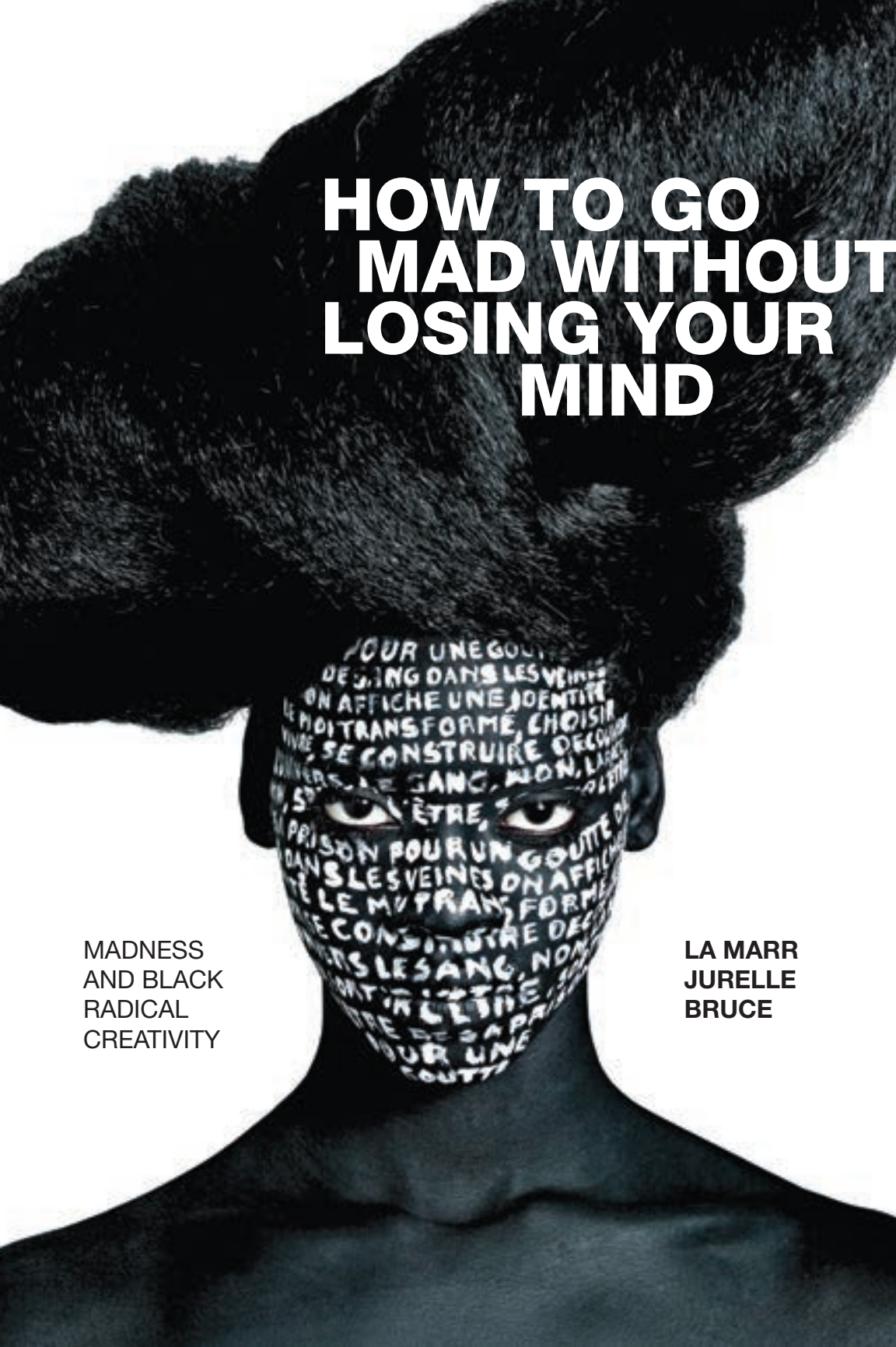
HOW TO GO MAD WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND



MADNESS AND BLACK RADICAL CREATIVITY

LA MARR JURELLE BRUCE

HOW TO GO MAD
WITHOUT LOSING
YOUR MIND

BLACK OUTDOORS INNOVATIONS
IN THE POETICS OF STUDY **A SERIES**
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AND SARAH JANE CERVENAK

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For

Eleanor Joyce Bruce (1941–2018)

and

David Anthony Hughes (1979–2020)

In love and madness, words fail—but I keep trying.

CONTENTS

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God is good, life is brief, love is long, I am here, you are close, we are blessed, and it is done.

CHAPTER ONE

MAD IS A PLACE

Confined on the ship, from which there is no escape, the madman is delivered to the river with its thousand arms, the sea with its thousand roads, to the great uncertainty external to everything. He is the Passenger par excellence: that is, the prisoner of the passage. And the land he will come to is unknown—as is, once he disembarks, the land from which he comes. He has his truth and his homeland only in that *fruitless expanse* between two countries that cannot belong to him. —MICHEL FOUCAULT, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, 1961

Those African persons in "Middle Passage" were literally suspended in the "oceanic." . . . [R]emoved from the indigenous land and culture, and not-yet "American" either, these captive persons, without names that their captors would recognize, were in movement across the Atlantic, but they were also *nowhere at all*. —HORTENSE SPILLERS, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," 1987

PRELUDE: THE SLAVE SHIP TOWS THE SHIP OF FOOLS

HOLD TIGHT. THE WAY TO GO MAD WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND IS SOMETIMES UNRULY. It might send you staggering across asylum hallways, heckled by disembodied voices—or shimmying over spotlit stages, greeted by loving applause. It might find you freewheeling through fever dreams, then marching toward freedom dreams, then scrambling from sleep, with blood and stars in your eyes, the whole world a waking dream.[1] But for now, we wade through a liquid void, among ominous ships, where this study begins.

