, philosophy, etc., which are essentially different from those of white people. Closely related to cultural nationalism*, religious nationalism* asserts that black people should establish, control, and run their own churches. In contrast*, revolutionary black nationalism* contends that only the overthrow of the existing political and economic system can bring about the liberation of black Americans. Finally*, separatist nationalism* in its purest form, asserts that blacks and whites should live in separate nations. However, there are also separatists who argue for all black towns or all black states. A better known urban variant of this form of separatism is "community control of black communities" (Hall "Introduction" 1-2).

Each form of nationalism advocates some form of separation between blacks and other cultures. However, the degree and reasons for separation may differ. There were a number of nationalist organizations during the black freedom struggle. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (1960-1966) began as an integrationist group during

the civil rights movement, but evolved and divided into nationalist/separatist groups. The Black Panther Party, a revolutionary group that evolved out of the Black Power movement, rejected integration as an immediate goal and advocated separatism for community empowerment.

Even some black socialists, who most often advocated cross-racial solidarity, argued for the necessity of separate black politics. Manning Marable argues that although modern forms of racism and sexism are based in capitalism, both racism and patriarchy are "precapitalist in their social and ideological origin;" thus "separate and even autonomous apparatuses must be created after the revolution to effectively uproot racism and patriarchy" (*Speaking* 260). Ahmed Shawki argues that the desire for a separate Black Nationalist revolution is often based on misleading assumptions of revolutionary Marxism (6). However, even Leon Trotsky argued that a process of "permanent revolution" (more gradual and ongoing work) was necessary for in the "struggle for Black rights" (Shawki 61), suggesting that the issue of racism was a special category that needed to be addressed in a socialist revolution. However, the Nation of Islam (NOI) is, perhaps, the best-known separatist group during the civil rights movement.

The Nation of Islam draws from both Garveyism, an aspect of Black Nationalism that argues for the complete, total and never ending redemption of the continent of Africa by people of African ancestry, at home and abroad, and the teachings of Noble Drew Ali, founder of the Moorish Science Temple of America, who led a Back-to-Islam group in the 1940s. Ali argued that African Americans were really Asiatics, specifically Moors, whose ancestors had come from Morocco. Ali's disciples included Wallace Fard

Muhammad, the founder of the Nation of Islam and Elijah Muhammad, who succeeded Wallace.

Both Garvey and Drew are important to the founding of the Nation of Islam. Elijah Muhammad, the NOI's leader during their period of greatest growth in the mid-20th century, argued that black liberation necessitated religious, economic, political, social and cultural separation. Garvey argued that the Negro Improvement Association necessitated complete separation to awaken the "so-called Negro" to the truth about his/her heritage and destiny. The ideology of separation is based on the following claims in the Nation of Islam: Blacks are the original people of the Earth and their true religion is Islam; black Muslims must reject the names of their former slave owners and must build all-black organizations for the purpose of creating physical separation between blacks and whites either in the United States or in Africa or Asia (Hall *Black* 101-102). The Nation of Islam was especially appealing to blacks of lower-class status who bore the brunt of white racism. One of the Nation's most popular converts was Malcolm X, who converted to Islam while in prison.

A charismatic speaker, Malcolm X drew many to the Nation of Islam. He connected the suffering of blacks in the United States to plight of black people all over the world and taught black pride and awareness. Through discipline and self-help, blacks could find their humanity that whites had stolen. As a member of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm also believed in separation of the races. His break with the Nation of Islam and his trip to Mecca influenced his thinking on separation. His last speeches and public statements suggest that he may not have believed full separation was necessary, however he continued to espouse other forms of Black Nationalism.

THE MISINTERPRETATION OF SEPARATION AND BLACK NATIONALISM IN PUBLIC MEMORY

Whites sometimes equate separation and segregation and argue that the two are "obverse sides of the same coin" (Peterson 100). In "The Ballot or the Bullet," Malcolm X explains that the difference between separation and segregation is that a segregated community is "a community in which people live, but outsiders control the politics and the economy of that community" (55). Thus, separation is an attempt to regain control over the community for its own benefit. This may not sound like a radical or subversive project, but as Malcolm X explains in the same speech, "The white man is more afraid of separation than he is of integration. Segregation means that he puts you away from him, but not far enough for you to be out of his jurisdiction; separation means you're gone" (56). However, in a nation that rarely seriously considers black separatism, the desire to be independent from white culture is often interpreted as a violation of the wisdom of *Brown vs. Board of Education*[viii] decision that declared, "To be separate is inherently unequal."

On the whole, U.S. discourse and culture "remember" Black Nationalism with suspicion. Pulitzer Prize winner Les Payne recalls writing a column praising Malcolm X in the 1980s, and remembers the many "cross looks and nods" by many of his white colleagues, some of whom refused to speak to him thereafter. To speak or write about Malcolm X or the Black Panther Party was an anathema (Payne). The lack of public remembrance and understanding of the legacy of Black Nationalism is due, in part, to historians and professional scholars reluctance to "research the movement on it own terms, preferring instead to characterize Black Power as the "evil twin" that wrecked civil

rights" and the "seeming lack of archival material on this era has served as a drawback to in depth research" (Peniel 2). The treatment of Black Nationalism, is therefore, better characterized as public forgetting or remembering the misunderstandings of Black Nationalism from the 1950s-1970s. *Eyes on the Prize* counters these memories by presenting Black Nationalism as a legitimate response to white racism. Although the documentary does not support complete separation of the races, it positively portrays the struggle to define a black political subject based in blackness rather than compared to whiteness.

There are some exceptions to the occlusion of Black Nationalism from popular recollection. Because of the lyrics of some rappers and *Malcolm X*, Spike Lee's 1992 film, the memory of Malcolm X has "increasingly acquired mythic stature" (Dyson *Making* 3). Chosen for his "ideological framework for authentic black consciousness" Malcolm X is the "rap revolution's rhetoric[ian] of choice" (Dyson, *Making* 85). Hip hop artists' choice to embrace the memory of Malcolm X in hip hop seems logical given its connection to the black power movement. In the mid-1970s "in America's inner cities, Hip-Hop was being created by Black and Latino youth in the South Bronx. It is therefore not much of a leap to see the Hip-Hop generation as direct descendents of the legacy left by Black Power groups such as the Black Panther Party" (Pough 26-27) who were heavily influenced by Malcolm X. In contrast to the middle class, well-mannered, civilized, "house slaves" that King's rhetoric appealed to, Malcolm spoke to the "field slaves," the ordinary working class black people (Kelley 420). He created identification with them by invoking his "experiences as an urban kid, former criminal, man of the streets, to show his audience that he knows where they are coming from and never forgot

where he came from" (Kelley 420). Malcolm represented the streets and his critiques of American racism are as relevant today as they were when he first spoke them. Even so, there are few public markers that remind the nation as a whole to remember Malcolm X. Furthermore, the film that immortalized him focused on his individual development rather than the force of his politics. Yet the memory of Malcolm X and his politics of Black Nationalism remain a potent force for contemporary critique.

BLACK IDENTITY ON BLACK TERMS: SEPARATISM IN *EYES ON THE PRIZE*

The issue of separatism in *Eyes on the Prize* moves from the apolitical separatism of the Nation of Islam (NOI) to the formation of a separate black political agenda as a means of representing the black nation within the United States. Black Nationalism, in the varying forms presented in the documentary, seeks to create a black identity based on the creation of a black standard. In his analysis of pro-slavery arguments, Dexter B. Gordon explains that African Americans were defined in terms of "'black otherness,' 'externality,' 'dependency' and 'inferiority'" (42). These labels continued after slavery as the symbols that aimed at enslaving the mind and the body. Black Nationalism, then, is the effort to create a black identity separate from, rather than in relation to whiteness. Thus, separation from white culture, power structures, and ways of knowing became important sites of political struggle as blacks worked toward self-definition and self-determination. The documentary details different attempts at a Black Nationalist politic, beginning with the Nation of Islam and ending with the Black Nationalist Political Convention in Gary, Indiana in 1972 that attempted to create a national black political agenda.

The first treatment of black separatism is in the seventh episode of the series, "The Time Has Come." In this episode, the documentary provides a rationale for the formation of a separatist group like the Nation of Islam and the possibility of approaching the world from a black perspective. It also articulates a critique of the misrepresentation of the NOI in white news media.

The NOI was growing in membership in major cities, yet many people were unaware of its existence until Louis Lomax reported on an NOI rally called, "The Trial." Thousands attended the rally and listened to Louis Farrakhan charge the white man with being the greatest "murderer, . . . liar, [and] . . . troublemaker on Earth. [And] therefore, . . . guilty as charged" (Time).[1] White news reporter Mike Wallace explains to the news audience that "the Trial" was representative of the NOI who preached "a gospel of hate that would set off a federal investigation if it were preached by southern whites" (Time). In an interview with black reporter, Louis Lomax, Elijah Muhammad confirms that he had been accused of preaching hate, but in reality he was teaching "the truth" (Time). Malcolm X also refutes the negative characterization of his organization in a speech he delivers at a street corner rally. He tells the audience that "They call Mr. Muhammad a hate teacher because he makes you hate dope and alcohol. They call Mr. Muhammad a black supremacist because he teaches you and me not only that we're as good as the white man, but better than the white man" (Time). The ideology of the NOI was troublesome to many whites who saw their divergence from the traditional civil rights agenda threatening. However, the documentary provides visual evidence of the popularity of the NOI's message among blacks in the North. There are numerous images of groups of black people at NOI rallies listening intently to speakers and watching ethnic dancers.

Thousands of people watched Farrakhan's "The Trial" and spoke out in affirmation of his call to find the white man "guilty."

Reception of the NOI and their politics of separation were mixed among African Americans. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) member John Lewis explains in an oral history interview that many blacks from the South viewed the NOI with suspicion and saw "Malcolm as someone . . . from the outside, coming from the North to tell us there was a different way, a different approach" (Time). However, Malcolm X also had a message that resonated with many African Americans. Sonia Sanchez, member of the Congress of Racial Equality, remembers the first time she heard Malcolm X speak.[4] She was resistant to his message, but stood at a street corner rally in the rain, "determined not to look at him, determined not to listen. But he started to talk and I found myself more and more listening to him. And I began to nod my head and say, 'Yeah, that's right, that makes sense'" (Time). Stokley Carmichael, also of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) recalls that as people began to take a closer look at Malcolm X, "the quicker they got hooked on Malcolm X" (Time). In fact, SNCC began to move toward a nationalist, rather than integrationist poltics thereafter.

After Malcolm X leaves the NOI, the documentary focuses on his life and the developing philosophy behind his politics and his vision for Black Nationalism. The documentary features a number of Malcolm's public addresses where he continually explains the problem of racism in the United States and his positions. His statements argue for the need to politically engage the problem of racism. Malcolm forms the Organization of Afro-American Unity to forward the goals of Black Nationalism, by which he means that

> the black man should control the politics of his own community and control the politicians who are in his own community. My personal economic philosophy is also black nationalism, which means that the black man should have a hand in controlling the economy of the so-called Negro community. He should be developing the type of knowledge that would enable him to own and operate the businesses and thereby be able to create employment for his own people, for his own kind. (Malcolm X, Time)

By this time, however, Malcolm's position on separation had softened a bit. When asked by a reporter if he would work with some of the other civil rights leaders, he affirms that he would as long as the programs were "genuinely designed to get results" (Malcolm, Time). The documentary includes a speech he made in Selma, Alabama at the request of SNCC in which he argues that the powers that be should acquiesce to the legitimate demands of SNCC and King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference. The segment ends with Malcolm's assassination. The memory of his death is powerful. Both Sonia Sanchez and Ossie Davis have to pause to regain their composure while talking about Malcolm's death. The documentary shows thousands of people who "endured subfreezing temperatures" lining the streets to witness the funeral procession (Time).

The message of black control affected many people. The documentary presents a number of different segments based on black efforts to gain control of their communities from white power structures. In the ninth episode, "Power!" parents and community leaders in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community in New York decided to take control of their children's education. The city government was hopeful that the experiment to allow the community to run the school would work well. After the community school board

asserted its power and fired teachers who did not want to "make an effort to get along with our kids, to teach our kids, if there was any problem, to possibly visit in the homes" (Dolores Torres, Power), the teachers union picketed the Ocean Hill-Brownsville experiment, but the controversy brought the black community together.

One man claims in a news interview groups who had previously been at odds could "rally around this community issue. Everybody understood the importance of black children receiving a quality education" (Power). A quality education, according to the documentary, was one that addressed the specific needs of black students. During the course of the experiment, education "looked" different. The documentary shows a woman teacher dressed in a dashiki and the physical education class included learning traditional African dance. The Ocean Hill-Brownsville community reinforced the need for this kind of education by adopting the rhetoric of Malcolm X, claimed that the teachers who had been fired would be kept out by "whatever means necessary" (Sonny Carson, Power).

Claims that the firings were anti-Semitic flamed the controversy, even though Albert Shanker, the union president, denies those claims in an oral history interview. But in a city that was home to approximately one million Jewish people, "the charge carried enormous political weight. Although many Jewish teachers crossed picket lines and continued to teach, the accusation threatened city support of the experiment" (Bond Power). The Ocean Hill-Brownsville experiment ended in failure. The pressure from the teachers union was too much for the project to withstand. The city took over the school in a move that one man claimed was, "educational colonialism" (Power).

African American students at Howard University also tried to decolonize their education. In the eleventh episode, "Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More," Howard student, Tony Gittens, recalls that the movement was shifting from "the attitude . . . of integration, of assimilation. . . towards one of self-identity and self-empowerment" (Shuffle). In April 1967, a student group invited Muhammad Ali to speak at Howard. After Ali's visit, some of the students authored a manifesto that demanded Howard move toward the students' vision of a black institution. The administration ignored the manifesto and so in March of 1968, 1,200 students took over the administration building (Bond, Shuffle). After three days of the student occupation, the administration decided to negotiate. Adrienne Manns, the lead negotiator, recalls that there were two main issues for the students: "First was Nabor's resignation, . . . And secondly . . . [w]e wanted Howard to make a statement about its commitment to the black community, to the welfare of the black community. And the trustees said no, they couldn't do that" (Shuffle). Fearing the forced removal by police, the students decided to leave the administration buildings. However, their efforts were not entirely in vain. The next semester, "Howard University sponsored a national conference called 'For the Black University.' It energized a growing black studies movement throughout the country" (Shuffle). In this way, the Howard students found a way to generate black knowledge by and for black people.

There was also cultural resistance to white power. Using historical footage, the documentary establishes Muhammad Ali's prowess as a boxer. It also demonstrates how he stood for his principles, even if it meant hurting his career or going to jail. Before his heavy weight title fight with Sonny Liston, promoters wanted Muhammad Ali, then

Cassius Marcellus Clay, to say that he was not a Muslim. If he did not, the promoters threatened to cancel the fight. Ali refused to deny his connection to the Nation of Islam, but with millions of dollars at stake, the fight went on. The documentary also includes Ali's fight against Floyd Patterson. Patterson was a former heavy weight champion and a devout Catholic. Patterson refused to call Ali by his Muslim name, insisting on calling him Cassius. The documentary shows the fight between the two. Ali's trainer, Angelo Dundee explains the scene; each time Ali punched Floyd he would ask Floyd, "'What's my name?' Pop. 'What's my name?' Pop, you know? I felt sorry for Floyd because Muhammad did a number on him" (Shuffle). Ali beat Floyd in 12 rounds, proving again his right to the heavy weight title and demanding respect for his beliefs.

Cassius Marcellus Clay's conversion to the Nation of Islam, and his subsequent name change to Muhammad Ali, was a cultural event that eventually had political consequences. Ali was drafted into the Army to fight in the Vietnam War. Ali told the press that he would not go to Vietnam because "the real enemies of my people are right here, not in Vietnam," and that he would follow the teachings of the Koran and "take parts in no wars on the side of infidels or Christians or non-believers in Islam. No war unless it's declared by Almighty God, Allah Himself, or his messengers" (Shuffle). The documentary includes the news footage of Ali's trip to the Houston induction center where he would refuse to join the army. Ali appears calm as he refuses to answer questions about his boxing career. For his refusal, Ali was sentenced to five years in prison. However, "In 1970, the Supreme Court overturned Ali's conviction. It was an expensive victory. Ali had lost three years at the height of his career. He would later tell the press, "I haven't lost one thing. I have gained a lot. Number one, I have gained a

peace of mind. I have gained a peace of heart" (Shuffle). Four years later, he defeated George Foreman in Zaire. At the age of 32, Ali was once again heavyweight champion of the world" (Bond, Shuffle). Commenting on the life Ali, entertainer and activist Harry Belafonte claims that Ali was,

> the genuine product of the moment, he was the best example. . . . He brought America to its most wonderful and most naked moment. 'I will not play your game, I will not kill in your behalf. You are immoral, unjust, and I stand here to attest to it. Now do with me what you will. And he was terribly, terribly powerful and delicious. And he made it, he made it. (Shuffle)

The documentary offers the life of Muhammad Ali as the possibility of acceptance in the United States on black terms—that acceptance in the United States did not necessitate assimilation.

Although Ali was able to succeed in the United States without assimilating fully into its culture, the documentary offers other examples of less separatist forms of nationalism. Nationalist activists also faced an increasingly conservative government and unsympathetic public. Richard Nixon's election marked a new political era that many black activists interpreted as "the system moving away from a commitment to people and hunger and housing and political empowerment" (Arthur Eve, Shuffle). Activists witnessed an increase of government repression. Reverend Benjamin Chavis recalls a time when he was jailed for a broken signal light on his car. Another time he was jailed because his registration was in his glove compartment. In effect, these jailings prevented Chavis from attending rallies and organizing. Despite government repression, Black Nationalists called for "black unity based on common concerns and a shared African

heritage" (Bond, Shuffle). On March 10th, 1972, "black nationalists and elected officials, often at odds," answered that call and "put aside their differences to hold the national black political convention. It took place in Gary, Indiana, a city run by a black mayor" (Bond, Shuffle).

The convention included speeches from entertainer Dick Gregory, Gary mayor Richard Hatcher, and Jessie Jackson. Jackson's speech, in particular, was telling as he asked the crowd, "What time is it?" and they answered, "It's nation time" He then asks the crowd a series of questions: "When we come together, what time is it? When we respect each other, what time is it? When we get ourself confident, what time is it? When we form our own political party, what time is it?" (Shuffle). To each question, the crowd enthusiastically responds, "It's nation time." The historical footage of the convention shows the enthusiasm of the crowd as they stand on their feet as they loudly chant, "nation time!" At a conceptual level, the delegates representing 45 states could find consensus. However, there was much debate over the

> proposed remedies for years of inequity in education, housing, and job opportunities. And they went further, addressing issues on behalf of all Americans; the need for national health insurance, for day care and elder care, and for environmental safeguards. (Bond, Shuffle)

The coalition threatened to break when the Michigan delegation threatened to walk out of the convention. Many of the Michigan coalition were from labor: auto workers, steel workers, and municipal workers. They felt that they could not adopt the agenda because it was too separatist. But not all of the Michigan delegates walked. The coalition held and "people went back home, rolled up their sleeves and ran for public office in a way

that blacks had never thought about running for public office before" (Hatcher, Shuffle). They published the plan on Malcolm X's birthday.

CONSTITUTING BLACKNESS: ABSOLVING GUILT, LOVING THE SELF, AND THINKING BLACK

Separatist politics in *Eyes on the Prize* takes many forms, but the issue that holds them together is the need to create a politics that foregrounds a politics that honors blackness and the particular experiences of oppression felt by black people. The possibility of creating a unified black Nation was difficult, because as with all people, black Americans are a diverse group. The concept is also rhetorically different because blackness had always been defined in terms of negation—historically being black was to not be white. It is difficult to define personhood "in a society that can only celebrate the power of the positive, being made to see the goodness in the negative is a difficult task" (Shultz and Biesecker-Mast 543). The negative is difficult to conceptualize because the negative is but a principle, an idea, not a name for a thing" (Burke *Language* 10). In the documentary, blackness is rhetorically constituted in three ways: the absolution of guilt, self-love, and a black epistemology. Through these three trajectories, the documentary attempts to present a coherent black political subject.

Absolving Guilt: Scapegoating the "White Man"

In his book, *The Rhetoric of Redemption*, David A. Bobbitt argues that racism creates guilt in blacks as well as whites. Arguing from a Burkeian perspective on the ontological nature of guilt, Bobbitt explains that "human symbol-using capacity results in the creation of hierarchy, the idea of the negative, and the concept of perfection, all of which lead to guilt. . . . Those higher up in the hierarchy will feel guilty about their

privilege, while those lower down will feel guilty that they have not risen higher (Bobbitt 34). Purification is necessary to alleviate guilt is achieved in Black Nationalism through scapegoating. In this case, the scapegoat is the white political system in particular and white people in general. White people can be the scapegoat because they are "part of an historical heritage which gives rise to guilt" and their continuing power make them "strong enough to hold the transgression" (Brummett "Delorean" 67). In *Eyes on the Prize*, Black Nationalists blame the white social, economic, and political power structures for the plight of black Americans in the United States.

In a series of speeches Malcolm X presents his case against white Americans that absolves blacks from their secondary status in the United States. The documentary features Malcolm at a well-attended rally telling a captivated audience: "We too have been taught by the Honorable Elijah Mohammed that we were stripped of everything we had and then cast into the fiery furnace. A land where they've been making it hot as hell for us for 400 years" (Time). He later tells them that the government is "responsible for the poverty that makes you and me turn to alcohol, to dope, and to crime. The government is responsible for the housing conditions that exist here in Harlem [and] . . . for the rats that bite our little children and the cockroaches that eat better than we do" (Time). He also addresses the drug problem in black ghettoes and explains that the problem exists because

> The white man brings [drugs] in. The white man brings it to Harlem. The white man makes you a drug addict. The white man then puts you in jail when he catches you using drugs. We're trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty, of ignorance, of apathy, of disease, and of death. (Time)

In addition to the material problems associated with racism, the white man, according to Malcolm, is also at fault for black's negative sense of self. At a debate in Oxford, England, Malcolm X tells an audience of black and white people that he lives in "a society whose social system is based upon the castration of the black man, whose political system is based on castration of the black man, and whose economy is based upon the castration of the black man" (Time). In this way, Malcolm X articulates the material and psychological problems of blacks that are caused by white people and motivated out of white people's desire to control black people. The documentary lends credibility to Malcolm's arguments by framing him as a well-groomed, articulate political activist. However, as the movement matured, Black Nationalists featured in the documentary don afros and dashikis as markers of a separate black aesthetic based on their African heritage.

At the beginning of the episode, "Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More," Amiri Baraka explains the difficulty of just trying to be black. This too, is the result of a white controlled system. Baraka tells an audience,

> I know it's hard to be black, and we're all controlled by white folks. DuBois said we always have the double consciousness. We're trying to be black, and meanwhile you got a white ghost hovering over your head that says, "If you don't do this, you'll get killed. If you don't do this, you won't get no money. If you don't do this, nobody'll think you're beautiful. If you don't do this, nobody'll think you're smart." That's the ghost. You're trying to be black and the ghost is telling you to be a ghost.

The case against white people maintains its material element. At the Gary, Indiana convention, Queen Mother Moore offers information about reparations. Dressed in a colorful dashiki, she tells the delegates as they pass by, “this document tells you why the man owes you reparation. . . . This is how you've been injured, this is how you've been destroyed. You was changed from an African into a Negro, you've been damaged, injured. They took your name, took your pulse. . . . I want an afro. I can't even wear one, the man done messed it up” (Shuffle). Although framed a bit differently, these criticisms are consistent with Malcolm X’s case against white America.

The scapegoating in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville segment is more subtle. Not all white teachers were at fault for the substandard education of black students, just white teachers who were unwilling to conform to black community standards. However, teachers were certainly scapgoated for the students’ poor scholastic performance. At a community meeting, a mother tells the audience that that the children come to school to work, but the teachers claim “they don't know what to do. The first thing they say, ‘We don't understand the children.’ Well, if they would try to understand the children, these problems wouldn't exist. The children are not stupid” (Power). Community board member Reverend C. Herbert Oliver makes a comparative analysis and argues that the problem must be the schools. The Oliver family had moved from Birmingham, Alabama and a segregated school system, yet one of his sons

> was above the national average in mathematics, but when he came to the schools here in Brooklyn, within one year, he was flunking math. And I went to the school to find out why. The teacher said my son was doing fine. I said, "He's not bringing home assignments and he's flunking math and he came here from Alabama and he

was ahead of the national average and you're telling me he's doing fine.

Something is wrong."

The implied argument in the documentary is that certain teachers did not care about the education of black and Latino children or the unique obstacles children of color faced. Thus, the teachers, not the children needed to be held accountable.

In each of these instances, the "white man," as with any scapegoat, had a tremendous amount of power over black people: the ability to make them poor and hate themselves; a task accomplished through politics, culture, and education. Thus, blacks need not feel guilty over their inability to rise above their station because the white man made it nearly impossible. Thus, part of the new black identity was leaving behind the negative self-image that allowed the white power structure to control blacks in America. Although the change in consciousness did not mean freedom from the white power structure, it was an important step toward that goal.

Constituting Self-Love: Black is Beautiful

To answer the problem of white control, the Black Nationalists in *Eyes on the Prize* seek a separatist politics that sounds and looks different from the assimilationist politics of integration. Different Black Nationalists offer different ways of making the problem better, but central to black agency is self love.

Notably absent from these segments is the presence of white people. With the exception of Mike Wallace, a reporter who briefly appears in "The Time Has Come" and a few Jewish teachers and a Catholic Priest in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville case, there are few white people in segments about Black Nationalism. The images in the documentary

are, thus, consistent with the goal of Black Nationalism—issues about blackness by and for black people.

To counteract the debilitating psychological "slavery" of racism, Black Nationalists argued that blacks had to let go of white interpretations of blacks. To explain the importance of self-love in the black freedom struggle, Sonia Sanchez explains,

> Can you really imagine whole generations living and dying and never once having loved themselves, that's what we tried to change when we moved into the black arts, black culture, black consciousness movement. I said never again will I allow anyone to live and walk on the planet earth and not like what they are, what they've been. (Shuffle)

According to Elijah Muhammad, the "so-called American Negro" had to be "completely reeducated . . . [and] . . . completely made over again" because "the condition that he is now in is not fit for self. And Islam gives him that qualification, that he can feel proud and does not feel ashamed to be called a black man" (Time). Ossie Davis explains the problem Muhammad describes when he recalls the first time he saw Malcolm X speak in a Mosque. Davis fondly remembers that Malcolm

> described how we as black folks smelled. . . . how we looked, . . . how we felt. And then he described what caused us to feel that way, and of the chains of slavery are still in your minds and in your heads and you look at a white man and you love him, that's what you do. You hate the fact that he let you go from slavery, you want to go back there. (Time)

However, Malcolm offers a way out of that way of thinking because "the Honorable Elijah Mohammed is here now and we're going to change all that. You know, the righteous black man is on the scene and we're not going to be satisfied with you and your shuckin' and jivin'. The time has come" (Davis, Time). By rejecting the white world that made you feel inferior you can regain a sense of self and pride based in a meaning system outside of white control. The separation is also visually represented. The documentary features Black Muslim women wearing white dresses and white scarves on their head. The men dressed in slacks, bow ties, and jackets. Their appearance denoted their affiliation with the NOI and disaffiliation with the larger white culture of the United States.

The case of Muhammad Ali is presented in *Eyes on the Prize* as a case in point of the power of self love. His success with being a black man on his own terms was dangerous to some. Kareem Abdul Jabar remembers that his teacher did not like Ali "because he was so antiestablishment and . . . got away with it. . . . The fact that he was proud to be a black man and . . . [h]ad so much talent and could enjoy it in a way that was not seen to be -- It didn't have the dignity that they assumed it should have" (Shuffle). The documentary includes news interviews with Ali where he disregards the interviewer's questions to say what he wishes. *Eyes on the Prize* portrays Ali's behavior at the beginning of his boxing career as a boastful and boisterous up-and-comer, unlike the other black boxing champions who were more acceptable because they were humble. Some blacks also disapproved of Ali's refusal to go to war in Vietnam. In an television interview, Jackie Robinson says Ali's decision hurt the

> morale of a lot of young Negro soldiers over in Vietnam. And the tragedy to me is that Cassius has made millions of dollars off of the American public, and now he's not willing to show his appreciation to a country that is giving him, in my view, a fantastic opportunity, hurts a great number of people.

However, the documentary concludes the segment by restating that Muhammad Ali "forced America to recognize him on his own terms" (Bond).

Not all Black Nationalists believed that Islam was a necessary component of self-love and the ability to be a black citizen in the fullest sense of the term. Because blacks had been "judged by white standards of beauty, culture and learning" many of them were expected to down play "their African features and rejected their cultural heritage. . . . [But] in the 1960s, Negroes celebrated their own standards. They were blacks in America, and black was beautiful" (Bond, Shuffle). The documentary portrays Howard an assimilationist university. The images at the beginning of the segment feature blacks partaking in "elite white society" activities like needle point and pouring afternoon tea. Bond reinforces these images of "whiteness" by saying,

> For nearly a century, Howard graduates had been trained to compete with their white counterparts on every level: educational, cultural, social. . . . Known as the Black Harvard, Howard mirrored white schools in many ways, including curriculum. Few courses focused on black history or culture. (Shuffle)

In contrast, many of the students interested in the movement at Howard wore afros. The afro becomes an important political marker, demonstrated in the story of the homecoming queen at Howard in 1966. Former Howard student Paula Giddings recalls that the Black Power movement at Howard began with the nomination and victory of Robin Gregory as

Howard homecoming queen. While this may seem like a superficial political act, Gregory was not the typical homecoming queen. She wore an afro and talked about politics. The documentary features images of Robin at school next to the other homecoming candidates as well as in a newspaper photograph that features three of the five candidates. In contrast to the other women, Robin is easy to identify because of her afro. Gregory explains that her choice to wear an afro was political:

> we as a people begin to accept ourselves, you know, just as who we were. Because over the years, there was a tremendous amount of shame. You know, we were made to feel ugly, especially by media images and things that people told us. And we did everything we could so that we wouldn't look like who we are, which was, you know, descendents of African people. (Shuffle)

Giddings recalls that the crowd exploded when they saw the shadow of Gregory's afro on the stage. The audience jumped up, raised their fists, and chanted "*umgawa*, black power, *umgawa*, black power. And a chain was created, people started to march to it, to the rhythm of *umgawa*, black power" (Giddings, Shuffle). The image of the afro demonstrates an embrace of black standards and a rejection of white standards. *Eyes on the Prize* frames the election of Robin Gregory's as homecoming queen as affirmation of the statement: black is beautiful. The energy of that moment carried over to create an organized student movement to make Howard a "black" university.

The documentary is also punctuated with black poetry by the Last Poets and Imaru Amiri Baraka. Their poetry and personal aesthetic is a celebration of blackness and demonstrates Bond's assertions that a new cultural movement was taking place. At the beginning of "Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More" Bond tells viewers that blacks had been

judged by white standards, but that times were changing. The next image is of The Last Poets, a Black Nationalist group that formed on Malcolm X's birthday and preached revolution. Two members of the group perform their poetry to the beat of a drum. To perform their poetry they walk side to side in rhythm to the words: "Poetry is black, poetry is black people. You know, black people like black poetry, black people like you and me movin' and groovin' and black, doing the shigaling." At the beginning of the Gary convention, the documentary includes a pre-recorded performance of Amiri Baraka (prior to 1967, LeRoi Jones), also a Black Nationalist, reading his poetry: "Oh, what can it be? What can it be, whoa, whoa, be, what can it be? Oh that's holding me, what can it be, that's holding, holding me, holding me from-from-from getting free? Whoa, whoa, whoa, do you, do you, do you know?" (Shuffle). A few minutes later in the documentary, Baraka is again reading another pre-recorded poem:

> We a big, we a big, big, big, black, black, we are the big black, bad, bad me, me, me, me to hook up, hook, hook, hook up into a bad black, we are bad, bad, a black, black, black, we, yeah, bad we, yeah, yeah, bad, bad we, see, yeah, we a, we a, we a bad, bad, black devil jammin', we, yeah. (Shuffle)

These poems are present to demonstrate a new black aesthetic on the rise and an art form of blacks for blacks. This poetry straddles the line between expressing a pride in a people and a way of knowing.

The sound of the Black Nationalist movement differs from the Negro spirituals that pulsate through the segments on the Southern civil rights movement. In contrast to the moral tone those songs bring to the civil rights movement, the Black Nationalist segments in *Eyes on the Prize* feature African drum beats, Jazz in relation to Malcolm X,

and the sounds of Motown are associated with Muhammad Ali. The chants of the students also differ. Instead of the familiar civil rights anthem, "We Shall Overcome," the students chant "beep, beep, bang, bang, ungawa, black power" and "Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More." Neither the song nor the chant have a particular moral message, but they do seem to bring a level of excitement and unity among the students at Howard as they clap and march together to these protest songs. The last element of the rhetoric that constitutes a new black identity is a black epistemology.

Black Epistemology

In labeling this last section black epistemology, I simply mean to state that an important component of Black Nationalism in *Eyes on the Prize* is a black way of knowing. In other words, part of the separatist project was to educate black people in a relevant way to their experience and productive for their community.

Eyes on the Prize first introduces the need to focus on the psychic needs of black people first in the segment on the Nation of Islam. Elijah Muhammad argues that "The so-called American Negro have to be completely reeducated. He have to be completely made over again. And the condition that he is now in is not fit for self. And Islam gives him that qualification, that he can feel proud and does not feel ashamed to be called a black man" (Time). Through Malcolm X's speeches, the documentary explains the problem with seeing the world from a white perspective that simply cannot understand a black person's position.

> They call Mr. Muhammed a black supremacist because he teaches you and me not only that we're as good as the white man, but better than the white man. Yeah, better than the white man. You are better than the white man. And that's not

> saying anything. That's not saying -- You ... nowhere just to be equal with him. Who is he to be equal with? You look at your skin. You can't compare your skin with his skin. Why, your skin looks like gold beside his skin. You find that old pale thing laying out in the sun trying to get to look like you, that pale thing. (Time)

Malcolm's black audience, however, understands the message. Their laughter is audible when Malcolm talks about white people as "that pale thing." Malcolm implores this same audience that it is "time for you and me to stand up for ourselves . . . see for ourselves. . . . hear for ourselves, and . . . fight for ourselves" (Time). To create an environment conducive to black humanity, the NOI "built temples for prayer, established businesses to encourage economic independence in black communities, and created schools to educate its children" (Bond, Time). For the NOI, complete separation was necessary to define black subjectivity outside of white standards. The rest of the examples in *Eyes on the Prize* attempt to create the possibility of a black political subject from within United States culture.

Some of the students at Howard University attempted to make it a "black" institution. Wife of a Howard board member, Mrs. E. Franklin Frazier argues that "You've got to conform to the society in which you live. . . . You can't straddle the fence. Now, are you going to live outside of the American culture, or are you going to live within it? As long as you stay in America, you've got to conform. What else can you do?" (Shuffle). Black Nationalists at Howard were trying to find ways to be black in America without having to deny the racial and historical realities that affect blacks every day. The images at the beginning of the segment and Bond's introduction frame Howard as an

institution that made blacks competitive with whites, but on white standards. The implied argument of the activists and the documentary is that the standards of a Black university should be judged by the black community.

Black Nationalist students tried to push the university to be "quite relevant to the black community. We want Howard not shut off from George Avenue and 14th Street. We want Howard University to stand as a pinnacle of black America as far as education is concerned" (Ewart Brown, Shuffle). Student leader Tony Gittens explains to a reporter, "You know, we're talking about Howard University, we're talking about black people, black people asking for freedom and more rights. We don't care what happens at white universities" (Shuffle). To demonstrate their commitment to making Howard a "black" university, the students occupied the administration buildings. The documentary uses footage of the student takeover. Dozens of students inside the building seemed prepared for the long haul. They had sleeping bags and board games to keep themselves occupied. But after five days of occupying the administration building, the students decided to leave. They failed to get the board of regents to acquiesce to their demands, but their efforts began the first black studies program that lead to black studies in universities across the nation. Thus, the students were successful in finding a way to produce black knowledge not only on their own campus, but also on non-historically black colleges and universities as well. The segment ends with a large group of students enthusiastically marching and singing, "Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More."

In the Ocean Hill-Brownsville case, the documentary suggests that education under the community board looked and sounded differently. The difference was important because it addressed the specific needs of black children and their experiences.

Bond states, "the teachers who stayed to teach at Ocean Hill-Brownsville looked for new ways to teach the basic skills. Some also brought a new cultural awareness" (Bond, Power). For example, a black teacher wearing a dashiki talks about the Yoruba tribe of West Africa and tells the students that if they could trace their ancestral lines, many blacks would find that their ancestors were of the Yoruba tribe. The documentary also features what appears to be a physical education class. The class appears to be learning traditional African dances to the beat of a drum. Karima Jordan, a student during the community experiment, argues that the students could relate to the black teachers and the education they received from these teachers was relevant to the students. Students were

> no longer members of a small community called Ocean Hill-Brownsville, we were broadened to W. E. B. Dubois, his readings, Langston Hughes, Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, H. Rap Brown, Mao Tse-tung, the Red Book. I mean, we became international. And it was a good thing because black people are the third world, the third world is much larger than European history. (Jordan, Power)

By learning from a perspective that made African history and black thought legitimate and important, the teachers developed a positive sense of self in the students. By arguing that the community run school and the city run school were quite different, the documentary implies the need for black students to incorporate knowledge of their blackness in a wide range of contexts in order to receive a quality education. Sonny Carson's comment to a reporter supports the implication that black students need a black perspective. Carson is one among many community members lined up at the school to keep the fired teachers out. He tells the reporter he does not know if the teachers were

fired because they were white, but "I don't think that any white person is interested in giving black children an education. That's my particular feeling" (Power).

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have argued that *Eyes on the Prize* counters negative public memories of Black Nationalism by presenting separation as a logical response to racism in the United States. The documentary suggests that the rhetorical construction of a black political subject is an important component of black liberation. Blacks had always been objects of white subjectivity. In asserting their own identity on their own terms, Black Nationalists countered centuries of symbolic subjugation. The trajectory of the narrative demonstrates the ways in which Black Nationalists worked to separate their identity, education, and politics from white standards and judgment. Support for this position is found in the rhetorical construction of a black identity from a black perspective.

Because Black Nationalism can mean so many different things, it is difficult to argue that it limits rhetorical invention. However, it is important to note that Black Nationalism is not necessarily revolutionary. The Nation of Islam supports black capitalism, patriarchy and strict racial separation. It was this form of "militancy" that the Hip Hop generation embraced in the mid-1990s (Marable *Speaking* 21). While the documentary certainly does not fetishize Black Nationalism, it also does not explore the consequences of conservative "militant" politics. Moreover, a Nationalist perspective "generally minimized the importance of class stratification and income polarization among African-Americans. Race, however important, was not the fundamental issue which defined the nature of inequality and oppression within capitalism" (Marable *Speaking* 15). Finally, the Black Nationalist convention in Gary, Indiana is the final

word on a Black Nationalist politic in *Eyes on the Prize*. The goal of this convention was to create a black national agenda. The convention almost ended in failure because some of the delegates from places like Michigan walked out because the agenda compromised their ties with organized labor. However, the convention proceeded and delegates left to enter the ranks of public elected officials. This move into electoral politics meant the abandonment of protest politics that had been effective in the past. It is significant to note that some of the most effective leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Fannie Lou Hamer, and Malcolm X were never publicly elected.

There are important lessons to be learned from the presentation of Black Nationalism in *Eyes on the Prize*. Establishing a black political subject and gaining control over the community are important political steps. By constituting a black subject through the critiques and stories of individuals, *Eyes on the Prize* promotes a realignment in the forces of power that construct social relations by "disassembling . . . certain formations in order to try out new constructions" (Charland 74). Thus, *Eyes on the Prize* counters disparaging public memories of Black Nationalism by asserting the humanizing effects it had on a generation of blacks. Moreover, the analysis of Black Nationalism reveals the power relations involved in self-definition and self-determination.

[1] *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

[2] *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954)

[3] In this chapter I analyze "The Time Has Come," "Ain't Gonna Shuffle No More," and "Power!" For the sake of clarity, I will cite these episodes as "Time," "Shuffle," and "Power" respectively.

Chapter Five: Complicating the Utility of Nonviolent Direct Action

To call nonviolence a weapon may seem to be a contradiction in terms, but according to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. . . . which cuts without wounding and ennobles the man who wields it. It is a sword that heals." However, nonviolence as presented in *Eyes on the Prize* is not always a weapon that works. During the civil rights movement, nonviolence was the primary and sometimes only movement tactic. Groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) went to great lengths and suffered tremendously to publicize the violence of racism. However, it was not a simple case of presentation and reformation. Fred Shuttlesworth explains,

> We thought that you could just shame America. Say, "Now, America, look at your promises. Look at how you treated your poor, negro citizens. You ought to be ashamed of yourself." But you . . . can't shame segregation. Rattlesnakes don't commit suicide. Ball teams don't strike themselves out. You got to put them out." (Awakenings)[ix]

Eyes on the Prize does not take the efficacy of nonviolent direct action for granted. It applies a politcal rather than a moral decision-making calculus to the effectiveness of nonviolence.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the polyvalent memories of nonviolence in *Eyes on the Prize*. The memory of nonviolence in the documentary is ambiguous. The narrative progression of the practice reveals that successful nonviolent campaigns were dependent on the sympathy of white liberals, which undermines the political efficacy of nonviolence as a tactic. On the other hand, an analysis of the images, interviews, and

testimony from movement activists, the practice of nonviolence creates powerful political actors willing to stand up for their rights. In this way, nonviolence is politically effective because it politicizes citizens. To understand the evolution of nonviolence and its use in the United States, I offer an overview of the philosophy of nonviolence and its particular form in the civil rights movement. Although there are numerous examples of the use of nonviolence in the documentary, I include the sit-ins and Freedom Rides, the march from Selma to Montgomery, and the Albany Movement in my analysis of the narrative trajectory to demonstrate the necessity of generating liberal sympathy for political success. To support my argument that *Eyes on the Prize* offers nonviolence as an effective means to politicize citizens, I will examine how the film constructs the identites of people through representations of their talking, singing, and self-presentation when they engage in nonviolent direct action.

THE EVOLUTION OF NONVIOLENT DIRECT PROTEST

The contemporary use of the term "nonviolent action" is a catch-all term that refers to a number of protests methods whereby the practitioners force conflict by doing, or refusing to do, particular acts without the use of violence. Thus, "nonviolent action is not passive. It is *not* inactive. It is *action* that is nonviolent" (Sharp 248). However, the use of nonviolence for social and political purposes has not always been practiced in the same way or for the same reasons.

The tradition of nonviolence goes back to the Anabaptists and the Quakers located in central Europe and England respectively. However, the United States "can claim credit for leading the world to a new idea: society can be permanently improved when people band together in organized groups to work actively and nonviolently for social

change" (Chernus x). Anabaptism began in Switzerland in 1523 and seemed to be "centered on one main issue: a radical commitment to Luther's idea that the Bible is the only source of religious truth" (Chernus 2-3). They also differed from other forms of Protestantism in that they stressed the "visible church, a collection of specific people in a specific place and time. So they are concerned about creating a better social structure in the real history of this world" (Chernus 4). However, as tension between religious groups increased, the Anabaptists became aware that they may have to die for their faith, but decided that they would not return the violence.

Perhaps the major difference between the Anabaptists and the Quakers was that the Quakers consciously set out to improve society. Quakers "combined elements of Anabaptist theological belief with elements of the Puritan drive to save the world through political and social change" (Chernus 15). The most apparent social problem in the United States was the institution of slavery. Quakers were among the first white Americans to oppose slavery. They based their opposition to slavery on the violence against the slave as well as the slaveowner. The means through which Quakers opposed slavery would be through "patient Christian suffering, which means crucifying one's own will to serve the needs of others, in love" (Chernus 16). If everyone served each other in love, there would be no need for violence.

Abolitionism was the spark for the first broad-based nonviolent movement in U.S. history.[1] Quaker opposition to slavery and Millennialism, the effort "to create a society perfectly ordered under God's will" (Chernus 28), gave abolitionists a platform from which to oppose slavery. Abolitionists opposed slavery because of its violence, because it was racist, and because it was a sin that denied universal brotherhood. Because both

slave owner and many whites were racist, the entire society was guilty. Although the movement was nonviolent, it is important to note that most abolitionists, following William Lloyd Garrison, did not engage in nonviolence per se, but nonresistance. The term highlights the issue of authority for many abolitionists. For "anyone who resists others and tries to coerce them is clearly trying to exercise human authority, and thus refusing God's authority" (Chernus 36). In other words, the abolitionists did not use violence because it would violate God's authority, which is the same reason that slavery and racism were sins.