The epigraphs above, supplied by the French philosopher Michel Foucault and the black feminist theorist Hortense Spillers, are our floating signposts. They point us to the intersection of a "fruitless expanse" and "nowhere at all": an unmappable coordinate where a ship of fools crosses a slave ship, where imprisoned madness meets captive blackness in a stifling tightness

through a groundless vastness. I shudder and flounder as I wonder: What vertigo does a body undergo, caught between treacherous waters below and treacherous captors above, with "nowhere" outside? How does it feel to be forcibly hauled across the sea while forcibly stagnated on the ship—to endure a cruelty in motion that is also a cruelty of stillness? What noise might ring out if the sound of a laughing "fool" joined the sound of a weeping "slave"—and would the weeper and the laugher commiserate? How does one keep time, or discern direction, or remember the way home from "nowhere at all," with no familiar beacon to behold ahead or behind? It seems to me that neither imagination nor historiography is apt to apprehend the seasickness of spirit, the existential dread, and the feverish homesickness that might menace a mad prisoner or black captive trapped at sea.

An unimaginable scene may seem a strange place to launch a study of radical imagination. Likewise, a fruitless expanse makes a bleak backdrop for pondering the fruit of mad black creativity. And furthermore, unanswerable questions may sound odd opening a work of careful inquiry. But there are lessons to learn from those who make homeland in wasteland, freedom routes to chart that start in a ship's hull, debris of mad and black life to retrieve from the sea, mad black worlds to make that rise from a ship's wake, and questions that refuse answers but rouse movements.[2] Besides, if the anticolonial psychiatrist Frantz Fanon is right, if there is "a zone of nonbeing . . . an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born,"[3] then "nowhere at all" may be an especially auspicious place to commence. By beginning at this curious crossing, I also hope to orient the reader—which requires that I *disorient* the reader—for the errant, erratic routes to come. Remember that the way is sometimes unruly.

Those opening epigraphs are passages of prose conjuring cataclysmic passages of persons across temporal, spatial, and metaphysical gauntlets. In the first epigraph, Foucault chases a "ship of fools" as it crisscrosses early modern Europe. To have him tell it, ships of fools were fifteenth-century nautical vessels whose lunatic occupants were deemed nuisances to their communities, expelled from home, made wards of sailors, and consigned to those ships as they drifted along European rivers and seas. When Foucault declares that the mad seafarer has "his truth and his homeland only in that fruitless expanse between two countries that cannot belong to him," the words evoke a *mad diaspora*: a scattering of captives across sovereign borders and over bodies of water; an upheaval and dispersal of persons flung far from home; and an emergence of

unprecedented diasporic subjectivities, ontologies, and possibilities that transgress national and rational norms.

To a scholar of black modernity, Foucault's account may ring uncannily familiar. It brings to my mind many millions of Africans abducted from their native lands by slave traders in the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries. These stolen people were stacked in the putrid pits of slave ships; made "prisoner of the passage" called the Middle Passage; uprooted from solid "truth" and stable "homeland"; drenched, instead, in oceanic uncertainty; dragged across a "fruitless expanse"; discharged onto a land that, arguably, "cannot belong to" them; and cast into restlessness and rootlessness that persist in many of their descendants.

In the second epigraph, Spillers describes the Passage, and her words bear repeating: "Removed from the indigenous land and culture, and not-yet 'American' either, these captive persons, without names that their captors would recognize, were in movement across the Atlantic, but they were also *nowhere* at all." Some pessimists claim that the progeny of slaves are still not American, still vainly awaiting recognition as citizen and affirmation as human, still existentially captive, still suspended in that void.[4] Wherever blackness dwells—slave ship, spaceship, graveyard, garden, elsewhere, everywhere—those captives accessed what Spillers calls a "richness of *possibility*."[5] They would realize black diasporic kinesis, kinship, sociality, creativity, love, and myriad modes of being that flourish in their marvelously tenacious heirs. In a "fruitless expanse," the enslaved bore fruit. The pit held seeds, as pits sometimes do.

Both the ship of fools and the slave ship provoke historiographic dispute. Regarding the ship of fools, many historians insist that Foucault mistook an early modern literary and visual motif for a material vessel.[6] As for the slave ship, it incites crises of calculation about the number of Africans who made it to *the other side*—by which I mean *the Americas* and/or/as *the afterlife*—and about the depth of the wound that the Middle Passage inflicts on modernity.[7] Both ships defy positivist history: the ship of fools because it was likely unreal; the slave ship because it is so devastatingly real that it confounds comprehension, resists documentation, and spawns ongoing effects that belie the purported *pastness* of history. It is no wonder that when Spillers wanted to address the historical and ontological functions of the Middle Passage and its ripples across modernity, particularly black female modernity, she realized that "the language of the historian was not telling me what I needed to know."[8] (Perhaps the language of the mad methodologist, who I will introduce shortly, can better speak to Spillers's concerns.) Spillers further characterizes the Middle Passage as a "dehumanizing, ungendering, and defacing project"—and I would

add *deranging* to that grave litany.[9] To *derange* is to throw off, to cast askew, "to disturb the order or arrangement of" an entity.[10] The Middle Passage literally deranged and threw millions of Africans askew across continents, oceans, centuries, and worlds.[11] I use *derange* also to signal how the Atlantic slave trade, and the antiblack modernity it inaugurated, framed black people as always already wild, subrational, pathological, mentally unsound, mad.