Henry David Thoreau also believed in noncompliance, but not for the same reasons. His existentialist beliefs required that each individual consider what is morally right in the sight of God rather than human laws. His "guiding principle was fidelity to conscience: everyone should do whatever he or she really wants to do most sincerely" (Chernus 53). His famous night in jail was the result of his refusal to pay taxes to support the Mexican American war produced a seminal piece for future nonviolent social movements: On Civil Disobedience. Thoreau, however, had no intentions of changing institutions, he simply did not want to participate in corrupt institutions. He also was not committed to nonviolence. He was only against unjust or immoral uses of violence. But Thoreau remains important to the practice and philosophy of nonviolence because "[a]s he and many others after him discovered, if enough people refused to participate, they would 'clog the machinery' of the system. And that itself could be the most effective way to change society for the better" (Chernus 54-55).

Not until United States involvement in World War I did nonviolent movements begin to take the form by which we recognize them today. The principle cause of this

violence, according to reform groups like the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), was the structure of the state and capitalism. Not until these institutions were radically transformed would the world be rid of violence on such a large scale. The Fellowship of Reconciliation began to change their understanding of Christian nonviolence. Nonviolence was "no longer merely a 'counsel of perfection,' directed to individuals who wanted to live a heavenly life on earth. It was now seen as a method, indeed the best method, for improving life on earth for everyone" (Chernus 86). It was also recognized at this time that Christianity was not the only spiritual system that supported nonviolence. Thus, the idea of nonviolence as a political tool spread. And groups like FOR supported "the new wave of strikes that spread in the late 1930s, encouraging workers to use new nonviolent techniques of direct action, like sit-ins and lie-ins" (Chernus 89).

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, more commonly known as Mahatma Gandhi, also took note of the possibilities of nonviolence to effect social change. Gandhi also based nonviolence in spirituality, but not Christianity. Gandhi practiced what he called "*satyagraha*: nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience" (Chernus 92). In his analysis of British rule in India, he reasoned that "all forms of oppression are wrong because they are untruthful. Truth, or *sat*, as a universal moral order, includes the freedom for individuals, groups, and nations to make the fundamental decisions that shape their lives" (Chernus 105).

NONVIOLENCE AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Martin Luther King Jr. did not always believe in nonviolence. He had even applied to carry a gun to protect himself and his family. Soon after his application was rejected, his home was bombed. Oddly enough, it was in that moment that Dr. King

committed himself to the philosophy and practice of nonviolence. King's understanding of nonviolence "was built predominantly out of his African American experience, filtered through predominantly white conceptual language" (Chernus 161). However, at the center of his nonviolent philosophy is the idea of personalism—that we are literally all made in the divine image of God. And because "God is perfectly free, every human being is innately free" (Chernus 163). Personalism connected to the sociological reality of community meant, for King, that a person can only fulfill her or his freedom by "serving the needs of others, especially when their freedom is abridged" (Chernus 164).

The use of nonviolence must be the product of careful analysis. The first step is to investigate the situation and determine whether or not an injustice is being done. Then, there must be a concerted effort to remedy the situation through negotiations that would produce a just result. If negotiations end in failure, people must "purify themselves of fear and selfish motives and then take direct action" (Chernus 170). In the civil rights movement, some nonviolent practitioners analyzed U.S. law. According the Martin Luther King, Jr., "there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but also a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws" ("Letter" 105). Although the disobedience was nonviolent, it was by no means passive or weak. Nonviolence "uses power to increase the tension that already exists" (Chernus 170). Done from a position of respect and charity for the opposition, nonviolence creates the possibility of community after social change. For King, nonviolence was a constructive channel for the frustration of African Americans that rejected both the "the

‘do-nothingism’ of the complacent [and] the hatred and despair of the black nationalist” (“Letter” 108).

Nonviolence and King have become somewhat synonymous in the United States; he was not the only practitioner or theorist of nonviolence at the time of the black freedom struggle. Reverend James Lawson spent almost a year in jail as a contentious objector to the Korean War and “employed Christian notions of love as a foundational political, social, and legal strategy by which to effect change” (Stollman 203). As a college student, he was exposed to Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolence. He spent three years in India learning about *satyagraha* and returned to the states with the belief that combining Gandhian and Protestant principles could end segregation through nonviolence. Reverend Lawson “helped pioneer this movement in America, and from different parts of the country and different classes, hundreds of American youth joined a movement that would change the social, economic, and political tenor of the United States” (Stollman 204). He also had a number of maxims:

> True faith relied on an adherence to nonviolence and underscored the strategy of employing love and reason and not hate and violence to overcome difference and understand others’ different points of view. Those who resorted to violence . . . demonstrated intellectual and spiritual weakness. Rage and violence emerged out of fear or ignorance, and despite the historical precedents that ‘might makes right,’ Lawson challenged the students to embark on a different spiritual and political path. (Stollman 205)

Lawson was extremely influential to many of the members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Diane Nash, in particular, took up the philosophy and used it

to confront the system of segregation in the South. The sit-ins and the Freedom Rides were examples of "active resistance to evil."

Civil rights groups like SNCC, CORE, and SCLC were successful in creating crises that had to be addressed through nonviolent direct action. However, these groups were also criticized for the paradox of their philosophy. Although committed to nonviolence on their part, many of the successes of these actions was the direct result of violence on the part of racists. The media criticized Dr. King for the violence his method provoked, even though he was a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Although he "repeatedly preached that violence was immoral, his critics were correct in noting that his nonviolent method was most successful when it provoked violence from defenders in the racist order" (Colaiaco 17). Actions like the freedom rides succeeded because the federal government had to intervene to stop the violence against freedom riders. Without violence, it is uncertain that the federal government would have enforced I.C.C. regulations on interstate travel.

A BLOODLESS REVOLUTION: PUBLIC MEMORIES OF NONVIOLENCE

Public memory of nonviolence casts Martin Luther King, Jr. as the champion of nonviolent social change. King argued that nonviolence as a means to create social change offers the opportunity to channel pent up aggression and release it in a positive and productive way. The benefit of nonviolence, according to King, was the ability to "struggle without hating; you can fight war without violence" (King "Hate" 9). But not all violence is created equally. According the King, there are essentially three views on the subject of violence. The first is complete nonviolence. This kind of social agitation is extremely difficult because it lacks mass appeal and requires an enormous amount of

self-control and strength of will. The second is violence in self-defense, "which all societies . . . accept as moral and legal. The principle of self-defense, even involving weapons and bloodshed, has never been condemned, even by Gandhi, who sanctioned it for those unable to master pure nonviolence" (King "Social" 13). And finally, there is the use of violence as a tool to force change, such as in warfare. This kind of violence, King feared, would fail to attract African Americans to "real collective struggle" and, in the end African Americans would be blamed for whatever outcome of the violence that took place (King "Social" 13).

Of the three positions on violence, nonviolence is taught as the only acceptable form of domestic social change outside of electoral politics. In a speech on the anniversary of the march on Washington, President Clinton reminded Americans, "whenever possible peace and nonviolence is always the right thing to do" (qtd in Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles 424). Moreover, as noted in Chapter Two, children are taught in the classroom that nonviolence is the only appropriate way to struggle.

THE NARRATIVE PROGRESSION OF NONVIOLENCE IN EYES ON THE PRIZE

When educators and politicians offer nonviolence as the only acceptable form of civil protest, the implication is that if the cause is just, then nonviolence will work. *Eyes on the Prize* portrays nonviolence as useful when protesters can enlist the sympathy of white liberals. Thus, the documentary presents a robust treatment of the use of nonviolence. The film's treatment of nonviolence begins with the Montgomery bus boycott and ends with the Memphis, Tennessee sanitation workers strike.

The first three examples of nonviolence in *Eyes on the Prize* result in victories for the dissenting group. The first story of nonviolence begins with Rosa Parks' refusal to

give her seat to a white person on a Montgomery bus. The documentary begins with historical footage of Parks signing legal papers and images of the city around 1955, including historical footage of a segregated bus with whites in the front and blacks in the back. Parks recalls the confrontation in an interview. It is clear from her story that her refusal to move was a way to actively resist racism. When the arresting officer asks her to move, she replies, "'I don't think I should have to stand up. . . . Why do you push us around?' He said, 'I do not know, but the law is the law, and you're under arrest'" (Awakenings). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) joined together and called for a boycott of the buses. The black citizens of Montgomery agreed to boycott. Martin Luther King, Jr. led the campaign. For the next year, African Americans would stay off the buses. During that time the a white segregationist group, the Citizen's Council, and Ku Klux Klan used legal and illegal routes to end the boycott without desegregating the buses. The boycott leaders decided to file suit in federal court, arguing that segregation on buses was unconstitutional. In response, city officials indicted "almost 90 black leaders under an old anti-boycott law. The tactic backfired. Suddenly the national press was very interested in the story, and in the eloquent Martin Luther King, Jr." (Bond, Awakenings). After his release, King explains to the press the goal and philosophy of the boycott, "We still feel that we are right and that we stand within our constitutional rights in the protest. And we still advocate non-violence with passive resistance and still are determined to use the weapon of love" (Awakenings). Finally, Bond reports that on "November 13, 1956, the US Supreme Court broke the deadlock,

ruling unanimously that Montgomery's bus segregation was unconstitutional" (Awakenings).

The next episode about nonviolence is the third episode, "Ain't Sacred of Your Jails." This episode highlights the college students who heightened the stakes of nonviolence. Through Bond's voiceovers and the dramatic images of the abuse they withstood, the documentary suggests that the Freedom Rides were successful because of the student's willingness to put their bodies on the line and provoke racist whites into using violence against them. The tactic proved effective in dramatizing segregation for the rest of the country and securing widespread sympathy for their cause.

Standing up to Segregation: The Student Sit-ins

"Ain't Scared of Your Jails" opens with a still black-and-white image of four black men standing together. With the song, "Mind Set on Freedom" playing in the background, Julian Bond explains that on "February 1st, 1960, in Greensboro, North Carolina" these "four black college students sat down at a lunch counter reserved for whites and refused to leave. This sit-in was a direct challenge to southern tradition" (Ain't). Set against moving images of whites attempting to physically remove blacks from a lunch counter and a police officer arresting a disheveled looking young black man, Bond explains that the students, trained in nonviolence, refused to fight back.

Nashville was home to four black colleges. Revered Jim Lawson came to Nashville to organize the students and teach them the discipline of nonviolence. According to Bond, "Lawson's plan to confront segregation directly was a bold step. The first target for this direct action would be the lunch counters downtown. John Lewis, Angela Butler, and Diane Nash led students to Nashville's first sit-in" (Ain't). At first,

the wait staff ignored the students. That changed on February 27th when gangs of "toughs" gathered downtown. But the students "sat in as planned. The documentary shows young white men attacking the activist while the police stand by idly and then "more than 80 demonstrators were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct" (Bond, Ain't). One of the sit-in leaders, Diane Nash, recalls that as she was being arrested,

> the second wave of students had all taken seats. [The police] were confounded and kind of looked at each other like, "Now what do we do," you know? And they said, "Well, okay, we'll arrest those too," and they did it and then the third wave. And no matter what they did and how many they arrested, there was still a lunch counter full of students there. (Ain't)

The student sit-ins forced the white citizens of Nashville to take a position on segregation. They continued to go to jail and refuse bail. This choice involved the parents of activists in the struggle. To oppose the jailing of students, parents and community members decided to boycott the downtown stores during Easter. Reverend C.T. Vivian explains in an oral history interview that the Easter boycott was a "chance to get over many ideas of nonviolence and help create a reconciliation of all the forces in the city" (Ain't). Tension in the city was high. Blacks and sympathetic whites were targeted for random acts of violence and then on "April 19th, dynamite thrown from a passing car at 5:30 in the morning destroyed the home of Z. Alexander Looby, one of Nashville's black city councilman and defense attorney for the arrested students" (Bond, Ain't). The black community responded with a spontaneous mass march.

> People began to gather, and we began to march and students came out from the lunchrooms and they came out from being on the campus grounds. And they

> joined, and they came out of buildings and dormitories. We filled Jefferson Avenue. It's a long, long way down Jefferson. After a while, there was a certain bit of singing. And as we came closer to town, it was merely the silence of the feet. . . . this was not to be played with or to be joked with. (Vivian, Ain't)

At a public confrontation at City Hall, the documentary presents historical footage of Diane Nash asking Nashville's mayor, Ben West: "First of all, Mayor West, do you feel that it's wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of his race or color?" (Nash, Ain't). West admits that he did not think that it was fair to discriminate based on color. Three weeks later the lunch counters were integrated and with the help of SCLC's Ella Baker, the students formed SNCC. By connecting the Mayor's response to Nash's question and the integration of the lunch counters, the documentary demonstrates the power of bodies to effect social change. SNCCs next action would put the nation on notice, that they would have to tolerate the violence of segregation or desegregate.

Riding For Freedom

The documentary presents the same recipe for success in the Freedom Rides. Nonviolence can work if people use their bodies to provoke violence to dramatize racism. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) planned to test two Supreme Court decisions banning segregation on interstate buses. James Farmer, a founding member of CORE, explains in an oral history interview that an integrated group would ride the bus and refuse to segregate when ordered and do the same at the rest stops. CORE felt they "could then count upon the racists of the South to create a crisis so that the federal government would be compelled to enforce federal law" (Farmer Ain't). So the Freedom Riders boarded buses and got the violence they sought. On Mother's Day, May 14th

1961, “two buses left Atlanta for Birmingham. Outside of Anniston, a mob fire bombed the lead bus and blocked the exits. Twelve riders were hospitalized. . . . The second bus was met in Birmingham by a mob of Klansmen. Freedom Rider Jim Peck took the brunt of the beating” (Bond, Ain’t). The Riders had hoped the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) would protect them. The FBI had information that the Klan was planning to attack the Freedom Riders, but did not pass that information along or try to stop the violence. Appalled by the violence, the Kennedy administration finally persuaded Governor John Patterson to protect the Riders. John Lewis recalls that, “about 40 miles or less from the city of Montgomery, all sign of protection disappeared. There was no plane, no patrol car, and when we arrived at the bus station, it was just like eerie, just a strange feeling. It was so quiet, so peaceful, nothing” (Ain’t). Rider Frederick Leonard describes the assault:

> And then all of a sudden, just like magic. White people, sticks and bricks, they're going, "Kill the niggers." . . . We went out the front of the bus. Jim Zwerg was a white fellow from Madison, Wisconsin. . . . When Jim Zwerg walked off the bus in front of us, . . . It was like they were possessed, they couldn't believe that there was a white man who would help us. And they grabbed him and pulled him into the mob. I mean, it was a mob. (Ain’t)

Some of the riders were viciously beaten, but stayed true to nonviolence. In a television interview, a bruised and bandaged Zwerg tells a reporter, “Segregation must be stopped, it must be broken down. Those of us who are on the Freedom Ride, we will continue the Freedom Ride” (Ain’t).

The Freedom Rides continued, but not as planned. Desperate to stop the televised beatings of Freedom Riders, Robert Kennedy struck a deal with officials in Mississippi.

Riders would not be beaten, they would be jailed. After the initial riders were jailed, hundreds of Freedom Riders poured into Jackson, Mississippi. By summer's end, 300 had been arrested and sentenced. The public violence was over, but the violence against Freedom Riders persisted behind the walls of the prisons. Officers had black inmates beat Freedom Riders for singing freedom songs and refusing to give up their mattresses. But the Freedom Riders succeeded in their goal. That summer, Robert Kennedy petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission to enforce the laws banning segregation on interstate travel. In late September, the commission complied.

Nonviolence Outwitted: The Failure of Direct Action in Albany, Georgia

Eyes on the Prize demonstrates the ineffectivity of nonviolence when activists cannot provoke public violence. The campaign in Albany, Georgia put nonviolence to the test and nonviolence failed. Albany Chief of Police Laurie Pritchett had read King's philosophy on nonviolence and responded accordingly. The movement in Albany turned from integration in transportation to voter registration. Movement leaders thought they could count on the same reactions to nonviolence they had experienced in other areas of the South, but Laurie Pritchett was a different kind of law enforcer. In an oral history interview, Pritchett admits that he "did research [and] found his method was nonviolence, that his method was to fill the jail, same as Gandhi in India. And once they filled the jails, we'd have no capacity to arrest and then we'd have to give in to his demands" (Easy). To avoid filling the jails, Pritchett contacted the surrounding jails and made arrangements to use their facilities. So when "the mass arrests started, and we'd have marches and there'd be 200, 300 -- At one time there, I think we had almost 2,000, but none in our jail" (Pritchett, Easy). King was among the protesters arrested. While Pritchett kept everyone

else in jail, he arranged for King's release which denied King the ability to use himself as a symbol to dramatize the problems of racism in Albany. Then, in "late July, the Albany Movement received another setback. At the city's request, federal judge J. Robert Elliott issued a restraining order to end the demonstrations which had been going on for almost nine months" (Bond, Easy). Without the aid of the federal courts, the movement had little recourse. Seeing no possibility for "clear cut victories," King and the SCLC left Albany "depressed" because the city was "as segregated as it was the previous December when he first arrived" (Bond, Easy).

Project Confrontation and the Success of Nonviolence in Birmingham, Alabama

Having learned important lessons about the scope and necessity of violence from white racists, King and his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference moved on to Birmingham to launch Project "C" for confrontation. Again, the documentary suggests that success is dependent upon publicly dramatizing racism in a way intolerable to the federal government. Knowing they needed a victory to regain momentum for the movement, Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth remembers telling King "I assure you if you come to Birmingham, this movement can not only gain prestige, but really shake the country" (Easy). While planning for Project "C" Birmingham had city elections. Trying to maintain power, Bull Connor ran for mayor, but lost to a racial moderate. However, the old regime refused to leave. They had "two mayors, two city governments. . . . On Tuesdays, the commission met, proceeded to govern the city. And when they finished, they would march out and nine council members would march in and they would proceed to adopt laws and spend money and conduct the affairs of the city" (David Vann, Easy). Many people felt that King and SCLC's protests were ill-timed and

hoped that the protests would stop to allow the new city government a chance to make changes without protests. Pressure to stop the protests even came from the federal government and white clergy. Then, Birmingham obtained a state court injunction to stop the protests. Fearing another stalemate, like Albany, King decided that he would lead a protest and go to jail with his people. While he was in jail, King wrote his famous rebuff of those who claimed these protests were ill timed, the Letter from Birmingham Jail. However, there was still no movement on the part of the city to negotiate with SCLS. Project "C" move into its next and most controversial phase.

With hundreds of people already in jail and with limited outside funding to continue the campaign, SCLC turned to children for their next move. Reverend James Bevel of SCLC explains the justification of using children to protest:

> Most adults have bills to pay, house notes, rents, car notes, utility bills. But the young people, wherein they can think at the same level, are not at this point hooked with all those responsibilities. So a boy from high school, he get the same effect in terms of being in jail, in terms of putting pressure on the city as his father, and yet he's not -- There's no economic effect on the family because the father's still on the job. (Easy)

On the first day of the children's march, approximately 700 children were jailed. The next day over a thousand children stayed home from school to march. Accompanying images show groups of children marching and then ushered into paddy wagons. The semi-orderly scene devolves when Bull Connor brings out the city's police dogs and then orders the fire department to turn their hoses on the children. With "100 pounds of pressure per square inch, the water hit with enough force to knock the bark off trees"

(Bond, Easy). The documentary includes the images of children attacked by dogs and blasted with water. It also suggests the embarrassing nature of these images for the nation by including photographs of international newspapers that feature cartoons of the violence in Birmingham. But that did not stop Bull Connor. The next day he again set the dogs and water hoses on protesters, but this time, some of the protesters responded with force. James Bevel was able to calm the crowd, but the patience of the black community was wearing thin. On May 7th "fighting broke out between blacks and whites in the downtown area. . . . The situation was fast reaching the riot proportions that James Bevel had feared. The businessman quickly returned to negotiations ready to talk" (Bond, Easy). The negotiations were rocky, but on May 10th the city and SCLC reached an agreement. Klan Grand Dragon Robert Shelton gave a public statement that rejected the deal and threatened King's life. Later that night, a bomb exploded at the hotel where King was staying, but he had already left. "Racial tensions gripped the country, and President Kennedy was moved to action. On June 11th, he took a stronger position than any president since Lincoln, calling civil rights a moral issue" (Bond, Easy). The Birmingham campaign was a success in gaining concessions from the city and focusing national attention on civil rights.

King's Dream and The March on Washington

The documentary includes the march on Washington as a nonviolent protest. However, it differs from the rest of the examples because it does not provoke violence. Also, it is not directly instrumental in the creation of legislation. The documentary frames the march on Washington as a celebration of nonviolent protest and the federal support for civil rights legislation. This segment features images of marchers

surrounding the Reflection Pool and the Washington Monument as well as images of Lincoln. These are the images that have come to represent the civil rights movement and its major success. The documentary complicates the now nostalgic imagery by introducing the controversy between SCLC and SNCC over the content of John Lewis' speech. The speech was critical of the Kennedy administration and its record on civil rights. However, Lewis' speech and its potential controversy is overshadowed by King's famous, "I Have a Dream" speech. In an oral history interview, Ralph Abernathy says that it "was the greatest day of my life" (Easy).

Bleeding to Vote: The Selma Voting Rights Campaign

The Selma campaign began as a voting rights campaign which, for the first time, involved the black middle class. The documentary presents the Selma campaign as a success, but it also suggests that the march from Selma to Montgomery is the beginning of the end of the unwavering commitment to nonviolence. In Selma, protesters faced the volatile Sheriff Jim Clark, who "had a helmet on like General Patton, he had the clothes, the Eisenhower jacket and a swagger stick" (Joseph Smitherman, Bridge). During the campaign, an Alabama state trooper shot Jimmie Lee Jackson at point blank range. African Americans were outraged. To channel their aggression, SCLC's James Bevel suggested they march from Selma to Montgomery to use that energy and keep the issue of disenfranchisement at the fore. It world also "take you five or six days, and which would give you the time to discuss in the nation through the papers, radio, television and going around speaking what the real issues were" (Bevel, Bridge). Governor George Wallace vowed that the march would not take place. Claiming he was protecting the marchers from more violence, he called in the state troops to stop the marchers before

they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge. On March 7th, the documentary includes historical footage of Hosea Williams and John Lewis leading an orderly group of people toward the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The marchers were met by Major John Cloud and the Alabama state troopers on the other side. Cloud announced to the marchers that

> It would be detrimental to your safety to continue this march and I'm saying that this is an unlawful assembly. You have to disperse, you are ordered to disperse. Go home or go to your church. This march will not continue. Is that clear to you? I've got nothing further to say to you. (Bridge)

The soldiers moved in and began beating marchers. Then Jim Clark's police, mounted on horses did the same. The state troops shot tear gas into the crowd and pursued fleeing marchers back to Brown Church. The scene is chaotic and filled with smoke. The only thing that is clear are the police batons swatting at fallen marchers. SCLC's Andrew Young remembers that the "police were riding along on horseback beating people, and the teargas was so thick you couldn't get to where people were in need of help. And so we really had to turn the church into a hospital just to get people back to their senses. And there -- It was a horrible two or three hours" (Bridge).