Although it is unlikely that a slave ship ever crossed a ship of fools in geographic space,[12] these vessels converged in the discursive domains and cultural imaginations of early Euromodernity. According to the era's emergent antiblack and antimad worldviews, both of these ships were floating graveyards of the socially dead. Both ships were imagined to haul inferior, unReasonable beings who were metaphysically adrift amid the rising tide of Reason. For the purposes of this study, I distinguish *reason* (lowercase) from *Reason* (uppercase). The former, *reason*, signifies a generic process of cognition within a given system of logic and the "mental powers concerned with forming conclusions, judgments, or inferences."[13] Meanwhile, *Reason* is a proper noun denoting a positivist, secularist, Enlightenment-rooted episteme purported to uphold objective "truth" while mapping and mastering the world. In normative Western philosophy since the Age of Enlightenment, Reason and rationality are believed essential for achieving modern personhood, joining civil society, and participating in liberal politics.[14] However, Reason has been entangled, from those very Enlightenment roots, with misogynist, colonialist, ableist, antiblack, and other pernicious ideologies. The fact is that female people, indigenous people, colonized people, neurodivergent people, and black people have been violently excluded from the edifice of Enlightenment Reason—with Reasonable doctrines justifying those exclusions.[15]

Regarding the hegemony of Reason, political theorist Achille Mbembe remarks that "it is on the basis of a distinction between reason and unreason (passion, fantasy) that late-modern criticism has been able to articulate a certain idea of the political, the community, the subject—or, more fundamentally, of what the good life is all about, how to achieve it, and, in the process, to become a fully moral agent. The exercise of reason is tantamount to the exercise of freedom."[16] While Mbembe names "passion" and "fantasy" as examples of "unreason," a third entry belongs on this list: madness itself. If those late-modern critics claim that Reason is requisite for "becoming a fully moral agent," they also imply the inverse—that unReason entails moral deficiency and ineptitude. (This is why throes of *passion*, flights of *fantasy*, and bouts of *madness* are thought inimical to one's moral sense.) Meanwhile, if "late-modern criticism" insists that "the exercise of reason is tantamount to the exercise of freedom,"

it also insinuates the inverse—that the condition of unReason is commensurate with the condition of unfreedom. While Mbembe's point of reference is late modernity, Enlightenment-era philosophers like David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Thomas Jefferson, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel also asserted that unReasonable beings were suited for unfreedom, that the unReason of Africans ordained them for enslavement.[17] Within white supremacist and antiblack master narratives that calcified in the eighteenth century, to be white-*cum*-rational was to inherit modernity's pantheon and merit freedom; to be black-*cum*-subrational was to be barred from modernity's favor and primed for slavery. The Euro-modern patriarch affirmed his Reason and freedom, in part, by casting the black African as his ontological foil, his unReasonable and enslaved Other.[18]

In staging this encounter between the slave ship and ship of fools, I do not intend to imply a simplistic analogy between the two. Rather, I want to suggest that the slave ship (icon of abject blackness) commandeers the ship of fools (icon of abject madness), tows the ship of fools, helps orient Western notions of madness and Reason, and helps propel this turbulent movement we call modernity.[19]

HOW TO GO MAD: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

How to Go Mad without Losing Your Mind roves the intersections of madness and radical creativity in black expressive culture, particularly African American expressive culture, since the twentieth century. In the chapters that follow, I seek the mad in the literatures of August Wilson, Amiri Baraka, Gayl Jones, Ntozake Shange, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Richard Wright; in the jazz repertoires of Buddy Bolden, Sun Ra, and Charles Mingus; in the comedic performances of Richard Pryor and Dave Chappelle; and in the protest music of Nina Simone, Lauryn Hill, Kanye West, Kendrick Lamar, and Frank Ocean, among many other cultural producers and forms. In the works of these artists, madness animates—and sometimes agitates—black radical artmaking, self-making, and worldmaking. Moreover, madness becomes content, form, symbol, idiom, aesthetic, existential posture, philosophy, strategy, and energy in an enduring black radical tradition.

The *black* in this book's subtitle signifies a dynamic matrix of cultures, epistemologies, subjectivities, corporealities, socialities, and ontologies rooted in sub-Saharan African peoples and traveling in diasporic circuits and surges to the ends of the world. *Black* coalesced as a racial category amid the Atlantic

slave trade and the advent of global antiblackness—but blackness contains creative and insurgent power, on display in this study, far exceeding those wretched sites of origin and those cruel conditions of coalescence.

I do not typically capitalize *black* because I do not regard it as a *proper* noun. Grammatically, the proper noun corresponds to a formal name or title assigned to an individual, closed, fixed entity. I use a lowercase *b* because I want to emphasize an *improper* blackness: a blackness that is a "critique of the proper";[20] a blackness that is collectivist rather than individualistic; a blackness that is "never closed and always under contestation";[21] a blackness that is ever-unfurling rather than rigidly fixed; a blackness that is neither capitalized nor propertized via the protocols of Western grammar; a blackness that centers those who are typically regarded as lesser and *lower cases*, as it were; a blackness that amplifies those who are treated as "minor figures," in Western modernity.[22] I appreciate that some use the big *B* to confer respect, signal gravitas, and indicate specificity. However, the impropriety of lowercase blackness suits me, and this mad black project, just fine. Besides, my minor *b* is replete with respect, gravitas, and specificity-in-collectivity, too; its smallness does not limit the infinite care it contains. As for the term *black radical creativity*, it signifies black expressive culture that imagines, manifests, and practices otherwise ways of doing and being—all while confounding dominant logics, subverting normative aesthetics, and eroding oppressive structures of power and feeling.[23]

But what of *madness*? My critical account of madness in modernity proceeds from two premises. On the one hand, madness is a floating signifier and dynamic social construction that evades stable definition. On the other hand, or maybe in the same hand, madness is a lived reality that demands sustained attention. Accounting for these exigencies, I forward a model of madness that is theoretically agile enough to chase floating signifiers while ethically rooted enough to hold deep compassion for madpersons. Thus primed, I propose that madness encompasses at least four overlapping entities in the modern West.

First is *phenomenal madness*: an intense unruliness of mind—producing fundamental crises of perception, emotion, meaning, and selfhood—as experienced in the consciousness of the mad subject. This unruliness is not necessarily painful, nor is it categorically pleasurable; it may induce distress, despair, exhilaration, euphoria, and myriad other sensations. In elaborating this mode of madness, I favor a phenomenological attitude attuned to whatever presents itself to consciousness, including hallucinations and delusions that have no material basis. Most important, phenomenal madness centers the lived experience and first-person interiority of the mad subject, rather than, say, the diagnoses imposed by medical authority.

Such diagnoses are the basis of *medicalized madness*, the second category in this schema. Medicalized madness encompasses a range of "serious mental illnesses" and psychopathologies codified by the psy sciences of psychiatry, psychology, and psychoanalysis. These "serious" conditions include schizophrenia, dissociative identity disorder, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, and the antiquated diagnosis of medical "insanity," among others.[24] I label this category medical*ized* madness—emphasizing the suffix *-ize*, meaning *to become* or *to cause to become*—to signal that mental illness is a politicized process, epistemological operation, and sociohistorical construction, rather than an ontological given. (Consider this brief example: A psychiatric patient who perceives voices, with no empirically discernable outside source, might be diagnosed with schizophrenia. Modern Western psychiatry medicalizes and pathologizes this experience as "auditory hallucination."[25] However, in another historical context or social milieu, such a sound might be regarded as, say, prophetic hearing, superhuman aurality, telepathic transmission, or merely an unremarkable sensory variation.[26] My point is that there is nothing inherently, ontologically, transhistorically pathological about hearing voices.)

Even forms of medicalized madness that are measurable in brain tissue physiology, neuroelectric currents, and other empirical criteria are infiltrated (and sometimes constituted) by sociocultural forces. The creation, standardization, collection, and interpretation of psychiatric metrics take place in the crucible of culture. Likewise, clinical procedures are designed and carried out by subjective persons embedded in webs of social relations. And furthermore, psychiatry is susceptible to ideology. Exploiting that susceptibility, various antiblack, proslavery, patriarchal, colonialist, homophobic, and transphobic regimes have wielded psychiatry as a tool of domination. Thus, acts and attributes such as insurgent blackness, slave rebellion, willful womanhood, anticolonial resistance, same-sex desire, and gender subversion have all been pathologized by Western psychiatric science.[27] Beyond these overt examples of hegemonic psychiatry, I want to emphasize that no diagnosis is innocently objective. No etiology escapes the touch and taint of ideology. No science is pure.[28]

The third mode of madness is *rage*: an affective state of intense and aggressive displeasure (which is surely phenomenal, but warrants analytic distinction from the unruliness above). Black people in the United States and elsewhere have been subjected to heinous violence and degradation, but rarely granted recourse. Consequently, as singer-songwriter Solange Knowles reminds us, black people "got the right to be mad" and "got a lot to be mad about."[29] Alas, when they articulate rage in American public spheres, black people are often

criminalized as threats to public safety, lampooned as angry black caricatures, and pathologized as insane. That latter process—the conflation of black anger and black insanity—parallels the Anglophone confluence of *madness* meaning anger and *madness* meaning insanity. In short, when black people get mad (as in *angry*), antiblack logics tend to presume they've gone mad (as in *crazy*).

The fourth and most capacious category in this framework is *psychosocial madness*: radical deviation from the *normal* within a given psychosocial milieu. Any person or practice that perplexes and vexes the psychonormative status quo is liable to be labeled *crazy*. The arbiters of psychosocial madness are not elite cohorts of psychiatric experts, but rather multitudes of avowedly Reasonable people and publics who abide by psychonormative common sense. Thus, psychosocial madness reflects how avowedly sane majorities interpellate and often denigrate difference. What I have already stated about medicalized madness can also be adapted to psychosocial madness: acts and attributes such as insurgent blackness, slave rebellion, willful womanhood, anticolonial resistance, same-sex desire, and gender subversion have all been ostracized as *crazy* by sane majorities who adhere to Reasonable common sense. Whereas phenomenal madness is an *unruliness of mind*, psychosocial madness is sometimes an *unruliness of will* that resists and unsettles reigning regimes of the normal.

In its psychosocial iteration, *madness* often functions as a disparaging descriptor for any mundane phenomenon perceived to be odd and undesirable. An unconventional hairstyle, unpopular political opinion, physical tic, indecipherable utterance, eccentric outfit, dramatic flouting of etiquette, apathy toward money and wealth, or experience of spiritual ecstasy might be coded as *crazy* in psychonormative discourse. Yet it seems to me that psychosocial madness reveals more about the avowedly sane society branding an object crazy than about the object so branded. When you point at someone or something and shout *Crazy!*, you have revealed more about yourself—about your sensibility, your values, your attentions, your notion of the normal, the limits of your imagination in processing dramatic difference, the terms you use to describe the world, the reach of your pointing finger, the lilt of your accusatory voice—than you have revealed about that supposedly mad entity.[30]

These four categories are not all-encompassing and do not cover every possible permutation of madness. Furthermore, these four categories are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they often intersect and converge. *Rage*, for example, is always also *phenomenal*. Discourses of *medicalized* madness attempt to make sense of *phenomenal* symptoms and inevitably harbor *psychosocial* biases. Black people who articulate *rage* at unjust social conditions are often coded as

psychosocial others (and sometimes diagnosed as *medically* unsound). The spillage of these categories into one another reminds us that madness is too messy to be placed in tidy boxes and too restless to hold still for rigid frameworks.

Note, also, that these modes of madness might be taken up in manifold ways for mad praxis. For example, rage might be harnessed to fuel impassioned resistance. Medicalized madness might be deconstructed to expose and address the biases in psy sciences. Phenomenal madness might be documented to teach sane majorities about the lived experience of madness. Psychosocial alterity might model otherwise ways of knowing and being, beyond entrenched status quos. In these and other ways, the protagonists in this study get mad and go mad to convey and confront the violence, chaos, strangeness, ecstasy, wonder, aporia, paradox, and danger—in short, the phenomenal madness—suffusing racial modernity.

Beyond approaching madness as an object of analysis, *How to Go Mad* adapts madness as methodology. As I propose and practice it, *mad methodology* is a mad ensemble of epistemological modes, political praxes, interpretive techniques, affective dispositions, existential orientations, and ways of life.