National television stations broadcast the images of "Bloody Sunday" on the nightly news. Then mayor, Joseph Smitherman remembers, "When that beating happened at the foot of the bridge, it looked like a war that went all over the country. And then people, the wrath of the nation came down on us" (Bridge). The SCLC called for another march and reinforcements. SCLC called on "people of good will" to come and march with them because did not think they could "count on police protection" or "count

on the "National Guard to protect black people" (Young, Bridge). Hundreds of people answered the call, which renewed the movement's spirit and commitment to nonviolence.

The next march was set for the 9th of March. King led the marchers over the bridge, again met by state troops. King and a few others then knelt and prayed, turned the march around, and went back to Brown church. Back at the church King asked if people who had traveled to take part in the march could stay a few days later. Some agreed. That night Orloff Miller, James Reeb, and Clark Olson ate at the Silver Moon Café. On their way back they took a wrong turn and were confronted by five white men. One of the men hit Reeb over the head with a club. Reeb died two days later. The news of Reeb's death resulted in protests across the nation. Only "Eight days after Bloody Sunday, four days after Reeb's death, the President asked for a comprehensive Voting Rights bill and astonished the nation by using the words of the movement" (Bond, Bridge).

Soon after Johnson's announcement, SCLC received clearance for the march from Selma to Montgomery. The documentary portrays the images of marchers entering Montgomery accompanied by the song, "We're Marching on to Freedom Land" as a triumph. Corretta Scott King fondly recalls "returning to Montgomery after ten years" and the thinking about how ten years before they were "visibly just blacks and when you looked at that march, you had Catholic priests and nuns, you had other clergy and you had a lot of white people. It was really a beautiful thing to pass Basker Avenue and go toward the capitol, marching together and listening to Martin's speech" (Bridge). In the "euphoria of the moment, no one could know the traditional civil rights movement would

never again be the same. The fragile coalition that had shaped the movement for so long was coming to an end" (Bond, Bridge).

Exposing Northern Segregation: Testing Nonviolence in Chicago

The documentary uses the failure in Chicago to denote new era in the civil rights movement. The acceptance of violent white resistance exposes the weaknesses of nonviolence. In the seventh episode, "Two Societies," SCLC takes the movement north to Chicago. There, they dealt with a larger city and the political machinery of Mayor Richard Daly. Jesse Jackson recalls, "It was said that you could not expose segregation in the North because it was subtle. This actually was everything except subtle. It was dynamic, it was real, blatant, ugly, violent" (Two). They began to march through neighborhoods to protest the housing patterns that forced blacks into living in slums. They began a series of marches through white neighborhoods.

The community responded with anger and violence. A large crowd of young men, some wearing Confederate flags chant, "we want King." "Three days of marching exposed white resistance and heightened black skepticism about the use of nonviolence" (Bond, Two). Jesse Jackson called for a march through Cicero, a part of Chicago known for its racism and violence. The announcement upset movement leaders and city officials. Religious leaders called for a citywide summit to put an end to the tension. The SCLC and King's "work in Chicago had failed to win support from former allies, including the federal government and northern liberals. It was time to move on" (Bond, Two). On August 26th, 1966, the city and the movement signed an agreement that few thought would be enforced. King saw it as a first step and called off the march into Cicero. The announcement split the movement. The residents of Chicago decided to go

ahead with the march through Cicero. The march was "not a King march" (Cloy Bryant, Two). Marchers were not marching "to appeal to the white conscience, but to demonstrate to everybody that rank and file people now are a new breed, a new kind of cat without fear" (Chester Robinson, Two); "and when they threw bricks, they got them back. We caught them and we threw them back" (Bryant, Two). Historical footage shows the confrontative nature of the march and the verbal banter between marching blacks and taunting whites. People on both sides have to be physically restrained to keep the situation from getting out of hand. The failure to make the federal government or the nation respond to the problems of racism in Chicago and the march into Cicero mark a significant change in the political temperament of the movement. Nonviolence was not effective in cities in the North, and in King's last campaign, it was losing its efficacy in the South, as well.

King's Last Stand: Striking in Memphis, Tennessee

The documentary does not include the outcome of the Memphis sanitation workers strike. The strike happens at the same time as the planning for the poor people's campaign that suggests the economic turn in King's approach to civil rights. Although a strike is a nonviolent coercive way to effect social change, the sanitation workers actions during the strike suggest a growing impatience with nonviolence. The strike had gone on for two months and there had been some violence. In the middle of planning for the poor people's campaign, King agreed to go. King flew in to speak in Memphis and agreed to return. When King returned his "nonviolent approach would be directly challenged . . . On the morning of March 28th, a tense and restless crowd waited two hours before King arrived. The strike was in its 7th week. Some younger supporters had grown impatient

with the strike leaders" (Bond, Promised). As the march progressed, the sound of breaking glass could be heard toward the back of the march. King's aids rushed him to safety. This was "first time King had led marchers who had turned to violence. Secluded for the night, he braced himself for criticism" (Bond, Promised). King returned again on April 3rd to speak to deliver his last speech, "I've Been to the Mountain Top." The next day, King was shot while standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. Violence erupted throughout the United States. The civil rights movement would never regain the same enthusiasm and strength as it had when Martin Luther King Jr. was alive.

The documentary provides familiar indices of nonviolence that resonate with public memories of the civil rights movement and suggest that civil rights legislation was the result of nonviolence. Indeed, the Montgomery bus boycott, Freedom Rides, and Selma campaign were instrumental in forwarding civil rights legislation. However, the lesson learned in Albany was that the mechanism for political change was not the love and reconciliation of nonviolence. An analysis of the narrative trajectory reveals that *Eyes on the Prize* evaluates nonviolence according to its political efficacy. The documentary implicitly argues that nonviolence can work if dedicated activists are willing to subject their bodies to violence in the correct historical and political moment. But it did not always work. Thus, the narrative progression presented in *Eyes on the Prize* troubles the memory of nonviolence as an effective means of social change.

The narrative trajectory of nonviolence paints a complicated picture of the use of nonviolence. At best, the documentary presents nonviolence as a tactic that is sometimes effective, but it can be outwitted and ignored. Thus, the documentary evaluates the use of nonviolence in terms of its political efficacy. Here the documentary presents two sides of

politics. On the one hand, the documentary suggests that nonviolence has the potential to politicize people, and is therefore politically effective. On the other hand, nonviolence is dependent upon the good will of others, which waxes and wanes according to the political and historical moment. Thus, the documentary approaches the issue of nonviolence in the black freedom struggle with a critical suspicion absent in public memory.

CREATING ACTIVISTS: NONVIOLENCE AND SELF-WORTH

One of the most powerful ways that the documentary supports public memories of nonviolence is through the subjective experience of movement participants. Through word and image, the documentary demonstrates an important shift in the mentality of blacks who took part in the movement. *Eyes on the Prize* establishes the mentality of some movement members before their participation to reveal the experience of oppression and the shift after they became involved in the struggle for civil rights.

To show how the nonviolent movement created internal changes, *Eyes on the Prize* offers some evidence of the tragic state of many African Americans. The documentary series begins with the story of Emmett Till, a young boy who was tortured and then murdered for talking to a white woman. Till's great-uncle, Mose Wright bravely testified against Roy Bryant, the woman's husband and his half-brother, J.W. Mylam, but it was not enough. The men were released. The rest of the documentary uses oral histories to establish the indignity and injustice felt by African Americans. The documentary establishes that many people who boycotted the city buses in Montgomery did so because they identified with Rosa Parks. Their support for the boycott was complete because, according to an interview with Jo Ann Robinson, They had been

touched by the persecution, the humiliation that many of them had endured on buses. And they voted for it unanimously, and that meant thousands of people" (Awakneings). In "Ain't Scared of Your Jails" Diane Nash recalls the injustice she felt in Nashville. She had looked forward to college as an opportunity to expand herself and grow. She "keenly resented segregation and not being allowed to do basic kinds of things like eating at restaurants in the ten cent stores, even. So, you know, I really felt stifled and shut in very unfairly" (Ain't). As representative anecdotes of racism, these humiliation and frustration are generalizable to the black population in the United States.

As a means of gaining strength, dignity, and pride, movement participants recall what nonviolent activism did for them. For some, the ability to stand up to oppression as a community marked a new beginning. In "Awakenings" it was clear that the bus boycott was not just about securing a place to sit, but about the respect they felt they deserved. Images of church meetings packed to the rafters and the enthusiasm with which they sang attests to the deeply felt injustice the boycotters wished to address. Georgia Gilmore recalls that at the church meetings people would, "tell you how they was being mistreated, and they were glad that they were able to come up and not have to take the same treatments that they . . . had taken and was afraid to admit" (Awakenings). Joe Azbel, a white reporter, arrived to one of the boycott meetings a few minutes late to find the audience "on fire. The preacher would get up and say, 'Do you want your freedom?' And they would say, 'Yeah. Yeah, I want my freedom'" (Awakenings). E. D. Nixon recalls that after the first day of the boycott he told the audience that he first began fighting for civil rights so that the "children who came behind me wouldn't suffer the same thing I suffered. . . . And I said, 'Tonight I changed my mind.' I said, 'Hell, I want

to enjoy some of this stuff myself.' And you ought to heard people holler" (Awakenings). Participation in the boycott, according to the oral histories in the documentary, created a conviction that they, too, deserved respect and citizenship and that they could gain it themselves through activism. *Eyes on the Prize* captures their commitment and energy in the abundant images of black people walking.

Eyes on the Prize also suggests that nonviolence builds community strength. The success in keeping blacks from riding the bus on that first day inspired them to continue (Bond, Awakenings). Ralph Abernathy recalls the distinct lack of fear when the people came together for the rallies (Awakenings). And after they had won a victory in the Supreme Court, they were unafraid of the Klan. The same day the Supreme Court announced its decision, the "Ku Klux Klan rode and walked the black neighborhoods again. This time, the blacks just watched, unmoved and unafraid" (Awakenings). In losing their fears, they also "won self-respect. We had forced the white man to give what we knew was a part of our own citizenship. . . . [I]t is a hilarious feeling that just goes all over you, that makes you feel that America is a great country and we're going to do more to make it greater (Awakenings).

The use of nonviolence empowered the students in the sit-ins and Freedom Rides. Reverend C. T. Vivian explains in an oral history interview the workshops they had to learn how "to take the blows and still respond with some sense of dignity" (Ain't). The students did take the blows, both at the lunch counters and on the Freedom Rides. But instead of letting the violence intimidate them, they met it head on. Still photographs demonstrate the integrated buses, but they also capture the resolution of riders. After the buses and Freedom Riders were attacked in Anniston, Alabama, SNCC students were

determined to continue the rides. In an oral history interview, Diane Nash explains the necessity of continuing to ride: “I strongly felt that the future of the movement was going to be just cut short because the impression would have been given that whenever a movement starts, that all that has to be done is that you attack it with massive violence and the blacks would stop” (Ain’t). Even while jailed for violating segregation practices in Mississippi, the students stood up to prison guards. Frederick Leonard recalls how the students kept their spirits up by singing. The guards threatened to take their mattresses if they did not stop singing. But the students refused to relent and their mattresses were confiscated. The next night they continued to sing freedom songs: “Freedom's coming and it won't be long” (Leonard, Ain’t). Again, the prison guards collected the mattresses, but Leonard refused to give up his mattress. He was then taken into the cell block where a black inmate named “Peewee” was ordered to beat Leonard. Leonard remembers his defiance and how “Peewee came down on my head. . . . He was crying. Peewee was crying. I still had my mattress. And that's when I -- You remember when your parents used to whip you and say, "It's going to hurt me more than it hurt you?" Hurt Peewee more than it hurt me” (Ain’t). Thus, the violence and intimidation that used to frighten blacks into submission was no longer effective. Their bravery and steadfastness encouraged others to follow suit.

In Selma, Alabama, the interaction between Reverend C.T. Vivian and Jim Clark is an important example of what nonviolence could do for activists. One of the opening scenes in the segment is a confrontation between Vivan and Clark. The documentary portrays Vivian defiantly standing on the courthouse steps and chastising Clark and his men. He compares them to Nazis and warns them that their day of judgment would

come. Enraged, Clark hits Vivian. In an oral history interview that follows the incident in the documentary Vivian explains:

> With Jim Clark, it was a clear engagement between the forces and movements and the forces of the structure that would destroy movement. It was a clear engagement between those who wished the fullness of their personalities to be met and those that would destroy us physically and psychologically. You do not walk away from that. This is what movement meant. Movement meant that finally we were encountering on a mass scale the evil that had been destroying us on a mass scale. You do not walk away from that, you continue to answer it. (Bridge)

Vivian's comment explains what the movement meant from the perspective of African Americans. Rather than focusing on the kind of legislation nonviolence could produce, the comment speaks to the power of nonviolence to change its practitioner from the object of oppression to an agent of change. Through the testimony of movement participants, the documentary portrays nonviolence as a way to actively engage in the struggle for rights as humans. Nonviolence gave meaning to the physical and psychological violence to which they had always been subject.

SOUNDS AND IMAGES OF STRENGTH: NONVIOLENCE IN ACTION

The images in *Eyes on the Prize* also affirm the resolution of the activists in the face of violence. In "Awakenings" there are numerous pictures of blacks walking, the marker of their resistance to segregation, juxtaposed with empty buses. There are also still images of church rallies where attendees appear to listen intently to Ralph Abernathy and Dr. King. The next vignette is one of Jim Lawson's clinics on nonviolent resistance. The students rehearse the drama of the lunch counters. They look forward and do not

react as “whites” taunt them with comments like, “let’s get these niggers out of here,” and repeatedly say, “nigger, nigger” to the students. They would soon face the real thing.

The documentary features still, black-and-white pictures of whites beating an activist. These still photographs fix “the point from which the visual information is apprehended” and provide less spatial information than do moving images (Platinga 51). The effect in *Eyes on the Prize* is the ability to focus the image on the activist rather than the antagonist. Moreover, it allows the activist to interpret the image. For example, still pictures show the firebombing of the Anniston bus and stills of the Klan beating someone in Montgomery. However, the image is followed by an interview with Jim Zwerg, who says,

> Segregation must be stopped, it must be broken down. Those of us who are on the Freedom Ride, we will continue the Freedom Ride. I'm not sure that I'll be able to, but we're going on to New Orleans no matter what happens. We're dedicated to this, we'll take hitting, we'll take beating. We're willing to accept death. But we're going to keep coming until we can ride from anywhere in the South to any place else in the South without anybody making any comments, just as American citizens. (Ain’t)

Sometimes images are given meaning through comparison. These images substantiate the violence, but they are also juxtaposed with images of SNCC members who boldly continue the Freedom Rides. One image in particular focuses on Diane Nash, whose resolution is evident in the photograph and reinforced by in her oral history interview where she attests to the importance of continuing the rides, in spite of white violence.

These still photographs allow the story of the Freedom Rides to revolve around the dedication and strength of the activists rather than the violence they endured.

The images also contribute to the internal changes within movement participants. Many of these images are coupled with Freedom songs. Freedom songs originated from the African American oral tradition whose lyrics were adapted and blended to create songs "capable of expressing the force and intent of the movement" (Reagon 106). That these songs are included is no surprise. The civil rights movement "was a *singing* movement . . . and the central importance of song to the movement is probably unprecedented in the history of major social movements in the United States" (Appleton 243). Freedom songs are sometimes diagetic, sounds that emanate from the profilmic scene, while at other times the songs are nondiagetic and are added in as background sound that functions as "commentary or accompaniment" (Platinga 76). In *Eyes on the Prize*, Freedom Songs both express the emotional information portrayed in image in diagetic and nondiagetic forms.

To show the new sense of strength and community among Montgomery's blacks, "Awakenings" presents images of people walking juxtaposed with empty buses along with Freedom Songs to add information as to how the images should be interpreted. Often times, these images present visual evidence of the preceding scene. The first images of people walking to work are accompanied by the song, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms." This scene provides visual and aural evidence of the spirit Ralph Abernathy attests to in the preceding scene. He says of the church meeting, "We have never seen a crowd like that before. It took 15 minutes before the people would sit down and become quiet and let us begin the meeting. And I can tell you the name of the first

song that we sang. And it was 'What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine, Leaning on the Everlasting Arms'" (Awakenings). As Corretta Scott King describes the mass meetings, the documentary features images of a church packed to the rafters with people singing, "Onward Christian Soldier." As the boycott moved into its 8th and 9th month, Bond explains that many other cities in the South were desegregating their buses, but not in Montgomery. However, the boycotters remained steadfast. To demonstrate their strength of will, *Eyes on the Prize* offers more images of people walking and waiting for a ride at designated corners and smiling. These images are accompanied by the song, "Jesus is With Me." Finally, after the Supreme Court announces the illegality of segregation on city buses, there are images of black people entering and riding the buses accompanied by, "Oh What a Beautiful City." These images reinforce the triumphant feeling that activists attest to in their oral history interviews.

"Ain't Scared of Your Jails" relies more heavily on still images. The still images allow songs and voiceovers to determine the meaning of the image. "Ain't Scared of Your Jails" is filled with violence, however through interpretive strategies, these images attribute agency to protesters. The opening scene is a still picture of the four college students who sat-in at a Woolworth's counter waiting for service. While Julian Bond provides historical information, the song, "Woke up This Morning With My Mind Set on Freedom" plays in accompaniment. The next image is another photograph of the young men sitting at a lunch counter. Julian Bond explains the sit-iners nonviolent philosophy and practice while moving images of sit-iners yanked from lunch counters and arrested. Bond then explains that the sit-ins spread quickly. A recording of some sort of sit-in primarily composed of women, enthusiastically sing, "Everybody Wants Freedom." This

opening segment visually demonstrates the practice and consequences of nonviolent direct action. Framing of still images of nonviolent direct action continues throughout the episode. At the fire bombing of the bus in Anniston, Alabama, the violence is portrayed in still image accompanied by the lyrics, "We shall not be moved." The bus that went on to Birmingham was also attacked, demonstrated visually with an image of whites beating a Freedom Rider. Soon thereafter, the federal government sent in troops to ensure the safety of the Freedom Riders. The troops filled the sidewalks and the streets as a song about the Freedom Rides plays in the background:

> I'm spreadin' the news, the Supreme Court had said
> Listen here Mr. Jim Crow it's time you were dead
> Hallelujah, I'm a travelin'
> Hallelujah, ain't it fine
> Hallelujah, I'm a travelin' down freedom's mainline
> I'm taking a ride on the Greyhound bus line
> I'm riding the front seat to Jackson this time.

Riders are then pictured exiting the bus, entering the "White Only" section of the terminal and walking into paddy wagons after their arrest. Thus, "Ain't Scared of your Jails," uses images to establish the tremendous amount of violence against Freedom Riders, but allows the activists to interpret what the images mean, which reinforces their own agency in the situation. Their actions forged a creative form of agency that allowed them to transcend their circumstances. In his analysis of Henry Highland Garnet's 1843 "Address to the Slaves," James Jasinski argues that Garnet's address articulates an alternative to the Christian passive resistance. Garnet, he argues, articulates a "*tertium*

quid, a middle course of action capable of constituting a new mode of African American agency" (30). This middle way was a provisionally stable middle ground that toggled between the avenging and suffering messiah. In actively resisting segregation, Freedom Riders claimed a new sense of citizenship and personhood.

Eyes on the Prize captures the spirit of the people and their ability to resist in similar fashion. In "No Easy Walk," the resolution of the people is communicated through images of before the movement and after. The opening images of the Albany movement show blacks walking on dirt roads, without purpose to the slow, somber Negro spiritual called, "Been in the storm so long."[x] This scene that opens the segment on the Albany Movement is in stark contrast to the active participation of people who joined the movement. Although the Albany Movement is not a "win" for the civil rights movement, through their activism, the spirit of the people of Albany comes alive. Because the violence that happened to activist happened behind the walls of the jails, the images of Albany are primarily of people being arrested. The commonality between the many images of activists at rallies or facing arrest was their singing. They sang "I'm on My Way to Freedom Land," "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Round," and a spin off of "We Shall Overcome." The Albany activists sang, "We Shall Go to Jail" and "Everybody Wants Freedom."[xi] Thus, the before and after images, even without a significant victory remain purposeful and hopeful that they will change their situation in Albany.

Through images of bravery, the documentary establishes the historical verisimilitude of movement members' testimony of courage and interpersonal change based on their participation in activism. These particular images verify the brutality of racism and the strength of the activists who met that brutality head on. However, not all

of the images highlight the activist's nonviolence as agents of change. Indeed, there are numerous images of activists as the subjects of unbridled hatred and violence. These images and attending explanations demonstrate the limits and the costs of nonviolence.

JUDGING THE POLITICAL EFFICACY OF NONVIOLENCE

Eyes on the Prize presents nonviolence as a useful tool for social change, but it is a qualified affirmation. As images of violence against protesters accumulate and switch from the stills that highlight the resolution of the protesters to the moving images that highlight the agency of the antagonists they undermine public memories of a "bloodless revolution." During Project "C" in Birmingham, Bull Connor allowed police officers to use dogs and firefighters to use water hoses to stop demonstrators from marching. Pictures of dogs attacking protesters and images of people falling over from the force of the water, as well as pictures of the damage the water cannons had on trees are accompanied by screams and yells. Bull Connor repeated this treatment a second time, which sparked anger and rioting among some Birmingham blacks. The police responded with more violence. They are seen beating African Americans with billy clubs.

The episode, "Bridge to Freedom" highlights both the strengths and weaknesses of nonviolence. Through the struggle in Selma, protesters were able to induce the federal government to pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act, but the victory came at quite a cost. Images include Sheriff Jim Clark forcibly arresting an older woman and poking activists with his nightstick. But these are rather tame compared to the melee at the Pettus Bridge. After a state trooper murdered Jimmie Lee Jackson during a march in nearby Marion, Alabama, the SCLC decided to have a march from Selma to Montgomery to productively address this "great violation of the people" (Bevel, Bridge). The murder of Jackson was

a crossroads for the movement. The violence began to weigh heavily on movement participants. Even SNCC's John Lewis confesses in an interview that he "just felt during the period, it was too much, too much, too many, too many funerals and some of us will say, 'How many more?'" (Bridge). Weary from the violence, SCLC proposed a march from Selma to Montgomery, which was met with more violence.