Mad methodology seeks, follows, and rides the unruly movements of madness. It reads and hears *idioms of madness*: those purported rants, raves, rambles, outbursts, mumbles, stammers, slurs, gibberish sounds, and unseemly silences that defy the grammars of Reason. It historicizes and contextualizes madness as a social construction and social relation vis-à-vis Reason. It ponders the sporadic violence of madness in tandem and in tension with the structural violence of Reason. It cultivates critical ambivalence[31] to reckon with the simultaneous harm and benefit that may accompany madness. It respects and sometimes harnesses "mad" feelings like obsession and rage as stimulus for radical thought and action. Whereas rationalism roundly discredits madpersons, mad methodology recognizes madpersons as critical theorists and decisive protagonists in struggles for liberation. To be clear, I am not suggesting that madpersons are always already agents of liberation. I am simply and assuredly acknowledging that they *can be*, which is a heretical admission amid antimad worlds. I propose a mad methodology that neither vilifies the madperson as evil incarnate, nor romanticizes the madperson as resistance personified, nor patronizes the madperson as helpless ward awaiting aid. Rather, mad methodology engages the complexity and variability of mad subjects.

Regarding anger, the warrior poet Audre Lorde asserts that it is "loaded with information and energy."[32] Mad methodology is rooted in the recognition that phenomenal madness, medicalized madness, and psychosocial madness, like angry madness, are all "loaded with information and energy." Mad methodology

proceeds from a belief that such information can instruct black radical theory and such energy can animate black radical praxis.

Most urgently, mad methodology primes us to extend *radical compassion* to the madpersons, queer personae, ghosts, freaks, weirdos, imaginary friends, disembodied voices, unvoiced bodies, and unReasonable others, who trespass, like stowaways or fugitives, in Reasonable modernity. Radical compassion is a will to care for, a commitment to feel with, a striving to learn from, and an openness to be vulnerable before a precarious other, though they may be drastically dissimilar to yourself. Radical compassion is not an appeal to an idyllic oneness where difference is blithely effaced. Nor is it a smug projection of oneself into the position of another, thereby displacing that other.[33] Nor is it an invitation to walk a mile in someone else's shoes and amble, like a tourist, through their lifeworld, leaving them existentially barefoot all the while. Rather, radical compassion is an exhortation to ethically walk and sit and fight and build alongside another whose condition may be utterly unlike your own. Radical compassion works to impart care, exchange feeling, transmit understanding, embolden vulnerability, and fortify solidarity across circumstantial, sociocultural, phenomenological, and ontological chasms in the interest of mutual liberation. It persists even and especially toward beings who are the objects of contempt and condemnation from dominant value systems. It extends even and especially to those who discomfit one's own sense of propriety. Indeed, this book sometimes loiters in scenes and tarries with people who may trouble readers. I hope that this book also models the sort of radical compassion that persists through the trouble.

I characterize mad methodology as a parapositivist approach insofar as it resists the hegemony of positivism. (As a philosophical doctrine, positivism stipulates that meaningful assertions about the world must come from empirical observation and interpretation to generate veritable truth. However, when engaging the phenomenal, the spiritual, the aesthetic, the affective, and the mad, we must deviate from the logics of positivism.)[34] Mad methodology finds great inspiration in other cultural theorists' parapositivist approaches, including the Apostle Paul's account of "faith," Édouard Glissant's "poetics of relation," Avery Gordon's haunted and haunting sociology, Saidiya Hartman's "critical fabulation," Jack Halberstam's "scavenger methodology," Ann Cvetkovich's compilation of an "archive of feelings," Christina Sharpe's "wake work," and Patricia J. Williams's "ghost gathering."[35] These thinkers study sublime, opaque, formless, subjunctive, scarce, dead, and ghostly phenomena that thwart positivist knowing.

As a parapositivist approach, mad methodology does not attempt to wholly, transparently reveal madness.[36] How could it? Madness, after all, resists

intelligibility and frustrates interpretation. Conceding that I cannot fully understand the meaning of every madness I encounter, I often precede my observations with the qualifiers *maybe*, *it might be*, and *it seems*. Between these covers, I embrace uncertainty and irresolution. I heed poet-philosopher Glissant's insistence that "the transparency of the Enlightenment is finally misleading. . . . It is not necessary to understand someone—in the verb 'to understand' [French: *comprendre*] there is the verb 'to take' [French: *prendre*]—in order to wish to live with them."[37] I want to *live with* the madpersons gathered in this study, but I do not need or want to *take* them. I strive to *pursue* madness, but not to *capture* it. Recall that I began this chapter by warning you to *hold tight*. Mad methodology also, sometimes, entails *letting go*: relinquishing the imperative to know, to take, to capture, to master, to lay bare all the world with its countless terrors and wonders. Sometimes we must hold tight to steady ourselves amid the violent tumult of this world—and sometimes we must let go to unmoor ourselves from the stifling order imposed on this world. I am describing a deft dance between release and hold, hold and release.

In short, mad methodology is how to go mad without losing your mind. At length, this book will show you.

MAD INTERVENTIONS

How to Go Mad joins a robust corpus of post-2000 black studies scholarship exploring radical imagination within black popular culture, black feminist ingenuity, black queer art, the black avant-garde, Afrofuturism, Afrosurrealism, and beyond. I want to cite just a few entries in this scholarly corpus: In *Freedom Dreams* (2002), Robin Kelley illuminates black radical imagination and freedom dreaming in black abolitionist, Marxist, surrealist, and feminist movements across the diaspora.[38] Fred Moten's *In the Break* (2003) chronicles and practices a black radical tradition—animated by a will to resistance and propelled by a "freedom drive"—in twentieth-century performance and poetics.[39] Daphne Brooks's *Bodies in Dissent* (2006) explores mid-nineteenth- through early twentieth-century circumatlantic performances that spectacularize and instrumentalize alterity to disrupt racial and sexual hegemony.[40] In his "Afrosurreal Manifesto" (2009), D. Scott Miller taps into otherworldly fantasy, mystical visions, ecstatic feeling, and aesthetic extravagance in order to defy oppressive regimes of "reality."[41] In *Wandering* (2014), Sarah Cervenak charts practices of (physical and metaphysical) wandering as black feminist strategies to evade the coercive constrictions of antiblackness, misogyny, and racial

capitalism.[42] L. H. Stalling's *Funk the Erotic* (2015) theorizes black "funk" as a sensuous amalgam of erotic, ethical, and epistemological rebellion against antiblack, misogynist, capitalist, and sex-negative status quos.[43] *Radical Aesthetics and Modern Black Nationalism* (2016) is GerShun Avilez's study of the insurgent imaginations that propelled the Black Arts Movement, the fractures and ruptures that opened up within that movement, and its bustling queer afterlives and reincarnations.[44]