The marchers were lined up two-by-two as they approached the bridge. They were stopped from crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge by state troopers and were told to turn back. When the marchers did not move the troopers moved toward the marchers and began to push the marchers and knock them to the ground with their nightsticks. They then run after the marchers who are attempting to retreat. Jim Clark's men, who had been watching on the sidelines, move in on horseback to chase the marchers. State troops fire tear gas and white plumes fill the frame. Through the smoke, however, the nightsticks of the troopers are clearly seen thrusting toward the ground, presumably on fallen protesters. An older woman emerges from the smoke and tries to gain her balance as two law enforcement agents swat at her with their nightsticks. The last images of the bridge include some marchers running away, while others lay on the ground. Back at Brown church, police on horseback patrol the streets as wounded marchers are carried away on stretchers. The images of the bridge are repeated on a television screen as Julian Bond explains that the scene on the Pettus Bridge interrupted ABC's showing of Judgment at Nuremburg.

The images of the beating at the Pettus Bridge are not interpreted by Julian Bond or the accompanying commentary as a moment of productive suffering. The march was supposed to address a "great violation of the people" and then they were violated yet

again. The result was frustration and despair. There was even talk of retaliation. Andrew Young recalls having to "make people think about the specifics of violence" to make them see "how suicidal and nonsensical it is" (Bridge). Hope was only restored in Selma's activists after SCLC called upon the white religious community to respond to join them in the Selma campaign. After the reinforcements arrived, "you could see a change in the atmosphere, a spirit of inspiration, motivation and seemingly hope coming back into the eyes and into the minds of these people" (Frederick Reese, Bridge).

The moving images of the violence at Selma impacts the interpretation of the event. Instead of demonstrating resolute marchers, it shows marchers as victims of violence. Their frustration with racism in the South, the lack of action on the part of the federal government, and their limited options for action contribute to the conclusion that nonviolence has its limits—both in its ability to bring about social change and the capacity of a movement to withstand violence without reacting in kind.

QUESTIONING THE EFFICACY OF NONVIOLENCE: JULIAN BOND'S VOICEOVERS

Further complicating public memories of nonviolence are Julian Bond's voiceovers. As the "voice of god" in the documentary, Bond's interpretation and evaluation of events are uncontested. With the exception of the Montgomery bus boycott in "Awakenings", each episode that features nonviolence as the primary movement tactic ends with commentary by Bond that mitigates its effectiveness or highlights the continuation of violence against the movement. Endings of documentaries are important because the "overarching function of the ending is epistemological" (Platinga 131).

Endings “fill in gaps, sum up main points, or suggest a “correct’ frame by which the previous data can be interpreted” (Platinga 131).

In most cases, Bond presents information in contrast to the gains of nonviolence. In “Ain’t Scared of Your Jails,” Bond says of the Freedom Riders, “The students had won their victory, and they had become a major force in America's civil rights movement, experienced indirection action and its consequences” (Ain’t). “No Easy Walk” ends with positive reflections of the March on Washington by participants. However, Bond’s last words in the episode attest to the violence elsewhere.

> Eighteen days after the March on Washington, Birmingham, Alabama, a bomb exploded in the 16th Street Baptist Church just before a Sunday morning service. Fifteen people were injured, four children were killed. The murder of these children shook the nonviolent movement to its core. As the people buried their dead, they sang "We Shall Overcome," but in anger and in rage, many wondered how. (Easy)

Commenting on the aftermath of the struggle in Selma, Bond says:

> That night, Viola Liuzzo, a white housewife from Michigan, was murdered by Klansmen as she transported marchers back to Selma. . . . August 11, five days after the Voting Rights bill was signed, the Watts area of Los Angeles, California, exploded in racial violence. More than 1,000 people were injured, 34 died. It signaled a new direction for the movement, the next phase of America's civil rights years. (Bridge)

Through his commentary, Bond negates simplistic interpretations of the use of nonviolence. Although nonviolence was successful in some areas, his commentary

suggests that the scope of nonviolent "wins" is small in comparison to problem of racism in the United States. Thus, the voiceovers mitigate the extent to which the legal remedies could address inequality and question whether or not nonviolence could produce the kind of social change necessary to end racism.

These conclusions by Bond are even more significant when the rest of his comments throughout the documentary are considered. Although much of Bond's comments are a means to connect historical and oral history narratives to create a coherent story, he also highlights the paradox of nonviolence. The episode, "Awakenings" is perhaps the most positive portrayal of nonviolence and its effectiveness. However, even in "Awakenings", Bond questions the efficacy of nonviolence. He states, "It was clear the boycotts hurt the bus companies, businesses, and the cities. It was not clear if they could end segregation" (Awakenings). As the documentary progresses, Bond's comments become more critical and questioning. The first segment of "No Easy Walk" is about the failure in Albany. Following a comment by Albany's Chief of Police which explained his approach to the tactic of nonviolence, Bond says, "Segregation had learned to beat the civil rights movement at its own game. The movement leaders had to find new ways to fight back. But it was still no easy walk" (Easy). And Bond concludes at the end of the segment that "Albany remained as segregated as it was the previous December when he first arrived" (Easy). Finally, in "Bridge to Freedom," Bond frames the episode in terms of national turmoil: "Race riots in northern cities during the summer of 1964. The civil rights movement was ten years old, nonviolence had been the strategy. But could nonviolence work in a society which grew angrier each day?" (Bridge). Later in the segment, SCLC considers a speech by Lyndon Johnson a victory for the movement

because he concluded with the words of the movement, “And we shall overcome.” However, Bond points out that the victory was merely symbolic because in Montgomery, SNCC members “were being beaten by Alabama police as they tried to confront Governor Wallace” (Bridge). Through his commentary, Bond complicates the the memory of nonviolence by framing the movement within the larger context of U.S. race relationships and highlighting the weaknesses of nonviolence.

CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that the documentary’s position on the use of nonviolence is ambivalent. The documentary does not unequivocally support or wholly condemn its use. Instead, it allows the experiences of activists to attest to its strengths and weaknesses and frames those experiences by Julian Bond’s voiceovers that remind viewers of the scope of nonviolent victories and the limits of nonviolence as a movement tactic.

The strength of nonviolence was its ability to change individuals stifled by oppression. Movement members “found” themselves through activism and by standing up for their rights. Nonviolence gave their suffering meaning and made violence against them a tool for social change rather than a means to keep them in their place. Thus, nonviolence was an incredibly effective tool for social change because it effected the mentality of thousands of African Americans from passive acceptance to resistance.

The weakness of nonviolence was the federal government’s ability to ignore violence that was not public. In public, Laurie Pritchett appeared nonviolent and the federal government did nothing to help desegregate Albany. Pritchett was unchanged by the methods of nonviolence. He told SNCC’s Charles Sherrod one day, “You know

Sherrod, it's just a matter of mind over matter. I don't mind and you don't matter" (Easy). As long as the violence was not public, it was not a problem. SCLC's Wyatt Tee Walker explains the impossibility of responding nonviolently to a nonviolent movement: "It's almost bizarre to say that a segregationist system or a law enforcement official of a segregationist system could be nonviolent because first of all, nonviolence works in a moral climate, and segregation is not a moral climate" (Easy). However, Laurie Pritchett's tactics worked for quite awhile. Because of the need for media attention to effect social change, both SNCC and SCLC had to engage in more drastic forms of nonviolence to induce racists to more spectacular forms of brutality to rouse public sentiment. And even with all the murders and televised violence, the pieces of legislation still could not stop racism.

By complicating the memory of the use of nonviolence, *Eyes on the Prize* provides crucial information to potential activists and movements about the kinds of situations and historical moments in which nonviolence is effective. It also implicitly argues that a successful movement cannot depend on nonviolence alone because nonviolence depends on public sympathy—which is not always forthcoming—for social change. The documentary seems to suggest that the nonviolence is a powerful tool to constitute political actors, but its instrumental effectiveness is dependent on the historical and political context.

[ix] In this Chapter I analyze "Awakenings," "Ain't Scared of Your Jails," "No Easy Walk," "Bridge to Freedom," "Two Societies," and "The Promised Land." The parenthetical notation will be "Awakenings," "Ain't," "Easy," "Bridge," "Two," and "Promised" respectively.

[2] Frederick Douglas and John Brown were notable abolitionists not committed to nonviolence.

[3] Lyrics for "Been in the Storm so Long" can be found at http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~kuumba/songs20012002.html#been

[4]Audio excerpts of these songs can be found at http://www.folkways.si.edu/search/AlbumDetails.aspx?ID=2269# ; lyrics can be found at http://www.cocojams.com/freedom_songs.htm

Chapter Six: Violence, Tragedy, and White Culpability

The issue of violence permeates *Eyes on the Prize*. According to James H. Cone, "No issue has been more hotly debated in the African-American community than violence and nonviolence" (173). Attitudes toward violence evolved within the context of the Vietnam War, political assassinations, and the civil rights movement. These events gave rise to a "curious mixture of attitudes . . . in which some people had a vague notion that any, or nearly any, use of violence is wrong, and others justified nearly any degree or type of violence if it was for goals they approved" (Marty 3). Martin Luther King, Jr. was aware of the connection between violence and the resistance to black equality in America. He argued that

> there is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of people in that society who feel they have no stake in it, who feel like they have nothing to lose. People who have stake in their society protect that society, but when they don't have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it." (Two)[xii]

Eyes on the Prize elaborates on King's warning and offers a justification for black aggression against the American system.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the presentation of the use of violence used in varying forms by participants in the black freedom struggle.[xiii] Violence in democracies is often looked upon as an abnormality, a deviation from a system that allows for change through nonviolent means (Keane 1). Interpreted through this lens, African American violence during the black freedom struggle is illegitimate. For example, mainstream media portrayed radical groups, specifically the Black Panther Party, as "a motley crew of unstable, paranoid black juvenile delinquent[s]" prone to

violence" (Stuab 57). There has also been a tendency among news agencies and some social scientists to "collapse and compress the events of a civil disorder" in a way that creates a "myth and illusion of rioters behaving as though their cognitive processes had temporarily broken down" (Kapsis 578). For example, the "riff raff theory" maintains that rioters are only a small minority of the community as well as "the most disreputable elements within the community (criminals, drug addicts, drifters, leaders of youth gangs, welfare cheaters)" (Sears & McConahay 3). Although much of the social science research conducted in the aftermath of the riots suggests the opposite, politicians nonetheless have accepted the riff-raff theory and respond with the rhetoric of "law and order." 1992 was an election year and the year Los Angeles exploded into a riot after the Rodney King verdict. The political fallout of these events was "clearly understood by politicians of both parties: law-and-order replaces jobs as the watchword of '92" (Evans and Novak 41). President George H. W. Bush vowed to prosecute the rioters. Even politicians who were sympathetic to the plight of urban dwellers blame the violence on the criminality of the rioters. Ann Richards refers to "young hoodlums who burn and batter and turn our streets into killing fields were once our children" (qtd. Ifill 9). Conservative Pat Buchanan more forcefully asserts the issue of moral and individual culpability. In response to the arguments that the riots were indicative of social and economic disparity between blacks and whites, Buchanan states:

> To suggest that some budget cuts in the 1980s justifies or condones an orgy of looting, arson, murder and lynching is an act, I think, of moral appeasement . . . I don't see how anyone can see the film of someone being dragged out of a car and

> beaten to death and then try to make excuses for it because maybe Ronald Reagan didn't spend enough on Head Start.(qtd in Roberts A8)

The emphasis on individual and moral culpability seems to overshadow societal causes of urban riots. For example, Bill Clinton "began the day by condemning the acquittal of four white police officers in the beating of Rodney G. King and expressing sympathy for the outrage that fed the riots," but changed his tune after watching the riots on television (Ifill 9). His later statements focus on individuals' responsibility for the violence: "There is a great deal of difference between being disappointed, angered and befuddled by the verdict, and taking the law into your own hands" (Ifill 9). Regardless of how obvious the reasons for the violence may be, politicians seem to gravitate toward chastising those who engage in violence rather than focusing on its causes.

Eyes on the Prize reverses the emphasis on violence in political discourse from its presence to its causes. I argue that the narrative trajectory of *Eyes on the Prize* presents a counter-memory of violence by framing black violence as an effect of white racism. The documentary places blame for the violence on whites, specifically the police, by rhetorically structuring the narrative of violence in tragic form. I will begin with a discussion of the use of violence in the United States and specifically in the black freedom struggle and then examine the narrative development of the Black Panthers and the Detroit and Miami riots.

AMERICAN VIOLENCE

Violence is a common theme that runs throughout the history of the United States in foreign and domestic affairs. American "mythogenesis" is grounded in the violent overthrow of English rule and perpetuated by immigrants who found the United States a

place where they could "regenerate their fortunes, their spirits, and the power of their church and nation; but the means to that regeneration ultimately became the means of violence, and the myth of regeneration through violence became the structuring metaphor of the American experience" (Slotkin 4-5). The guiding metaphor of violence guaranteed that the United States would be an aggressive nation, one that understood itself through violence.

The use of violence in the United States is not unique. What is "unusual about the history of violence in the United States is the enormous gap between the reality of its existence and the failure or refusal to accept it" (Boskin 5). Many people consider the American system of democracy as a set of institutions and way of life a "non-violent means of equally apportioning and publicly monitoring power within and among overlapping communities of people who live according to a wide variety of morals;" violence, then is "the greatest enemy of democracy as we know it. Violence is anathema to its spirit and substance" (Keane 1). Violence used on the part of citizens to address domestic and foreign affairs "has been largely treated as an aberration from the on-going political system" (Abudu, Raine, Burbeck and Davidson 408). This view is the product of political scientists who have tended to interpret civil violence as "irrational and pathological" and "equate *successful* democracy with *stable* democracy" (Olson 274). Even though a democracy may have been born of civil violence, the use of violence to change it has long been interpreted as an illegitimate use of force enacted by irrational people who gain nothing through its use.

VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Research on the use of violence by social movements suggests that violence can be useful. Still, proponents of nonviolence claim at least three reasons for its superiority: (1) nonviolence expresses love rather than hate; (2) nonviolence persuades through appeals to human conscience rather than coercion of the human will; and (3) nonviolence uses spiritual rather than brute force (Marty 6). However, sometimes the "threat of violence, and the occasional outbreak of real violence" are "essential elements in peaceful social change not only in international, but also in national communities" (Nieburg 865). In his study of the use of violence in social movements, William Gamson argues that "violence is associated with successful change of successful repression: it grows out of the confidence and strength and their attendant impatience with the pace of change. It is, in this sense, as much a symptom of success as a cause" (82). However, none of the groups Gamson studied used violence as its primary tactic. Moreover, Gamson argues that since 1945 "the rise of the national security state and particularly the sophisticated covert action capability" and "the rise of television and, with it, the much more central role for the mass media, affects the strategies of both challengers and authorities" (145-146). In this political context it would be more accurate, he concludes,

> to interpret the results as "feistiness works" rather than "violence works." Feistiness includes the willingness to break rules and use noninstitutionalized means—to use disruption as a strategy of influence. However, it can't be simply verbal feistiness, that is, the strategy of speaking loudly and carrying a small stick. (156)

The utility of violence is also dependent upon the desired outcome. In a revolutionary movement, violence may be more justified than a movement that seeks domestic reform. For example, the perspective of theorists like Frantz Fanon who wrote about revolutions, violence is a necessary tool to overcome physical and psychological colonization. Thus, it is important to consider how, when, and by (and against) whom violence is used to determine its ethical and instrumental effectiveness.

Violence and the Civil Rights Movement

Citizens and politicians alike often remember the civil rights movement as a bloodless revolution. At the senate hearings for the proposed memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., US senator, Paul S. Sarbanes; D-Maryland, hopes that the memorial will remind generations to come that one of the fundamental principles of a functional democracy is that "change, even very fundamental change, is to be achieved through nonviolent means; that this is the path down which we should go as a Nation in resolving some of our most difficult problems" (10-11).

Violence was both an impetus for the movement and an outcome of attempts to gain equality and freedom in the United States. In the Jim Crow South blacks knew that there were strict social rules that had dire consequences if broken. There were laws that officially regulated behavior, but these laws were enforced, ultimately, through the practice of lynching. The myth of the black male rapist was the most effective justification for lynching. Ida Barnett Wells researched these claims and found that only a third of the men lynched were actually accused of rape. Nonetheless, "men who were motivated by their duty to defend their women could be excused of any excess they might

commit. That their motive was sublime was ample justification for the resulting barbarities" (Davis 187).

The 1955 murder of Emmett Till is, perhaps, the most famous lynching case. Charles Schumer, a champion of the reinvestigation of the Till case said, "The murder of Emmett Till was one of the seminal moments in our nation's civil-rights movement and the failure to bring his murderers to justice remains a stain on America's record of reconciliation" (qtd in Harold and DeLuca 265). Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam tortured and killed Emmett. His body was found in the Tallahatchie River so badly mutilated that even the coroner had a difficult time examining the remains. However, Mamie Till Bradley would not let her son's death fade into obscurity. When she brought the boy's body home for the funeral she insisted on an open casket so that "all the world can see what they did to my boy" (Awakenings). Through this act of defiance against the brutality of Southern justice, Mamie Till Bradley "transformed her son from a victim of white racism to an unforgettable symbol that mobilized a generation of activists" (Harold and DeLuca 271). The brutal murder of such a young boy became a lasting memory in the black community and awoke in them the resolve to resist white terrorism. This memory is formative for the movement and the film. Fred Shuttlesworth of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference argues that, "the fact that Emmett Till, a young black man, could be found floating down the river in Mississippi, as, indeed, many had been done over the years, this set in concrete the determination of people to move forward" (Awakenings). Although the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision happens almost a year before Till's murder, the documentary begins with his story as the prime example of

the inhumanity of racism. That Till's murder was sanctioned by the community and the court demonstrates in no uncertain terms the need for massive resistance.

Dismantling the system of white supremacy in the South was not a peaceful process. Between 1956 and 1966 white supremacists committed more than 1,000 documented violent incidents aimed at stopping integration including bombing, burning, flogging, abduction, castration, and murder ("The Ku Klux Klan: A History of Racism and Violence" 23). Freedom Riders were beaten severely for trying to desegregate interstate buses and bus terminals, protesters were bitten by dogs, jailed activists were beaten in prisons, James Meredith was shot, and Jimmy Lee Jackson, Viola Liuzzo, Jim Reid, Andrew Goodwin, James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, Fred Hampton, Mark Clark, Medger Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr., among others, were all murdered for their involvement in the movement. The black freedom struggle was hardly bloodless. Instead, it was filled with violence ranging from schoolyard squabbles to torture and murder.

THE NARRATIVE PROGRESSION OF VIOLENCE IN *EYES ON THE PRIZE*

Eyes on the Prize presents a sympathetic reading of the use of violence, but it does not support the use of violence as an instrumental movement tactic. The use of violence does not result in significant social change for African Americans in the documentary. Instead, the framing of violence in *Eyes on the Prize* suggests that violence is an unfortunate, although sometimes understandable, reaction to white resistance to social equality. The purpose of violence in *Eyes on the Prize* is to reveal the racism blacks continued to face even after congress passed laws like the 1964 and 1968 Civil Rights Acts. The narrative arc of violence in *Eyes on the Prize* suggests the waning

effectiveness of nonviolence, economic disparities between blacks and whites, as well as police brutality in black communities were causes of black violence.

The documentary broaches the issue of violence in the sixth episode, "Bridge to Freedom." Through Bond's voiceovers, the documentary connects the resistance to social change with the desire to react violently. The episode is about the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) attempted march from Selma to Montgomery to mourn the murder of Jimmie Lee Jackson and highlight the disenfranchisement of Alabama's blacks. State troops prohibited marchers from crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge and beat them as they retreated. Although "Bridge to Freedom" ends with the passing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Julian Bond concludes the episode by stating, "the Watts area of Los Angeles, California, exploded in racial violence. More than 1,000 people were injured, 34 died. It signaled a new direction for the movement, the next phase of America's civil rights years" (Bridge).

The next episode, "The Time Has Come," introduces the rhetoric of Malcolm X and Black Power. The episode is important because it marks a turning point for the movement's politics and tactics. People in the Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee (SNCC) began to listen to Malcolm's call to secure their human rights "by any means necessary." They voted John Lewis out and Stokley Carmichael in. According to Carmichael, the rejection of John Lewis meant that the "morality upon which King's organization depended to bring about changes in the community were not possible. The SNCC people had seen raw terror and they understood properly this raw terror had nothing to do with morality, but had to do clearly with power" (Time). Later in the episode, during James Meredith's march against fear, Carmichael takes a stronger

stand against nonviolence. He tells a reporter, "I just don't see [nonviolence] as a way of life, I never have. But I also realize that no one in this country is asking the white community in the South to be nonviolent. And that in a sense is giving them a free license to go ahead and shoot us at will" (Time). Carmichael did not just talk about defending himself. During the Meredith march, the documentary shows Carmichael lurching at one of the white persons taunting marchers. Nothing comes of the moment because King pulls Carmichael back into the march at the last second. Later in the march, law enforcement agents attack one of the activist campsites. Arlie Shardt describes the scene as a hell filled with people suffering from inhaling the tear gas. The documentary provides the visuals of the campground engulfed in plumes of smoke. A reporter interviews Carmichael, who is visibly injured. Carmichael tells the reporter that he was hit with one of the tear gas canisters. According to Bond, "Black Americans were changing, and there was no turning back" (Time).

The next three attempts at nonviolent social change failed, however the documentary ultimately frames these failures as the result of a non-responsive government and resistant white community. First, King and the SCLC tried to take nonviolence to the big cities of the North. In Chicago, SCLC wanted to determine whether "nonviolence [would] work in the North, and what elements of nonviolence would work. Voter registration, marches and direct action, could we end slums and create good housing? Could we create jobs and educational opportunities?" (Andrew Young, Two). The documentary visually establishes the poor living conditions of blacks in Chicago. Images of run-down apartment buildings and littered black neighborhoods versus the well kept white neighborhoods establish the pattern of racial segregation and

discrimination in Chicago. However, Chicago mayor Richard Daley would not make concessions to the movement even after nonviolent confrontations and skirmishes with police officers produced violence against black activists. The acts of violence committed against African Americans during this time also "failed to win support from former allies, including the federal government and northern liberals" (Bond, Two).

The next failure of nonviolent social change would end with the assassination of King. In the middle of planning the poor people's march, King agreed to help with a sanitation workers strike in Memphis, Tennessee at the request of long time activist, Jim Lawson. The mayor had refused to negotiate with the workers and police had maced and beaten some strikers during a march. Lawson hoped King's presence would force the city to enter negotiations. King was only supposed to speak at a rally and then leave, but agreed to return. Upon his return, King led a march that resulted in violence on the part of the strikers. King left Memphis distraught. According to Bond, "The FBI, monitoring King in Memphis, used its press contacts to create doubt about the upcoming campaign in Washington" (Promised). When King returned to Memphis to prove that nonviolence could work, the city blocked the march with an injunction. The injunction was finally lifted, but King would not march. On April 4th, he was shot on the balcony of his room at the Lorraine Hotel.

The poor people's campaign also ended in failure. The campaign was very important to King because he believed it was "a kind of last, desperate demand for the nation to respond to nonviolence" (Promised). Still in shock from the murder of their leader, SCLC went ahead with the proposed campaign. The documentary shows masses of people arriving in Washington D.C. on buses, horse drawn carts, and on foot. Some of

the marchers singing, “Na, na, na, na, na; I want my freedom now.” The idea was to bring the nation’s poor to the capitol to demonstrate the great need of the people. On the same ground as the march on Washington, Ralph Abernathy declares the site, “Resurrection city, USA” and hammers in the first in the first nail as the crowd chants “Freedom, Freedom, Freedom.” The campaign begins on a hopeful note. The song “Everybody’s Got a Right to Live” plays in the background to images of people working together to construct homes. Signs that say, “Peace, Brother,” “Black is Good,” and “Malcolm X Shabazz Center for Black Brothers” decorate the homes. However, in the wake of King’s assassination, the SCLC was unable to sustain the commitment of the city or secure new government programs. Then Resurrection City lost its biggest supporter, Robert Kennedy (Promised). While campaigning, Robert Kennedy was assassinated on June 4th. Andrew Young recalls that “Bobby Kennedy's assassination just brought everything to a halt. And I think we began to grieve about Martin in the context of Bobby Kennedy's assassination” (Promised). And then the rain came. Images of people walking around in knee deep water. With little hope of success and the miserable living conditions, people began to leave the city. SCLC’s Bill Rutherford explains that

> The last days of Resurrection City were like being in the camp of a defeated army. I think the spirit went out of people, there were people there who had no place to go, people who had come to Washington, come to Resurrection City with a great deal of hope, and who had none left. It was literally at the end of the major battle, the battle of the poor, and they'd lost. (Promised)

The episode ends with an admonishment from King: “One day, we will have to stand before the God of history and we will talk in terms of things we've done. It seems as if I

can hear the God of history saying, 'That was not enough. For I was hungry, and you fed me not'" (Promised).

The use of King's quote to end the segments suggests that the failure of these nonviolent campaigns is really the failure of the United States to live up to its religious and political ideals. The documentary also offers these examples to demonstrate why black activists became increasingly frustrated with nonviolence as a social movement tactic and as a rationale for blacks looking for alternative ways to effect social change.

URBAN RIOTS: ECONOMIC DISPARITY AND POLICE BRUTALITY

The second claim the documentary forwards is that blacks use violence in response to police brutality; in other words black people and movements were not the instigators of violence. In American popular consciousness, violence is generally legitimate if the violent actor is truly aggrieved and beset by the violence of its opponent. So the film's presentation is progressive in so far as it suggests that both the instrumental violence of the Black Panthers and the eruptions of violence in riots were the result of entrenched racism backed by law enforcement agents. The Detroit riot follows the failure of nonviolence in Chicago in the documentary. Bond transitions between the two segments by highlighting the growing "tension" between "black and white America [that] would explode with the greatest force in Detroit, Michigan" (Two).

1967 Detroit Riot

Eyes on the Prize uses images and oral history testimony to suggest that economic disparity and police brutality caused the Detroit riot. In 1967, Detroit was undergoing a time of economic prosperity, but only for whites. Images of high rises set to upbeat

music juxtaposed with the dilapidated buildings in the black section of Detroit show the disparity between the haves and the have-nots. The new economic opportunities also meant a disparity in power. In "Detroit, that meant white power. It was symbolized by a police force that was 95 percent white. Generations of black residents had contended with police, especially four man squads known as the big four" (Two). Herb Boyd, community member and professor, explains that

> it wasn't unusual to see the cops coming into neighborhoods and just arbitrarily grabbing people, you know, without any kind of provocation and slam us up against the walls, ask us for identification, where you going, what you been doing, any kind of suspicious whatsoever would be cause for them to just go ahead and accost you. (Two)

The police and residents of Detroit's ghettoes had been at odds for some time. The tension in the city came to a head one night when the police raided a "blind pig," an after hours night club. It took law enforcement agents quite some time to haul off all of the people who were at the blind pig. Officer John Nichols recalls that the mood of "hilarity grew into some derisive talk to the police and ultimately was stoning the cars" (Two). The scuffle turned into a riot. Later that morning, a man on the street tells a reporter that the blacks are rioting because "All these folks, every time you see one of them, he going to stop a brother. You know, he never stop no whites, that's why we out here rioting and we going to keep on rioting until they stop all this" (Two). But the "rebellion" on the part of blacks lacked direction and organization. Images of community members loitering in the streets, individuals carting off goods from various stores, and fires in stores and the street establishes the disorder of the opening hours of the riot.

The mood of the documentary soon shifts. What is pictured and talked about as disorder devolves into a "growing sense of concern in the community was that the situation was out of hand. That no one knew where it was going, when it would end, or even how to end it" (Arthur Johnson, Two). Federal troops were ordered into the city to try and restore order. The images of troops in their fatigues patrolling the streets with rifles drawn looks as though they are from a war torn country. Then night falls and sounds of sirens, breaking glass accompanied by the music of Jimi Hendrix's "Purple Haze" along with images of multiple burning buildings and firefighters futile attempts to douse the flames. The sounds and images portray a city destroying itself.

Eyes on the Prize implicitly attributes the structure fires and other damage to the looters. However, according to the documentary, much of the violence against people was perpetrated by law enforcement. Albert Wilson, a victim of police misconduct during the riot recalls the scene in a five and ten cent store. The police entered the building and ordered all the "black mother fuckers to come out from back there." Wilson got up, but heard his neighbor call him back. As he turned

> to go back and get there next to her behind this bolting of carpeting, and I just remember seeing a flash of light at that time and going back there to lay down on a bolt and to wake up, I guess, a couple of days later and to hear a doctor tell my mother that the bullet had injured my spine and I probably wouldn't walk again. (Boyd, Two)

Bond reports that "at least two people died when National Guardsmen, fearing snipers, sprayed buildings with gun fire." There was also a story "uncovered by the press about three young black men killed during a police raid at the Algiers Motel. . . . There were

no convictions." By the end of the rioting, "Forty-three people were dead, 33 were black" (Bond, Two).

1980 Riot in Miami

Eyes on the Prize begins the story of the Miami riot in Overtown, a black enclave on the northern edge of downtown Miami, to establish the community values and individual desire to take advantage of the new opportunities afforded blacks with the end of legal segregation. It was a vibrant community "in which people had common causes and related to each other, there was economic development, businesses, furniture stores, clothing stores, soda water bottling company. The professionals, doctors, lawyers, other professionals were there" (Dewey Knight, Back). Images of business men having lunch, children playing in a pool, and enjoying themselves and line dancing at the Sir John, a popular nightclub demonstrate the vitality of Overtown destroyed by city expansion. The space was used to build an expressway which displaced over 50 percent of Overtown's population. Many moved into nearby Liberty City where they experienced rejection and vandalism motivated by racism in the previously all-white neighborhood.

Nevertheless, people in the black community had high hopes for the social mobility education would bring their children. Dr. John O. Brown explains, "think at that time, most of us in the black community felt that education was the key, and once the schools were integrated and black kids were given the opportunities to get training and everything, then a lot of these other things would disappear" (Back). While in Miami, Sammy Davis, Jr. visited a black school to encourage them to be ready for the new opportunities created by the civil rights movement. The documentary frames Arthur McDuffie as a person ready for those opportunities by including interviews with

McDuffie's widow and former high school friends. Bond tells viewers, "1968, McDuffie came home from the Marines. That same year, he married his high school sweetheart. As the years passed, Arthur McDuffie became a successful business executive. Even to family members, he could be an exacting boss" (Back). The documentary portrays McDuffie as a man poised for success, until the night he was pulled over by the police and beaten to death.

Four Miami police officers were tried for the murder of Arthur McDuffie. Although there was strong evidence of their guilt, an all-white jury acquitted the offending officers. Dr. John O. Brown said the verdict was, "just another lynching;" Dorothy Gram, mother of two, concluded after the verdict that there "seemingly is no justice for a black man" (Back). The riot began as hundreds of peaceful protesters gathered outside of the state building. A man in a car slowly rolls past protesters, encouraging them to chant "we want justice." The camera focuses on a sign that says, "I am a hardworking, law abiding, parent of two. Please do not beat me to death, too!" Police tried to disperse angry protesters. In retaliation, cars were set on fire and other fires were started "throughout Overtown and Liberty City. Police could not stop the growing furor" (Bond, Back). Police officers refused to hold their posts, claiming that they were being shot at and feared for their lives. Rioters burned white owned businesses and targeted individual whites. Images of burning buildings and bloodied whites being helped out of the ambulances and rolled down the hospital hallways on gurneys attest to the anger and violence of the protesters. A man interviewed in his car explains to a reporter that blacks are "angry over the results of McDuffie, they're angry. They're angry. They're angry, and they're emotional and anything that looks like it might be Caucasian,

they're throwing bricks and rocks and shooting" (Back). In the end, "17 people died, 10 black, 7 white. More than 1,000 people were arrested, most of them with no previous arrest record" (Bond, Back).

As represented in *Eyes on the Prize*, the lack of economic opportunity and the gross mistreatment of blacks in their own neighborhoods and in the courtrooms of America is the cause of violence and rioting. The documentary establishes both visually and verbally that blacks have good reason to be angry and frustrated. However, it suggests that the disorder and destruction that each of the rebellions devolves into serves little progressive political purpose. This kind of rebellion poses little threat to the structural forms of racism that is the cause of their justified outrage. The documentary suggests similar circumstances that give rise to the Black Panther Party.

THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY: REPRESSION AND THE LAW

The documentary portrays the Black Panthers in a positive light. It spends little time on the Panther's use of violence in favor of the violence used against the Panthers. In two episodes, "Power" and "A Nation of Law?," *Eyes on the Prize* presents the Black Panther Party as an organization whose function was to protect the black community from police brutality. In the first episode, "Power," Julian Bond transitions from the story of the mayoral election of Cleveland's first black mayor, Carl Stokes, to the Black Panther Party by saying, "In Oakland, California, the search for power began on the streets. Blacks had little say in how their community was run; in particular, many questioned the role of the police." In an oral history interview, Huey Newton explains the focus on the issue of policing: "The police throughout the black communities in the country were really the government. We had more contact with the police than we did the

city council. The police were universally disliked" (Power). Influenced by third world revolutions and the growing problem of policing, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale formed the Black Panther Party. Their purpose was to monitor police activities and protect their community with violence, if necessary. To spread the word about their organization, Panther members went to the state capitol to attend the legislative session about gun laws that would restrict use of guns within city limits. Black Panthers interpreted this law as a direct attack on their activities. News footage included in the documentary shows the Panthers arriving at the capitol clad in black leather and toting guns, a legally protected right in California. A confrontation with authorities ensued. Unable to charge the Panthers with gun violations, the Panthers were charged with and convicted of disturbing the peace.

"Power" offers a brief introduction to the Black Panther Party and presents their reasons for forming the party and using violence. Their claims of police misconduct and brutality are substantiated in "A Nation of Law?" The episode begins with a quote from Bobby Seale who argues that King had exhausted nonviolence as a means of social change. And that although they respect nonviolence, it was no longer acceptable to "sit and watch ourselves be slaughtered like [King], we must defend ourselves, as Malcolm X says, by any means necessary" (Nation).

According to the documentary, the Panthers were a part of "an increasingly volatile political scene" (Bond, Nation). The organization was growing which gained the attention of J. Edgar Hoover, who "expanded surveillance of organizations in the black community, especially the Black Panther Party" (Bond, Nation). The FBI also issued directives that called for "imaginative and hard hitting counterintelligence measures

aimed at crippling the Black Panther Party" (Bond, Nation). The FBI was even skeptical about the Panther's breakfast program, whose purpose was to feed hungry children. The documentary refutes this claim with historical footage of Black Panthers innocently inviting children into eat the prepared breakfast. By 1969, Hoover claimed that the Panthers were the number one threat to internal security of the United States. Hoover's statement gave law enforcement agents the "impression that . . . you didn't have to worry about the law, you didn't have to worry about the difference in the executive branch of government and the judicial branch of government. . . . We've got the authority, we have the capacity, let's crush them" (Harold Saffold, Nation). The police raided Panther headquarters, burned the breakfast supplies, provoked tension between the Panthers and a local gang, and arrested Panthers at will. While on trial, Seale insisted on speaking in his own defense. His request was denied and he was gagged. According to Southern Christian Leadership Conference member, C.T. Vivian, the treatment of Seale was a, "symbol to every one of us, black men in our courts, are gagged. Black men in our courts do not feel as though there is any justice. Black men in our courts . . . feel the judges do not understand and are without mercy" (Nation).

The documentary depicts the Chicago police and FBI as corrupt agencies hell bent on destroying the Black Panthers. It uses a police raid and murder of Fred Hampton, a Black Panther, as evidence of law enforcement's willingness to violate the laws they had sworn to uphold to thwart the Black Panther Party. Police informant, William O'Neal, provided the Chicago police with a document that detailed the floor plan of a Panther apartment. The documentary includes a sketch of the floor plan and zooms in on the upper right hand corner to focus in on a handwritten note, "Room of Hampton and

Johnson when they stay here" to substantiate the claim that the police planned the attack against Hampton. On December 4, 1969, Both Clark and Hampton "were killed in the raid. Four of the seven surviving occupants of the apartment were wounded. All were charged with assault and attempted murder" (Nation). Police contended that the Panthers had attacked them and they only returned fire. However, a reporter named Brian Boyer went down to the crime scene and found that all the bullets were going in one direction. The city's public relations director produced photographs of Hampton's apartment riddled with bullet holes. He argued that the photographs proved the city's claim that the police were attacked by the Black Panthers during the raid and the police responded appropriately. *Eyes on the Prize* uses historical footage of the apartment to refute those claims. It also provides historical footage of the tours through the apartment narrated by Panther members. They point to bullet holes and the bed where Hampton died. They explain that if the police wanted to "take somebody to jail, it would be a simple matter, just shoot some tear gas" (Nation). A voice in the background says, "right on" (Nation).

In addition to the visual evidence of police misconduct, the documentary offers the justified outrage of the black community as well as Julian Bond's voiceovers as evidence of wrongdoing. Reverend Thomas Strieter argued that the police raid was a "blatant act of legitimatized murder [that] strips all credibility from law enforcement. In the context of other acts against militant blacks in recent months, it suggests an official policy of systematic repression" (Nation). The city could not quiet the controversy, which "leads to a series of investigations. An FBI ballistic expert established that all but one of the more than 90 shots had been fired by the police. All charges against the Panthers were dropped, no police were indicted" (Bond Nation). Later, more evidence of

FBI misconduct emerged. In 1971 "political activists broke into an FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania. Stolen FBI files documented extensive FBI operations against U.S. citizens and organizations, including traditional civil rights groups" (Bond, Nation). However, the federal government continued to support these agencies. President Richard Nixon, "reaffirmed his support for the FBI during graduation ceremonies at the Bureau's national academy" (Bond, Nation).

Eyes on the Prize presents a damning case against law enforcement agencies. Through subjective and historical evidence, the documentary reveals the reality of thousands of blacks who experienced the American legal system in an entirely different way than did its white citizens. For poor blacks trapped in ghettoes, the enforcement of law was the source of violence. Although the documentary never explicitly condones violence, the evidence makes it difficult to deny the need for a group like the Panthers to defend black communities against an illegitimate police force. Thus, the narrative progression of the use of violence in *Eyes on the Prize* is borne of the loss of faith in the social and political institutions to change. This critique is most apparent in the behavior of police who, in all the cases, either fail to protect black citizens or purposefully inflict harm on black citizens.

TRANSFERING GUILT: TRAGIC VIOLENCE AND WHITE CULPABILITY

The narrative progression of *Eyes on the Prize* tracks the continuation of racism even after blacks had made a concerted effort to change American society through nonviolent direct action. The subsequent loss of faith in the American system and white people to change from their racist ways resulted in black violence against the American system. Remembering black violence in this way fundamentally contradicts dominant

memories of violence during the black freedom struggle which blames the victims of racism for their outrage.

The displacement of guilt for violence is rhetorically displaced through tragic form. Narrative theorists most often make distinctions between what a story is about and how it is told to determine meaning. The form of the story provides important information about the meaning of the story. Hayden White calls this "explanation by emplotment," which simply means that the sequence of events reveals the story to be of a particular kind (White 7). Documentaries are also narratives that often conform to particular story forms, and thus, shape our perception of the "reality" of the world based on the kind of story form a documentary uses to present information (Platinga 85).

Using the categorical scheme of Northrop Frye's *An Anatomy of Criticism*, Hayden White identifies at least four different modes of emplotment in which to narrate history (7). Of the four, Comedy and Tragedy contain plot structures that "suggest the possibility of at least partial liberation from the condition of the Fall and provisional release from the divided state in which men find themselves in this world" (White 9). Both narrative forms revolve around historical conflict and both take historical conflict seriously. However, comedy "eventuates in a vision of the ultimate *reconciliation* of opposed forces" while Tragedy resolves through a "*revelation* of the nature of the forces opposing [humans]" (White 10). Furthermore, the function of conflict in tragedy represents "intense struggling, straining, and striving to gain a lofty and sorely-needed prize" (Appel 217-218). Thus, in the tragic form, conflict is not about the object of conflict itself, but the resolution on the other side of conflict (White 95). Thus, tragic

strivings are attempts to establish "a new hierarchy; a radical shift in values and laws" (Appel 218).

Rhetorically, tragedy is "concerned with the processes of guilt and justification" (Burke *Permanence* 195). The tragic form presents "a complex kind of trail by jury in which the author symbolically charges himself or his characters with transgressions not necessarily considered transgressions in law, and metes out condemnation and penance by tests far deeper than any that could be codified in law" (Burke *Permanence* 195). The meaning produced by tragic from is, therefore, dialectical (Burke *Grammar* 38). The agent who earnestly strives against a system of injustice can only truly reveal those sins through her own demise. Thus, the meaning of the story points not to her own actions, but to the original sin that motivated her action. Guilt, then, is assigned not to the action, but to the motivating force behind the action.

Guilt, for Kenneth Burke, is the result of an inability to maintain order (*Religion* 4), most often structured in hierarchies. Hierarchies are "system[s] of social order in which participants assume roles, rights, and responsibilities towards other participants" (Brummett "Zebra" 65). However, this order cannot be maintained. Individuals and groups inevitably violate the principles of the order through "hate, violence, lawlessness, rejection, alienation, or failure to meet responsibilities. This offense against the social order creates in the transgressor the feeling or motive of guilt" (Brummett "Zebra" 66). In tragedies, guilty action sets in motion a "chain of events and circumstances" (Brummett "Delorean" 224). In short, human failure produces social disorder, which is a source of guilt.

Tragedy is often theorized from works of art. Rhetorical tragedy differs because the "rhetor is primarily concerned with *framing an experience* so that it can be accepted as a tragedy and, in that sense, a work of art" (Kenny 97). *Eyes on the Prize* uses actual violent events and frames them tragically to rhetorically recast blame. The narrative progression connects the failures of nonviolence and police misconduct with black violence to portray violence as a means to win self-respect, to fight fire with fire. Ultimately, these attempts end in failure. This suggests that the documentary is not pro-violence, but uses instances of black violence to demonstrate the continued racism and violence against blacks. Thus, the purpose of violence in *Eyes on the Prize* is to encourage the viewer to interpret black violence as the failure of the United States to ensure the rights and privileges of all its citizens. In both the cases of the Black Panthers and the riots in Detroit and Miami, violence foregrounds the motivation over the action.

Protecting the Community from the Law: Police Violence and the Black Panthers

Overall, the documentary portrays the Black Panthers in a positive light. For a group that had been accused of being black racists, *Eyes on the Prize* offers examples of the opposite, like Fred Hampton having a group repeat after him: "we're all power to all people. You say white power to white people. Brown power to brown people. Yellow power to yellow people. Black power to black people" (Nation). However, the Panthers also represent a violent element of the black freedom struggle. The documentary includes a scene in which Chicago Black Panthers brandish rifles as Fred Hampton says, "We are very confident that no one is coming through the front door." In the next scene, Hampton tells an interviewer,

> Yes, we do defend our office as we do defend our homes. This is a constitutional right everybody has, and nothing's funny about that. The only reason they get mad at the Black Panther Party when you do it is for the simple reason that we're political. And they don't want to admit that there are a lot of young organizations around, but we're a political organization. We are an organization that understands that politics is nothing but war without bloodshed and war is nothing but politics with bloodshed. (Nation)

The police also attest to the Panther's violent nature. According to Officer Charles O'Brien, the Panthers

> seemed to be in deliberate, open, provocative confrontation with the police departments in their early periods. They used revolutionary language, provocative language and seemed to be deliberately seeking to confront established authority particularly police authority. (Power)

In a public statement after the raid on the Panther apartment, Joseph Lefevour says, "The Black Panthers preach every day hate, kill whitey, kill the police, kill the pigs, hate, hate, hate, that's all you hear from them" (Nation). There are no visual images of the Panthers engaging in actual violence, but Bond introduces the Panthers as an organization armed with "law books and guns" (Power). Bobby Seale recalls the community taking note that the Panthers openly carried weapons while observing police arrests. A news report of the Panthers in Sacramento states that the Panthers are, "heavily armed, whether their weapons are loaded or not, nobody seems to know" (Power). Soon after the interview is a scene with Panther, Bobby Hutton, arguing with a police officer about his constitutional right to carry a weapon (Power).