While *How to Go Mad* is foremost in league with such black studies scholarship, this book also speaks to—and talks back to—Western canon-dwellers from antiquity through postmodernity. Indeed, to ponder the juncture of madness and art in the West is to join a conversation with preeminent storytellers and philosophers in the Eurocentric context.[45] For example, in *Phaedrus*, the Athenian philosopher Plato (writing in the guise of Socrates) suggests that Eros, prophecy, and poetry are forms of "divine madness."[46] Throughout his dramatic oeuvre, Elizabethan playwright William Shakespeare endows characters like King Lear, Hamlet, and Ophelia with madness that begets ingenuity, cunning, and revelation; regarding Hamlet, the character Polonius opines: "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't."[47] American gothic author Edgar Allan Poe writes that "the question is not yet settled, whether madness is or is not the loftiest intelligence—whether much that is glorious—whether all that is profound—does not spring from disease of thought."[48] Nineteenth-century Eurocontinental philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche extols the revolutionary potential in madness, arguing that "almost everywhere [in Western history] it was madness which prepared the way for the new idea, which broke the spell of a venerated usage and superstition."[49] In perhaps the most influential study of madness in the West, *Madness and Civilization* (1961), Foucault details the sequestering and silencing of madness in Euromodernity. He contends that Europe's ruling classes, religious leadership, and psychiatric authorities colluded to expel madness (itself a sort of epistemology, communicative mode, and wandering way of life) into physical confinement and existential exile.[50] In *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari find insurgent energy in schizophrenia, treating it as a locus of unruly, free-flowing desire that defies repressive incursions of capitalism and psychoanalysis.[51]

Clearly, the conjunction of madness and creativity is a common concern in Western culture writ large. However, that madness-creativity intersection is especially fraught and charged when occupied by black folks. This is because antiblack discourse constantly codes black people as savage, irrational, subrational, pathological, and effectively mad. Black artists must

contend with—and also can draw upon—these associations of blackness and madness interlaid with those broader associations of artistic genius and madness.

This project owes much to disability studies.[52] Among that field's signal contributions is its interrogation of the *medical model* of disability, the dominant framework for understanding disability in the West. The medical model regards a disability as a physical or cognitive dysfunction residing in an individual body and/or mind—a dysfunction that should be corrected or cured by medical intervention. In contrast, disability studies advances a *social model*, contending that disability is a social construction: a set of social exclusions, obstructions, and derogations imposed on persons who diverge from a dominant, "abled" norm.[53] The medical and social models of disability roughly correspond to my medicalized and psychosocial iterations of madness. However, my own schema does not treat the medical and psychosocial as dichotomous; rather, I emphasize their entanglements and convergences.

Dominant discourses of "disability" tend to center the physical body, treating disabled people as "physically" feeble, infirm, *undercapacitated*. In contrast, normative notions of madness cast madpersons as dangerously *hypercapacitated*—that is, able and liable to do harm that sane persons could barely fathom, let alone act upon. Addressing such exigencies, the burgeoning field of mad studies centers the lived experience of madpersons—especially consumers, survivors, and ex-patients of psychiatric systems—and advances agendas for mad liberation. Brenda A. LeFrançois, Robert Menzies, and Geoffrey Reaume are the editors of *Mad Matters: A Critical Reader in Canadian Mad Studies* (2013), the most extensive collection of writings in mad studies to date. In an introduction articulating a comprehensive, interdisciplinary, and intersectional platform for mad studies, they write:

> To work with and within the language of madness is by no means to deny the psychic, spiritual, and material pains and privations endured by countless people with histories of encounters with the psy disciplines. To the contrary, it is to acknowledge and validate these experiences as being authentically human, while at the same time rejecting clinical labels that pathologize and degrade; challenging the reductionistic assumptions and effects of the medical model; locating psychiatry and its human subjects within wider historical, institutional, and cultural contexts; and advancing the position that mental health research, writing, and advocacy are primarily about opposing oppression and promoting human justice.[54]

I share their commitment to mad study that honors the personhood, lived experience, and agency of madpersons while recognizing the abjection that frequently haunts mad life. Like the editors of *Mad Matters*, I am invested in "promoting human justice"—alongside, I might add, relief, revelation, joy, and liberation—for madpersons and other psychosocial outcasts. However, I respectfully diverge from the editors' quest, articulated later in their introduction, for a mad studies "steadfastly arrayed against biomedical psychiatry."[55] While I decry the dire harm that biomedical psychiatry has wrought on many pathologized people, I also know that some patients and survivors find utility in it. To "validate and celebrate survivor experience and cultures," as the editors rightly intend, we might sometimes cautiously, provisionally, ambivalently, improperly, subversively take up biomedical psychiatry—all while we pursue its radical transformation.[56]

Another compendium of mad studies appears in "Mad Futures: Affect/Theory/Violence," a 2017 special issue of the scholarly journal *American Quarterly*. Guest editors Tanja Aho, Liat Ben-Moshe, and Leon J. Hilton remark that the field of mad studies "draws on decades of scholarship and activism examining how psychiatric disabilities or differences must be understood not only as medical conditions but also as historical formations that have justified all manner of ill-treatment and disenfranchisement—even as they have also formed the basis for political identities, social movements, and cultural practices of resistance."[57] In this passage, they note the multiplicity of madness, which is at once a "medical," "historical," "political," "social," and "cultural" formation. Furthermore, they acknowledge both the abjection that may beset madness and the insurgent energy that may emanate from it. Foundational to my own study is attention to madness as a complex and dynamic process that may entail both devastating abjection and mighty agency.

This complexity is illustrated in the juxtaposition of two common figures of speech: *to snap* and *to click*. In Anglophone idiom, *to snap* is to break, to come undone, to lose control, to go crazy; *to click* is to come together, to fall into place, to make sense. Much as the sounds of physical snaps and physical clicks are sometimes indistinguishable to the ear, the processes signified in these idioms are sometimes indistinguishable to critical interpretation. As this book reveals, sometimes coming undone is precisely how one falls into place. Sometimes a breakdown doubles as a breakthrough. Sometimes a snap is a click. *Sometimes*. I recognize and reckon with occasions where madness entails pain, danger, terror, degradation, and harm for those who experience it

and those in its vicinity. But I hasten to mention that Reason may entail pain, terror, abjection, and harm, too. In fact, far more modern harm has been perpetrated under the aegis of Reason—I have in mind chattel slavery, colonialism, imperialism, genocide, war, and other evils both momentous and mundane—than committed by rogue madpersons.[58]

As we work to destigmatize madness, including the medicalized madness of mental illness, it is crucial that we resist romanticizing it. Feminist bioethicist and disability studies scholar Elizabeth Donaldson warns that "the madness-as-feminist-rebellion metaphor might at first seem like a positive strategy for combating the stigma traditionally associated with mental illness. However, this metaphor indirectly diminishes the lived experience of many people disabled by mental illness."[59] Indeed, the "madness-as-feminist-rebellion metaphor" risks evacuating madness of its lived complexity in order to flatten and polish it into a shiny political badge. Whereas Donaldson admonishes against abstracting madness into a positive symbol, psychiatrist Robert Barrett critiques how madness is reduced to a negative sign. He suggests that schizophrenia is coopted to "represent symbolically much of what has gone wrong in the modern world," forcing schizophrenic people to bear "the responsibility of representing an alienated, fragmented, meaningless, self-absorbed society—a schizophrenic society."[60] While simplistic metaphors may be rhetorically expedient, they come at grave ethical cost if they distort and objectify people. With these cautions in mind, I center representations of madness that illuminate, rather than efface, its lived experience.

No matter how carefully I qualify my mobilization of madness, and despite my work to avoid romanticizing it, this study might incite the ire of a cohort I call *rationalist readers*. Analogous to the moral reader hailed in slave narratives and sentimental novels, the rationalist reader—and more broadly, the rationalist audience—is the presumed paradigmatic consumer of psychonormative culture. Such a reader possesses psychonormative sensibilities, adheres to Reason's common sense, and shuns madness as categorically detrimental. Some rationalist readers may fear that my focus on mad blackness reinforces myths of black savagery and undermines the "respectable" project of Reasonable blackness. The latter project puts faith in Reason, a structure that I approach with well-warranted suspicion (and perhaps paranoia). Rather than integrate black people into the pantheon of Reason, or seek a place for them at its hallowed table, I want to interrogate the logics that undergird that pantheon and prop up that table. I am especially interested in artists who refuse to have a seat, but would rather flip the table and carry their meals outside.

Some of those black captives in slave ships resolved to go outside, too.[61] They leapt from the decks of those vessels and into the Atlantic Ocean, choosing biological death over the wretchedness that sociologist Orlando Patterson deems "social death."[62] Typically, psychiatry labels such leaps *suicide* and pathologizes them as the outcome of absolute self-abnegation. While the frame of psychopathology is apt for apprehending why some people take their own lives, it cannot hold all those Flying Africans. Amid the misery of the Middle Passage, suicidal ideation might be a mode of radical dreaming, an urge to escape to a distant elsewhere in an afterlife, otherworld, ancestral gathering place, heaven, or home. For the captive on the ship, suicide might be an act of radical self-care, intended to relieve and leave the hurt of the hold and expedite arrival in that elsewhere.[63] Sometimes the leap was not a plummet to doom, but a launch into flight; not an outcome of self-abnegation, but an act of self-assertion; not a bog of hopelessness, but an outburst of radical hope hurled into another world. To be clear, I do not glibly romanticize suicide; I know and ardently assert that each life is sacred, singular, precious, miraculous, and should be treated with ineffable care. At the same time, I acknowledge that there are conditions of unbearable duress where taking one's own life might be a critical and ethical act—albeit dreadful and woeful, too. *How to Go Mad* attends to people and practices who, like those Flying Africans, will not be captured by normative Reason.

By the nineteenth century, the slave ship gave way to the plantation as the paradigmatic site of black abjection and confinement in the Western Hemisphere. Meanwhile, the ship of fools, if it ever existed, was succeeded by the prison house and later the asylum as the preferred receptacle for the allegedly insane.[64] Amid these shifts, the association of blackness and madness remained. In antebellum America, that association manifested in the similar logics used to justify the plantation and the asylum. Literary and cultural historian Benjamin Reiss writes that "both institutions revoked the civil liberties of a confined population in the name of public order and the creation of an efficient labor force, and both housed a purportedly subrational population . . . with the asylum's triumph over madness paralleling the white race's subduing of the black."[65] The plantation and asylum were forums in which arbiters of antebellum Reason rehearsed methods of domination and developed logics of justification.

I want to linger at the site of the asylum to highlight the salience of space and movement in modern notions of madness. Within Anglophone idiom,

subjects *go* crazy, as though mad is a place or constellation of places. The ship of fools, the insane asylum, the psychiatric hospital, the carnival, the wrong side of the supposed line between genius and madness, and even the continent of Africa are frequently mapped as mad places within Western discourse. It is as though madness is a metaphysical zone, a location outside the gentrified precincts and patrolled borders of Reason. Or maybe madness is a mode of motion occasioned in treacherous terrain: a wavering, trembling, swelling, zigzagging, brimming, bursting, shattering, or splattering movement that disrupts Reason's supposedly steady order and tidy borders. It seems to me that madness, like diaspora, is both location and locomotion. Madness, like diaspora, is both place and process.[66] Madness and diaspora transgress normative arrangements—of the sane and sovereign, in turn.