The Panthers not only carried weapons, they advocated using them and sometimes did. At a rally, Fred Hampton enthusiastically tells a group of people "I am the people, I'm not the pig. You got to make a distinction. And the people are going to have to attack the pigs. The people are going to have to stand up against the pigs. That's what the Panthers . . . are doing all over the world" (Nation). At a different rally, Eldridge Cleaver tells a crowd, "We will always say it, we're not afraid to say it, that these racist Gestapo pigs have to stop brutalizing our community or we're going to take up guns, we're going to drive them out" (Power). Injury reports attest to the Panther's willingness to use violence against police. In October of 1967, "Huey Newton was shot in the stomach in a confrontation with police. Police officer Herbert Haines was also seriously wounded. Officer John Fry died from gunshots believed to be from a police revolver" (Bond, Power). Six months later, on April 6, 1968, "a gun battle on the streets of West Oakland. Five men were wounded, three police officers and two Panthers. A third Panther, Bobby Hutton, aged 17, was shot to death" (Bond, Power). And in Chicago, Bond reports that Panther involvement in a "gun battle on Chicago's south side" resulted in the death of "a former Panther and two policemen" (Nation). The Panthers were not suicidal, but they were serious about using and becoming subject to violence to protect their communities.

The documentary demonstrates the fact that the Black Panther Party engaged in violence as an instrumental tactic. However, it also includes numerous oral history and news interviews in which Black Panthers offer their reasons for using violence. Moreover, the documentary frames the police misconduct against the Panthers as evidence of the veracity of the Panther's claims that the police abused the black

community. Their acceptance by the community is also evidence of the positive impact of the Black Panther Party.

Many people within the black community were initially afraid of the Panthers (Bond, Nation). However, the Panthers' bravado and courage inspired those around them and the nation. Across the country, men and women formed local chapters. The appeal, explains Bobby Seale, was that they were engaged in "a battle, it was a struggle and I think we . . . began to get millions of black folks to really look at where were coming from in our stand against the power structure" (Power!). In reference to the death of Bobby Hutton, Panther member Elaine Brown states in an oral history:

> Here was a man who was saying this, and we are willing to take charge of our lives, we are willing to stand up, we are willing -- I mean, there was the appeal that Malcolm had in many ways that a certain subjective appeal to my psyche and to my emotional need to say, "Yes, there were men in this world who cared, black men, who cared about the community and wanted to do something and were willing to take it to the last degree." (Power)

In Chicago, Panther Fred Hampton was an adept organizer. The multiple interviews included in the documentary portray a fast-talking, articulate, and charismatic activist. Elaine Brown remembers that Fred Hampton had a way of drawing in

> people from the streets, I mean, who are not going to get up and go to work or anything else, and never had no discipline and never would. But there they were, and it was 6:30 in the morning, freezing Chicago weather. And Fred would have them out there doing pushups and jumping jacks and getting themselves energized for the day's work, which included making the breakfast, which included selling

> papers, which included working in the medical clinic, which included a bunch of stuff. . . . You could not not be moved by Fred Hampton. (Nation)

Although not everyone would understand the philosophy behind the organization, *Eyes on the Prize* suggests that people were drawn to the Panthers because they were directly confronting the power structure that, despite the civil rights movement, continued to terrorize their community.

From the perspective of the black community, the murder of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark is a tragic story that demonstrates of the problem of the white power structure. Outrage over the murder of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark came from all parts of the black community who voiced their fear and frustration with the unlawful use of violence against African Americans. Panthers opened up the apartment so that the community could witness for themselves the crime scene. Images of walls covered with white strings that showed the direction of the bullets as well as photographs of the apartment offers visual confirmation of a murder. Visitors who came

> out of curiosity, were saying, 'This is atrocious.' Even law and order people were saying, 'This is unlawful and it's disorderly and it's obviously not part of what I want to condone in terms of my law enforcement or my taxes to be protected. . . .' People realized that there had been a trial, a conviction, and an execution in that house. (Safford, Nation)

Community member Nancy Jefferson did not believe in the methods of the Panthers, but did believe that the violence against the Panthers meant that everyone was prone to police violence. Hampton's death was a cause for "fear, shame, you know, sorry. What could we do? Why couldn't we have protected Fred?" (Jefferson). George Clements had a mass

for Fred and recalls that he was "shattered" and "devastated" and broke down into tears trying to explain why Fred Hampton was important. The sentiments of community members reinforce the justification for violence heard by Panther members at the beginning of the segment while simultaneously undermining the legitimacy of federal and local law enforcement.

The response to this reckless abandon of the law was silence. After an "FBI ballistic expert established that all but one of the more than 90 shots had been fired by the police. All charges against the Panthers were dropped, no police were indicted" (Bond, Nation). The segment ends with Richard Nixon reaffirming his support for the FBI at a graduation ceremony at the Bureau's national academy:

> I am honored to be here to break into your graduation ceremony, to reassure you and all of the men in law enforcement throughout the country of the support you have at the very highest levels in government for your work. And I am honored to speak for the entire nation in saying to you congratulations, wishing you well and seeing that this nation is one in which we will have respect for law, in which the American people can have freedom from fear. (Nation)

Nixon's affirmation of the FBI is portrayed in the documentary as his approval of the tactics used against the Black Panthers and yet another example of why Panthers took it upon themselves to try to make changes within their own community.

The tragic chain of events that lead young men and women to take up arms in defense of their community and the murder of two while they slept in their beds demonstrates the travesty of justice that the Panthers were trying to address. In the tragic frame, the murder of Mark Clark and Fred Hampton are not completely in vain. By

framing the overall story of the Black Panthers in as a tragedy and the emphasis on the murder of Fred Hampton, the violence that the Panthers engaged in against the police points to the racism of the police, FBI and Nixon rather than the lawlessness of the Black Panthers. The tragedy of Hampton and Clark was not a total loss because it taught the community to speak out for liberation, for first class citizenship (Clements, Nation). The riots in Detroit and Miami are also tragic, but the documentary suggests that the losses had little productive value.

URBAN VIOLENCE UNLEASHED

Eyes on the Prize suggests that both the Detroit and Miami Riots were the result of community fragmentation and racism, but neglects the role of the economy. In both situations there were structural changes to the city that divided African American communities, which resulted in prosperity for white people. In 1967 Detroit was the site of "Federally funded urban renewal" which brought "highways," "skyscrapers," and the auto industry "brought employment. But success looked different to Detroit's black community. Urban renewal built expressways through black neighborhoods. It took jobs and resources to white suburbs. It left black residents behind" (Bond, Two). "The expressway divided the community," recalls Helen Kelly, "when you could walk across the street and talk to your neighbor, it's no longer there. You got to go cross the bridge, and if you go across that bridge, you ain't going to find that same neighbor because that space, the street is gone" (Two). There was also a dividing line between those who prospered from the urban renewal and those left behind. Ron Scott, a black autoworker, claims that white men were promoted to management levels and drove better cars to

better neighborhoods. But for the average African American man, “there wasn't the opportunity there” (Scott, Two).

The same structural changes that led to the fragmentation of communities are also a central feature of the Miami riots that erupted in Liberty City and Overtown. Many of the property owners lost their houses for the construction of I-95, “which was basically developed to get people from suburbia downtown, and in the process destroyed Overtown and that sense of community. All of a sudden, you saw concrete apartment houses coming up, what we called concrete monsters, simply because the demand was for space” (Knight, Back). When estranged residents of the Overtown community tried to move into nearby Liberty City they experienced resistance from whites. By including the community fragmentation as a precursor to the riots, the documentary implicitly argues that the destruction of black communities for white prosperity made these communities vulnerable and angry. The destruction of the community during the violence is an expression of their frustration.

Although most people quoted in the documentary lament the violence of the riots, the violence and chaos was not totally without merit. Herb Boyd argues that when the Detroit riot began there was a sense of “euphoria, a sense of freedom and rebellion. Everybody felt like the revolution was right around the corner. Because we had been talking about those things in the community anyway. . . . everybody felt that this was the catalyst, this was the charge, this was the igniter” (Two). Also, at episode’s end, Reverend Al Cleage says that the riots are a part of a “black revolution sweeping America” (Two). Riots, then, have a positive impact because the rebellion is for “self determination; . . . Oppression doesn't destroy people. The acceptance of oppression

destroys any people" (Cleage, Two). By rioting, blacks were rebelling against the acceptance of oppression. In the Miami riot, a man interviewed also claims that, "the incident itself was an ignorant act. But there's a point behind it, and maybe they don't have another way of expressing themselves or getting that particular attention" and the point is that "we need help" (Back). The documentary only verbally establishes these sentiments. There are no images that suggest the riot was a precursor to a larger black rebellion.

The riots may have had the potential to create a substantial change, but ultimately the documentary disregards these claims by focusing on the losses of the riots. Each riot episode ends with more loss of life on the part of blacks and more devastation to their own community. In the five days of rioting in Detroit, "police arrested 7,200 people. Most were young, black men . . . Forty-three people were dead, 33 were black. Insurance estimates of property loss neared $50 million" (Bond, Two). The documentary shows images of half burnt buildings and a somber looking family walking down a sidewalk of destroyed homes.

In Miami, "the riot lasted three days, 17 people died, 10 black, 7 white. More than 1,000 people were arrested, most of them with no previous arrest record. . . . Property damage . . . ran to nearly $100 million" (Bond Back). A frustrated black man interviewed in his car says blacks lost in the riot, "all the way around. And they can keep going because they're losing, Jack, they're losing [the] battle." (Back).

Federal government response in both situations was initially hopeful, but then neglected. The Detroit riot resulted in the Kerner Commission dedicated to the study of the causes and possible remedies to urban unrest, but Johnson refused to hear the report.

In Miami, President Jimmie Carter met with city officials, but ultimately wanted the local government to deal with the issues. Local blacks were dissatisfied, and were "angry that no one seemed to be addressing the injustice which led to the recent uprising. As the President left the meeting, a bottle thrown from the crowd smashed on the limousine's roof" (Bond, Back). Ronald Reagan would soon supplant Jimmy Carter. Reagan's election signaled a shift in national politics. He began his term by cutting funding for programs that, according to Rep. Fauntroy were "vital to the role of government to care, protect and defend the poor of our nation and our world" (Back).

The result of the riots ends in tragic "resignation of men to the conditions under which they must labor in the world" (White 9). According to Jack M. Bloom, the riots had a tremendous impact on the black community because they raised a wide variety of political, economic, and social issues. They forced the government to respond with new programs, the civil rights leaders to reshape their strategies and even their goals; they intensified the political struggles within the black movement, and they confronted white society with the dilemma of how to respond (200). However, whether or not the black community, in the end, benefited from the riots is questionable. For example, while the "first monies were poured into rioting ghettos, by summer of 1967 the then-secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development stated: 'We were very careful *not* to allow a riot city to receive a lot of new money, as we didn't want to appear to respond to violence" (Bloom emphasis in original 206). The lessons of the riots are difficult to ascertain but the rage and destruction is a clear call for help.

THE DIALECTIC OF TRAGIC MOTIVATION

In the tragic frame the act in the narrative is a paradox. Because the agent is moved to act by his passion, he is really "moved by his being-movedness" (Burke *Grammar* 40). In the tragic frame, then, the agent's action is passive; he is moved to act in a certain way. The documentary uses oral histories to give evidence of white culpability for black violence. In these oral histories, African Americans testify to their desire to be nonviolent, but that white violence and resistance to social change made violence on the part of blacks inevitable. In "Two Societies" Martin Luther King, Jr. warns, "People who have a stake in their society protect that society, but when they don't have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it" (Two). King's comment is soon followed by a statement from a young black man who tells a reporter, "Sure, we like to be nonviolent, but we up here in the Los Angeles area, will not turn the other cheek" (Two). Later in the episode, Chicago activist Minnie Dunlap comments on the violence she watched on the television against peaceful marhcers. She recalls:

> I got angry, I got scared, I got upset. And when I watched that kind of hostility and that kind of prejudiceness, they like to not understand, so I just couldn't see why they would do that. And in looking at that I said, 'Gee, I'm not as nonviolent as I think I am,' especially when Dr. King wanted us to be nonviolent. (Two)

In a public statement at the beginning of "A Nation of Law?", Bobby Seale argues

> When our brother, Martin King, exhausted a means of nonviolence with his life being taken by some racist, what is being done to us is what we hate, and what happened to Martin Luther King is what we hate. You're darn right, we respect nonviolence. But to sit and watch ourselves be slaughtered like our brother, we

> must defend ourselves, as Malcolm X says, by any means necessary. (Seale, Nation)

Later in that same episode, Father George Clements explains in an oral history interview that the Panthers use of violence and spectacular tactics was necessary because

> It was very easy to ignore black people back then because everybody figured, "Well, it's just a lot of talk. They're not going to do anything, they'll just go on and on and on moaning and groaning about how terrible everything is. And they at the best, they just might get involved in some acts of nonviolence." But that's about it, and they just kind of -- you know, business as usual. You couldn't have business as usual with the Black Panthers. The Black Panthers were definitely going to be heard. (Nation)

Within these comments is a lament for the possibility of nonviolent social change. Striving in vain through the mode of nonviolent change made the use of violence necessary.

WHITE RACISM AND RESPONSIBILITY

Throughout the documentary there are numerous examples of the violation of the law by those who are to uphold the law. The issue of police misconduct is connected to black violence in *Eyes on the Prize*. The police represent "White Power" and how it functions to oppress African Americans. In "The Time Has Come," police attack the camp of marchers in James Meredith's march against fear. While setting up camp, the "Mississippi state troopers who had once been assigned to protect the marchers now took another stance" (Bond, Time). The state troopers first tear gassed the crowd and then began to beat people. Arlie Shardt remembers:

> It was like a scene of hell with the smoke rising and people vomiting and crawling around and choking and crying. And then there was a kind of an eerie silence and the one thing you could hear over and over again was this thug, thug, thug sound. And what it was was Mississippi troopers kicking people on the ground or hitting them with their rifle butts. (Time)

One of the marchers, Willie Ricks, tells a reporter, "White power, that's what it is, white power" (Two). Although the march remained nonviolent, the frustration with the white power structure and the violence it continued to enact on peaceful protesters was evident.

Significant to both cases of rioting is the issue of police misconduct and brutality. What actually constitutes brutality is somewhat debatable and can range from the use of profane language to murder. To understand the role of police brutality in riots is not to clearly define what is and what is not brutality, but what these practices mean to citizens. Because what citizens "object to and call 'police brutality' is really the judgment that they have not been treated with the full rights and dignity owing citizens in a democratic society" (Reiss 177). The data from the Kerner report makes clear that a primary cause of the riots of the 1960s was the deep seeded "hostility between police and ghetto communities" (299). James Baldwin describes the relationship between black residents and police well when he explains that, in general, the police have no way of

> understanding the lives led by the people; they swagger about in twos and threes patrolling. Their very presence is an insult. . . . They represent the force of the white world, and that world's real intentions are . . . to keep the black man corralled up here, in his place. The badge, the gun in the holster, and the swinging club, make vivid what will happen should his rebellion become overt. . .

. [They are] like an occupying soldier in a bitterly hostile country; which is precisely what, and where he is, and is the reason he walks in twos and threes." (65-67)

Many African American leaders had tried to get local governments to address the issues that cause rioting, explaining to city officials that African Americans in the North and the South continue to suffer police misconduct, that most African Americans believe that their neighborhoods are not guarded from crime as well as white communities are, and that they have no way to stop the harassment and encourage effective law enforcement (Fogelson 220).

Eyes on the Prize frames police brutality as a direct cause of the violence. Black residents in Detroit had complained about police brutality for generations. In "four man squads known as the big four," the police antagonized the black community (Bond, Two). Detroit resident, Grant Friley says that "When the big four pulled up, you jumped. I mean, when they said move off the corner, you moved off the corner. And where do young black men have, but a corner?" (Two). According to residents police would arbitrarily grab people, "without any kind of provocation and slam [them] up against the walls, ask [them] for identification, . . . any kind of suspicious whatsoever would be cause for them to just go ahead and accost you" (Boyd, Two).

The misconduct on the part of police in the Detroit riot coverage in *Eyes on the Prize* extends into the handling of the riot. Albert Wilson was paralyzed after police shot him in the back at a five and dime store during the Detroit riot. Roger Wilkins, an aid to President Johnson, recalls a telling story about the mentality of the police during the riot

> One night, a black coworker and I were driving up Grand River . . . when all of a sudden we realized that this convoy of state police cars had made a U-turn and were pulling us over. So I came out of the car with my hands up, and . . . I was circled by people with long guns and pistols and they were all pointing at me and they were all nervous people and they were all white. And I'm a black guy and I'm a high government official, but I was a nigger, a nigger in white America and I thought at that moment I was going to be dead. (Two)

The story demonstrates the racial logic at play during the riot. The distinction for police was clear: black or white, good or bad, rioter/looter or citizen. After the riot was quelled, "people were calling up, reporting what the police were doing or did, or reporting missing people. People wanting to file complaints, fear, anger, it was -- Could this be happening in America?" (Conyers, Two). The press also uncovered a story about three young black men killed during a police raid at the Algiers Motel. Murder charges were brought against a white police officer. Two other officers and a black security guard were also implicated. There were no convictions" (Bond, Two).

In the Miami Riot, police brutality was explained through the Arthur McDuffie case. The riot was the result of an acquittal of four white police officers for the death of Arthur McDuffie, a 33-year-old black insurance man. According to arresting officers, McDuffie ran a red light and lead then tried to outrace the police, "running at least 25 stoplights at speeds up to 100 mph . . . before he was apprehended by more than a dozen metro and Miami police" (Beck and Henkoff 39). However, there was rumor that the officers had met to create and confirm a cover-up story. Word of the conflicting versions brought about a four-day investigation, after which prosecutor Henry Adorno filed

charges against six police officers ranging from second-degree murder to participating in the cover-up.

It seemed like an open and shut case. Several of the participating officers agreed to trade testimony about the murder for immunity. These officers confirmed that they had taken part in a savage beating of Arthur McDuffie, then smashed his motorcycle and falsified reports to make it look like an accident. On the witness stand, they described in great detail the grizzly events of 17 December 1979. The all white jury deliberated only two hours and 40 minutes before acquitting four white officers of all charges in connection with McDuffie's beating (Beck and Henkoff 39).

Eyes on the Prize portrays the trial as racist from the beginning: a change of venue to a white district and an all white jury. However, black residents expected that "those men would be convicted of killing McDuffie. To us, the evidence appeared to be overwhelming, that they were responsible for the death of McDuffie and should have been dealt with accordingly" (Brown, Back). However, the jury returned a not-guilty verdict. Residents were outraged. Many concluded that it was "just another lynching" (Brown, Back).

The Black Panther Party is also a response to police misconduct, in the story told by *Eyes on the Prize* . In contrast to Panther activities, the police are presented as a subversive force willing to use any means necessary to shut down the Black Panther Party. At a protest at the California state capitol in Sacramento, Panther members were arrested for carrying loaded weapons, an offense that was actually a protected right in California. But more so than the nuisance of illegitimate arrests for petty violations, Panthers were framed for crimes they did not commit. Huey Newton was charged and

convicted of murdering a police officer, a conviction that was eventually overturned. However, the most egregious violations of the law are those that were approved by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Presented in the episode "A Nation of Law," the segment on the Panthers includes a statement from Richard Nixon: "This is a nation of laws and as Abraham Lincoln had said, no one is above the law, no one is below the law, and we're going to enforce the law and Americans should remember that if we're going to have law and order." Julian Bond follows Nixon's statement with one which explains that the FBI was stepping up their efforts to thwart the progress of the Black Panthers in the United States (Bond). These orders implicitly gave the police free reign on the Black Panther Party. African American police officer Howard Saffold explains that:

> The police community is sort of a built in reward and punishment system of its own, and you get a lot of rewards when you go after who the boss says is the bad guy and you get him. And I think what J. Edgar Hoover was able to do was to give police officers the impression that it was okay, it was open season. You didn't have to worry about the law, you didn't have to worry about the difference in the executive branch of government and the judicial branch of government. I think what he in effect said, it's our ball game, guys. We've got the authority, we have the capacity, let's crush them. (Nation)

Police began to use subversive and sometimes illegal tactics that included a misinformation campaign, espionage, and murder.

Law enforcement tried to prevent the Black Panther's community building efforts by planting misinformation. The Black Panthers attempted to create coalitions with other groups of blacks. One such group was the Blackstone Rangers, a Chicago gang. The hope was to redirect the energies of gang members and stop the killing of black people. From the perspective of law enforcement, this coalition presented a significant threat. Howard Saffold, explains that the Black Panthers were trying to redirect "these young minds, this young energy, and turn it into part of our movement in terms of black liberation and the rest of it. And I saw a very purposeful, intentional effort on the part of the police department to keep that head from hooking up to that body" (Nation). The FBI tried to undermine the coalition by writing an anonymous letter to "Jeff Fort, the leader of the Blackstone Rangers warning Fort that the Panthers have, 'a hit out for you.' The Bureau knew that the information was false, but believed that Fort might take retaliatory action against the Panthers" (Bond, Nation). Simultaneously, the city announced its intention to step up its efforts against gangs and expanded its anti-gang program to include the Black Panthers.

As a part of the increased efforts against the Panthers, police raided their headquarters and engaged the Panthers in a gunfight. During the raid, the police started a fire in the building. Bobby Rush argues that the fire was indicative of "the nature of the raiding officers" because they "burned boxes of cereal . . . on the third floor, deliberately set fire to that. They didn't set fire to the second floor, . . . and that was . . . what they were thinking and how they were moving" (Nation). Images of the burned out building and bullet holes in the door substantiate Rush's claim. Bobby Seale believes that the act was more than just a war on the Panthers, but was an effort to "psyche the community

out. . . . this was an attempt to terrorize us out of existence, at the same time if we would close down, it would leave the black community saying, 'Well, they stopped them'" (Nation).

Law enforcement agents also spied on Panther activities. In an oral history interview, William O'Neal explains that his recruitment as a spy for the FBI was "very efficient." He had stolen a "car and went joyriding over the state limit. . . . [and] was looking for an opportunity to work it off. And a couple months later, that opportunity came when the FBI agent Roy Mitchell asked me to go down to the local office of the Black Panther Party and try to gain membership." O'Neal proved to be a very good informant. Although he failed to find evidence that would incriminate Fred Hampton, he was able to offer the FBI and the police detailed floor plans of a Panther's apartment, where many Panthers lived.

The information provided by informant O'Neal led directly to the murder of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark. At 4:45 in the morning "fourteen policemen, nine white and five black, raided the apartment" (Bond). Deborah Johnson, a Black Panther, survived the initial attack and recalls an "unfamiliar voice say, 'He's barely alive, or he'll barely make it.' Then the shooting started back again. Then I heard this same unfamiliar voice say, 'He's good and dead now.' . . . I assumed they were talking about Fred." Of the seven surviving occupants, four were wounded and "[a]ll were charged with assault and attempted murder" (Nation, Bond).

The official report would blame the incident on the Panthers, however the documentary provides evidence of a police raid and cover-up. The official police report delivered by Edward V. Hanrahan stated that the Panthers, not the police began the shootout. According to the official

report, “Sergeant Gross ordered all his men to cease firing and told the occupants to come out with their hands up. Each time, one of the occupants replied, ‘Shoot it out,’ and continued firing at the police officers.” However, reporter Brian Boyer “went down there, and he saw the evidence and it didn't take a genius to . . . see that all the bullets were going in one direction and all those bullet holes were pointing towards Fred Hampton's bedroom” (Taylor, Nation). Although the police stuck to their original account, “public pressure lead to a series of investigations. An FBI ballistic expert established that all but one of the more than 90 shots had been fired by the police. All charges against the Panthers were dropped, no police were indicted” (Bond). There is also evidence that this was not an isolated incident. In 1971, the truth about the FBI emerged after political activists broke into an FBI office. The documents revealed “extensive FBI operations against U.S. citizens and organizations, including traditional civil rights groups” (Bond). The evidence provided by news reports, oral histories, and Julian Bond describes prevalent and significant violations of the law on the part of local and national law enforcement agencies.

CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that *Eyes on the Prize* finds whites guilty for black violence. The perceived failure of nonviolence and police brutality resulted in groups like the Black Panthers and the Detroit and Miami riots. Moreover, the tragic form of the narrative highlights white racism and police brutality as the real culprit. In this way, *Eyes on the Prize* counters memories of black violence as an aberration to democracy and the result of a pathological people prone to violence.

Although the nonviolent movement led to a number of political achievements, activists became “disillusioned with the relevance of nonviolence for bestowing self-esteem and eliminating poverty in the black community of the urban ghettoes of the

North" (Cone 177). Movement activists realized that white supremacy might not be responsive to the moral approach of nonviolence. *Eyes on the Prize* counters the public memory of nonviolence as the only means to address racism in the United States by highlighting African American's lived experience of violence. Indeed, the first and last episodes of the documentary include stories about state-sanctioned murders of black men: Emmett Till and Arthur McDuffie. The violence used by African Americans in *Eyes on the Prize* is borne out of complete frustration with a people and a government that systematically denied their personhood.

The documentary does counter the public memory of violence, which is important to understanding and appreciating the black freedom struggle. However, its tragic focus does little to inform an audience on the kinds of violence or as Gamson puts it, "feistiness," that may benefit a movement. By framing each narrative of black violence as a tragedy, it may also inadvertently reinforce public memories of the futility of violence for a social movement.

Examples of successful uses of violence that actually reduced the overall violence are not included in the documentary. For example, in a little known case in Monroe, North Carolina, Robert F. Williams, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) president in 1957 advocated the black community arm themselves against Ku Klux Klan (KKK) violence. The two groups exchanged fire on a number of occasions, but it is Williams' contention that these engagements reduced the overall violence in Monroe. The Klan eventually "stopped raiding our community" and city officials "met in an emergency session and passed a city ordinance banning the Klan from Monroe without a special permit from the police chief" (Williams 57). This story

was not carried in local or national news and it is certainly not the subject of popular memory. In a debate with Dr. King and other nonviolent proponents, Williams was careful to endorse the nonviolence as a tactic. However, he also stated that nonviolence is a very potent weapon when the opponent is civilized, but nonviolence is no repellent for a sadist" (qtd in Tyson 15). Williams did believe in the use of nonviolence when appropriate but like Malcolm X, refused to allow himself, his family, or his community to be brutalized by white supremacists. Thus, the framing of violence *Eyes on the Prize* is simultaneously progressive and limiting.

Eyes on the Prize also offers sparse analysis of the systemic violence felt most keenly by African Americans living in urban ghettos. As the black freedom struggle moved North, class issues came to the fore. Although the effort to gain access to public facilities were laudable goals, many urban blacks at the "bottom of the class structure of modern America" found their "class position exacerbated by their racial status. Black efforts to alter this position demanded changes in the class system; these were structural changes that the civil fights coalition would not and could not carry out" (Bloom 217). The documentary includes excerpts from interviews and images that suggest this change. Ron Scott, Detroit resident, explains that blacks were simply not extended the same opportunities as their white counterparts. Dewey Knight also references the "concrete monsters," huge housing projects erected to house displaced Overtown residents. The housing projects were clearly substandard living situations. The films' also elide the economic importance of the Black Panther's program. Bobby Seale explains the Panther 10-point plan which stated:

> We want power to determine our own destiny in our own black communities, immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people, was point number seven. The right to have juries of our peers in the courts, what have you. We summed it up, we wanted land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. (Power)

The Panther free breakfast program is an obvious attempt on the part of the Black Panthers to address the effects of poverty in the black community. As the previous chapter suggests, nonviolence in the documentary is relatively unsuccessful in Chicago, the Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike, and the poor people's campaign—all campaigns that had economic goals. However, the documentary focuses on community fragmentation and police brutality. Certainly, these are important issues. However, without an analysis that constructs a full picture of the problem of racism and its economic effects, *Eyes on the Prize* limits viewers' ability to understand the forces behind black rage and the decision to meet systemic violence with physical violence.

[xii] In this chapter I refer to the episodes "Two Societies," "Bridge to Freedom," "A Nation of Law?" "Back to the Movement" and "Power!" From the point on I will refer to these episodes as "Two," "Bridge," "Nation," "Back," and "Power" for the sake of clarity.

[xiii] This analysis focuses on the Black Panthers, a group who endorsed the use of violence as an instrumental act to protect blacks from police brutality, and the Detroit and Miami riots. I do not include acts or rhetoric of self-defense because violence is normally defined as a proactive and self-defense is reactive. Moreover, violence on the part of citizens is a violation of the law. However, self-defense "has always been an accepted right of the Americans. . . that where the law is unable, or unwilling, to enforce order, the citizens can, and must act is self-defense" (Crosby ¶ 4). Finally, the issue of self-defense was racialized from the earliest days of American history, and because black persons were traditionally denied that right, one could easily argue that *any* assertion of self, or self-protection, by black Americans represented a blow against racism and bigotry" (Strain 6-7).

Conclusion: Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize in the New Millennium

Every so often there is a national event that uncovers the persistence of racism in the United States. In the 1990s the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles revealed the racism of the Los Angeles Police department. In 2005, coverage of hurricane Katrina exposed the callousness of the government and the structural violence of poverty that the mostly poor and mostly black Americans suffered in New Orleans even before the storm. Some Americans have difficulty understanding how and why these situations occur.

That Americans do not delve deeper into the political decisions that create these conditions is, partially, a product of their education. James W. Loewen finds that high school students leave their history classes "without having developed the ability to think coherently about social life" because "textbooks stifle meaning by suppressing causation" and "our teachers and our textbooks still leave out most of what we need to know about the American past" (4). Public memory also offers few resources for thinking critically about the past because its purpose is to "legitimate a present social order" (Connerton 3). Many Americans rely on the narrative of "bootstrap individualism," religion, and "alleged pathology of poor blacks" to "deflect the relevance of the considerable benefits we've received" (Dyson *Hell* 3). When national events fail to square with the image and ethos of American public memory, many Americans are ill equipped to understand the underlying historical forces. These forces are what create deleterious conditions for national disgraces like the response to hurricane Katrina.

In a moment where electoral politics has continually failed to respond to the needs and will of the people, the lessons about struggle in films like *Eyes on the Prize* are an important resource for groups and individuals interested in social change. My analysis of

Eyes on the Prize demonstrates how a text that was created for a popular audience contains the possibility of resistant readings that may serve as the basis for rhetorical agency. Rhetoric involves "not only proof or judgment, but discovery or *invention*" (Jost 2). Michael Leff argues that rhetors must accommodate and adapt to an audiences' sentiments, which necessarily "constrain the orator's intellectual horizons, modes of expression, and even representation of the self" (138). Thus, "tradition emerges as the primary resource for rhetorical invention" (Leff 135). While tradition is a stabilizing force, that stability is only "temporarily and locally stable, since it is constantly altered by the rhetorical performance it makes possible" (Leff 144-145). The same can be said about public memory. It is both a stabilizing force that can ground a social movement in a tradition of struggle, and a reservoir of inspiration and argumentation. In offering audiences a version of the black freedom struggle that makes available counter- and polyvalenced memories, *Eyes on the Prize* is a tremendous resource for students and activists.

I began this project with the question of how today's social justice activists might find a useable history in a massively influential text like *Eyes on the Prize*. The need for such a history is urgent and visible in protests against the Federal government in the wake of the Katrina debacle. I argued that culture is an important rhetorical resource for political struggle. Specifically, the struggle over popular productions of memory in documentaries has the potential to reaffirm or contest popular memory.

Public memory is not simply a top down carrier of social meaning and action. Instead, the past is part of a "cultural 'tool kit'" which can channel emotional expression and mobilize and sustain action (Pfaff and Yang 540). Remarkably, public memory of

the black freedom struggle offers those interested in social change few "tools" with which to analyze or challenge existing social, political, and economic relations. It presents the black freedom struggle as "a neat and straightforward story, effortlessly recounted to school-children and other audiences who can experience sadness, indignation, and ultimately pride in how far we have come" (Raiford 236). While *Eyes on the Prize* celebrates the achievements of the black freedom struggle it also argues that the struggle is not over and calls viewers to action. Thus, the memories it contains do not simply "tell" a different story or correct public memory; they are a resource about the issues and methods of social struggle. I analyzed some of those resources in this dissertation.

It is important to attend to these productions as situated in the historical contexts of their reception, allowing for the possibility of shifting interpretation and political reaction. As a standard against which to assess *Eyes on the Prize*, mainstream public memory of the civil rights struggle begins with the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision and ends with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. This version of the past highlights integration and nonviolence as the appropriate means and ends of a democratic social movement. The people, goals, and tactics of the black freedom struggle that lie outside of the norm are often absent. When they are present, they are "interpreted through the assumptions of the mainstream discourse" which is often in the form of "frightening visual representations of outsiders like Malcolm X or the Black Panthers" (Morgan 153).

Compared with the mainstream public memory of the black freedom struggle, *Eyes on the Prize* is decidedly more complex in almost every respect. We must not

neglect the ways in which the overall narrative trajectory is somewhat conservative in that it moves from protest politics to electoral politics. In the context of a political and social swing to the right of the late 1980s, *Eyes on the Prize* may not have offered much in the way of rhetorical potential in its overall force. However, given the present political context, audiences may be more attuned to alternative forms of political action and ways of seeing the complexity of integration and violence, pacifism and separation.

With regard to the documentary's portrayal of integration, I argued that the documentary supports the goal of integration by constantly framing the debate in terms of the effect it has on individual blacks and by extension, the black community. On the issue of integration, the bottom line in the documentary is that integration offers black people more opportunities. In "Fighting Back," the documentary establishes the importance and difficulty of integration by focusing on individuals like Authrine Lucy, James Meredith, and two of the Little Rock Nine: Ernest Green and Melba Patillo Beals. Because segregation affected blacks as a people, the documentary presents these individual cases to demonstrate the injustice for individuals. At the time, segregationists relied on arguments based on community. Arguments against integration evolve in the documentary. Whether *de jure* or *de facto*, some whites resisted integration by arguing that its practice infringed on individual rights. To (re)present the pro-integration argument, the documentary offers individual perspectives, but the warrants for these arguments shift in the opposite direction of segregationists—from individual rights to community needs. Overall, the arguments for integration narrate an ethical standard for being-with-others to which the United States should adhere.

The representation of separatism in the text, however, rationalizes its practice. Although the documentary does not present total separation, such as with the Nation of Islam, as a feasible goal, it does offer logical reasons as to why separation from white control may be an important feature of a black American citizenship. The process was not easy because segregation created in some blacks the belief that they, indeed, were not worthy of citizenship or that politics was the business of white people. Thus, the appeal of separation in the documentary is the mental space to create a black identity free from the destructive values of whiteness. The documentary offers three interrelated elements necessary for the construction of a black identity: the absolution of guilt, self-love, and black knowledge.

Eyes on the Prize evaluates nonviolence as a political tool. It suggests that nonviolence only works when those in power (white elites) find the backlash against nonviolence intolerable. Thus, in cases like the Freedom Rides, the tactic was successful; in Chicago it was not. Should a movement fail to gain the sympathy of social and political elites then nonviolence is an inefficient and sometimes deadly endeavor. However, the documentary also suggests that nonviolence has the capability of politicizing people. Nonviolence was a method through which blacks could successfully assert themselves in politics, an act of citizenship that the United States government had long denied them. The presentation of nonviolence in *Eyes on the Prize* is a qualified affirmation of its use.

Notably, the film is also qualified on the question of violence. Violence, as presented in the documentary, does not produce tangible gains for blacks. The documentary does, however, rhetorically purge black people of the guilt for violence

through a tragic narrative frame. In both the Detroit and Miami riots, as well as in the two segments on the Black Panther Party, the documentary suggests that white racism, specifically police brutality, was the cause of violence on the part of African Americans.

Eyes on the Prize does not contradict public memory's dominant values of the black freedom struggle, but it does resist their blind adherence. Black nationalism is not irrational in the face of massive white resistance to integration. In the same way, the use of violence may not seem as irrational after viewing the opposition to nonviolent social change and the brutality of racism. These issues were divisive in their day and they are often likewise remembered—good integration and nonviolence versus evil separation and violence. However, the documentary does not force viewers to take sides. It allows them to realize that these concepts are in tension with one another. These are, in my estimation, productive tensions.

THE CITIZEN ACTIVIST: THE POLITICIZING POSSIBILITY IN *EYES ON THE PRIZE*

In the fall of 2006 and spring of 2007 I taught a class called "Speechmaking and Society." In that class we read a variety of speeches ranging from Calhoun's "On the Reception of Abolitionist Petitions" to Fannie Lou Hamer's, "Is this America?" Each semester I asked my students what they thought the responsibilities of a citizen were. In both classes the answers were 1) vote, and 2) pay your taxes. When pushed for other possibilities, they were at a loss. These sentiments seem consistent with Kristen Hoerl's analysis of films about activism--that activism is dead (256). Indeed, Paul Loeb argues that students attending college between 1987 and 1993 came of age "under the sway of political, cultural, and economic currents that convinced citizens in general to seek

personal well-being over a common social good" (3). However, a healthy democracy is dependent upon the loyal opposition. As Barbara Ehrenreich argues, "Dissent, rebellion, and all-around hell-raising remain the true duty of patriots."

Eyes on the Prize is an excellent pedagogical tool for producing citizen activists. Although activism gives way to electoralism by the end of the documentary, activism is portrayed positively in the documentary. There are certainly costs to activism, as some activists experienced in the most extreme way. However, the heroes of *Eyes on the Prize* are certainly the activists. As Harry Belafonte explains,

> What Dr. King gave us, what Stokely Carmichael gave us, what Malcolm X gave us, everybody gave us, whether you agreed with them or not, the energy of that time and the goals that we were all aspiring to, I think, is what it was all about at its best. At its worst, it was when we did nothing." (Time)

Whether it was through Black Nationalism or the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the documentary features citizens who engage politics in the street. In reference to the Selma campaign, Reverend C.T. Vivian explains that activism offered individuals a way to meet head on "those that would destroy us physically and psychologically. . . . Movement meant that finally we were encountering on a mass scale the evil that had been destroying us on a mass scale. You do not walk away from that, you continue to answer it" (Bridge). Through images and testimony, *Eyes on the Prize* attests to the power of ordinary people to engage the political structure that had subjugated them.

Learning how people in the past have used collective protest to challenge the structures of racism is an important lesson. *Eyes on the Prize* was released in the 1980s

at a time when the primary form of political engagement was voting. While voting is important, the movement from protest to politics necessarily makes any sort of change more conservative in nature. Moreover, elected officials have had little effect on the economic inequalities that persist between black and white Americans (Tate 171). Greater numbers of blacks in elected office has not meant that the gains of the 20th century black freedom struggle are secured. During George W. Bush's presidency the focus of the Department of Justice has shifted from "traditional issues like sex and race discrimination and vote suppression to discrimination against religious conservatives" (Scott ¶ 1). Additionally, the recent Supreme Court decision in the *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District* placed further restrictions on how public schools can achieve racial diversity. It is difficult to imagine how electoral politics alone could counteract the erosion of those civil rights which activists gradually have attained. *Eyes on the Prize* features an array of political engagement—both instrumental and symbolic—to address these social, political and economic problems.

Documentary film may also be an important form of storytelling to consider when engaging questions of activism. Unlike other forms of popular media, documentary film offers first person accounts of struggle whose verisimilitude may be more persuasive than the a similar story told in fiction form. Civil rights activist and former SNCC member, Lawrence Guyot, argues that *Eyes on the Prize* "is a visual, graphic empathic lesson that people can make policy that has national ramifications" (qtd. in Goodman). *Eyes on the Prize* contains compelling stories of real individuals who put their bodies on the line to engage a social, political, and economic system that oppressed them. The growing popularity of documentary film also means that these stories are more likely to be heard

and whose lessons, perhaps, heeded. Moreover, because documentary film has the potential to weave complex narratives that do not conform to dominant narratives about history, then viewers may be more likely to discuss the films' meaning with others. This form of participation does not constitute activism, but it may be an important first step toward greater political engagement.

SKIPPING CLASS: THE LIMITS OF RHETORICAL INVENTION IN EYES ON THE PRIZE

In an analysis of a text's rhetorical potential, it is also necessary to acknowledge how the text limits rhetorical possibility. Significantly, *Eyes on the Prize* inadequately addresses the importance of class in the black freedom struggle. Without underestimating the importance of voting and desegregation, let me state that these demands are essentially middle class demands seeking to secure equal access (Bloom 171). Such demands do not address a central problem of racism: poverty. The post-WWII era was a time of economic expansion in which some African Americans joined the ranks of the middle class. However, the vast majority of blacks in the United States were still working- and lower class. The ability to sit at a public lunch counter does little for a person who cannot afford its prices. These issues became apparent to traditional civil rights leaders, which *Eyes on the Prize* features in small glimpses. In "The Promised Land," Martin Luther King, Jr. tells a crowd about the poor people's campaign. He correctly argues, "It didn't cost the nation one penny to integrate lunch counters. It didn't cost the nation one penny to guarantee the right to vote. But now we are dealing with issues that cannot be solved without the nation spending billions of dollars and undergoing a radical redistribution of economic power" (Promised). Because class is a

little discussed issue in the United States, however, and because it is notably absent from the documentary's analysis, a viewer would need prior knowledge of the role of economy in racism to fully grasp its weight.

The lacuna of class in the documentary may have two important consequences to its interpretation and rhetorical possibilities. First, without a class analysis, the documentary neglects fundamental changes in the goals and tactics of the black freedom struggle. Black Power is often understood as the "evil twin" that wrecked the civil rights movement. While the documentary does not present Black Power as the "evil twin," it also does not explain why the successes of the civil rights movement were inadequate. After the Voting Rights Act, many African Americans concluded that they "were in fact not basically better off with this new right than they had been before; they were still poor and without the power to direct their own lives" (Bloom 208). However, the documentary does not explore these revelations or their consequences. The dialectic between integration/separation and nonviolence/violence are tensions between black middle- and lower-class demands. There is little analysis of the different kinds of demands--which were met and which were not. King understood these changes and attempted to reformulate his methods and goals. These efforts are evidenced in the Project "C" campaign in Birmingham and Chicago, which demanded both access and jobs. Project "C" was successful because the protesters were able to moralize the demands by evoking fantastic images of irrational hatred on the part of Bull Connor and his men. The nation's disapproval of the violence pressured the city to acquiesce, but the lack of *de jure* racism in the North would not yield the same results. King and SCLC failed to produce the same gains in Chicago and with the poor people's march. The turn

to more militant and material demands was an important change in the movement that is lacking in the documentary.

The second important limitation of the documentary is an analysis of white racism. Within the documentary there are good whites and bad whites. There is little to no analysis of why whites would be racist, and the material and psychological structures that maintain their racism. The black freedom struggle "began to call for social and economic alternatives not just in the South but throughout American society—changes that would involve a redistribution of wealth and power (Bloom 8). That whites have a material interest in maintaining race and class relations is not a conclusion the documentary points toward. Misunderstanding white racism and its capitalist foundation is an important limitation for the rhetorical potential of the documentary.

KEEPING OUR EYES ON THE PRIZE: RHETORICAL INVENTION AND SOCIAL STRUGGLE

2007 marked the four-hundredth anniversary of Africans' forced arrival in America. To commemorate the occasion, Travis Smiley hosted a public conversation among scholars, activists, entertainers, entrepreneurs, and clergy called, "The State of Black America." In the context of a comparatively distant past, the issue of the more recent black freedom struggle kept reappearing throughout the conversation. Reverend Al Sharpton said,

> We all must have a commitment in our time and our life to continue the struggle that started when we got to Jamestown. . . . That does not mean that we get

> caught in our past, but we learn from our past. . . And I think if we have the sense to know what's ahead and then in our contemporary setting make our own decision on that advice we can be relevant.

For better or worse, any struggle for racial justice and equality will happen within the context of a memory that surrounds the black freedom struggle beginning with the arrival of Africans in Jamestown. This past may be read in a myriad of ways. It may also be used critically to reveal "a history that is embarrassing, macabre, and always bizarre with respect to race" (Baker Critical 9-10). Alternatively, this memory can serve the purposes of elites who maintain their power through a particular narrative of the past that justifies social, political, and economic privilege. Contrary to popular American meta-narratives, the nation is not working naturally and inevitably toward a more equitable and just society. Rights and freedoms are the result of struggle. As Frederick Douglass puts it, "Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the roar of its many waters. (188)

In offering audiences a version of the black freedom struggle that makes available counter- and polyvalenced memories, *Eyes on the Prize* is a tremendous resource for students and activists. If, as Gary Edgerton argues, people receive their knowledge about the past through television (2), this documentary may very well become the foundation of what future generations "remember" about the black freedom struggle. Charles J. G. Griffin agrees that *Eyes on the Prize* "has much to teach contemporary viewers about social movements as a distinct form of memory;" however, he argues that the "ultimate lessons remain open to debate" (209). Analyzing the documentary for its rhetorical

potential suggests that there is no ultimate lesson. Instead *Eyes on the Prize* offers a robust *rhetorical* account of how people, not documents alone, make history. It is that rhetoric, and its intrinsic possibilities, which must become the recourses for continued struggles toward social justice.

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Vita

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