The transgressive motion of fugitive slaves was framed as madness-as-kinesis by proslavery psychiatry. In 1851, the prominent Confederate physician Samuel Cartwright coined *drapetomania*, which he described as "the disease causing Negroes to run away."[67] As formulated by Cartwright, drapetomania is a racialized diagnosis that exclusively afflicts "Negroes"-as-slaves, reflecting an antiblack antebellum insistence on conflating *blackness* and *slaveness*.[68] Of course, this discursive conflation was allied with the material, legal, and existential yoking of blackness and slaveness in chattel slavery.

Cartwright further argues that "the cause in the most of cases, that induces the negro to run away from service, is as much a disease of the mind as any other species of mental alienation, and much more curable, as a general rule." He suggests that drapetomania can be cured if the slaveholder upholds a dual role as disciplinarian master (with use of the whip, so that slaves will fearfully obey) and paternalistic protector (so that slaves will be made agreeable by bonds of affection and the incentive of protection).[69] In pathologizing black self-emancipation, Cartwright joins a proslavery, antiblack conspiracy against black freedom: antiblack slave codes criminalized black freedom; antiblack religion demonized black freedom; antiblack philosophy stigmatized black freedom; and antiblack slaveholders and vigilantes terrorized black freedom. It is no wonder, then, that antiblack medicine would pathologize black freedom. Under the obscene regime and episteme of antebellum slavery, black freedom was crime, sin, stigma, liability, and sickness, too.

Whereas drapetomania supposedly compelled black people to flee servitude, Cartwright coined another psychopathology to ail them once they found freedom. He writes that "Dysaesthesia Aethiopica is a disease peculiar to negroes, affecting both mind and body. . . . [I]t prevails among free negroes, nearly all of whom are more or less afflicted with it, that have not got some

white person to direct and to take care of them." Cartwright claims that black people are constitutionally unfit for freedom, sickened by it, and that they are mentally and physically healthier when enslaved. To have Cartwright tell it, the motley symptoms of dysaesthesia aethiopica include cognitive decline, lethargy, lesions, and skin insensitivity. In a flourish of melodramatic antiblackness, he decrees that to "narrate [dysaesthesia aethiopica's] symptoms and effects among them would be to write a history of the ruins and dilapidation of Hayti, and every spot of earth they have ever had uncontrolled possession over for any length of time."[70] He names the first free black republic as ground zero in a sort of hemispheric epidemic of dysaesthesia aethiopica. If mad is a place, according to Cartwright, it might be "Hayti."[71]

The notion that slavery was salutary for black people also infused antebellum political rhetoric. John C. Calhoun, an eminent nineteenth-century politician whose career included stints as US Secretary of State and US Vice President, offered this justification for antiblack chattel slavery circa 1840: "Here is proof of the necessity of slavery. The African is incapable of self-care and sinks into lunacy under the burden of freedom. It is a mercy to him to give him the guardianship and protection from mental death."[72] Calhoun claims that freedom will careen Africans into lunacy, into a helpless and mindless oblivion that he deems "mental death." If slavery was social death and freedom was mental death, those Africans were caught in a deadly double bind—doomed one way or another. Within the wicked machinations and pernicious logics of antebellum antiblackness, black people, whether enslaved or free, were the living dead.

Beyond *discursive* conflations of blackness and madness, slavery induced *lived* convergences of blackness and madness. It perpetrated systematic trauma, induced mental distress, and ignited crises of subjectivity—which is to say, it produced phenomenal madness—in black people both enslaved and free. Regarding black women in colonial and antebellum America, for example, Nobel laureate and novelist Toni Morrison explains that "black women had to deal with post-modern problems in the nineteenth century and earlier. . . . Certain kinds of dissolution, the loss of and the need to reconstruct certain kinds of stability. Certain kinds of madness, deliberately going mad in order, as one of the characters [from the novel *Beloved*] says, 'in order not to lose your mind.' These strategies for survival made the truly modern person. They're a response to predatory Western phenomena."[73] Morrison suggests that "going mad" was sometimes a strategy to doggedly clutch hold of one's mind when Reason would steal or smash it. If Reason is benefactor of white supremacy, proponent of antiblack slavocracy, and underwriter of patriarchal dominion, an enslaved

black woman might fare better by going insane instead. Rather than remain captive behind the barbed fences of slavocratic sanity, she might find refuge—however tenuous, vexed, and incomplete—in the fugitivity of madness.

Morrison fleshes out these themes in her Pulitzer Prize–winning novel *Beloved* (1987). The story is inspired by the life of Margaret Garner, a fugitive from slavery who escaped a Kentucky plantation with her family in 1856 and settled in the neighboring "free" state of Ohio. When slave catchers (authorized by the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act to legally stalk and abduct black persons living in "free" states) apprehended Garner, she attempted to kill her four children rather than see them repossessed into slavery. Like the Flying Africans, Garner preferred biological death over social death and sought the former for her children to spare them the latter. She succeeded in killing only her two-year-old daughter, Mary.

Margaret Garner is the basis for the novel's primary protagonist, Sethe, while Mary is inspiration for the novel's titular character, Beloved. As narrated in the story, Sethe goes mad in order to perform a killing that is utterly unconscionable within nearly every model of motherhood. And yet, her deed is also an astonishing, unflinching, unconditional attempt at motherly protection; she intends to save her sons and daughters from enslavement by any means, at any cost. In the moment before the killing, Sethe has a breakdown that feels like beating wings and probing beaks:

> She was squatting in the garden and when she saw them coming and recognized schoolteacher's hat, she heard wings. Little hummingbirds stuck their needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thought anything it was No. No. Nono. Nonono. Simple. She just flew. Collected every bit of life she had made, all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful, and carried, pushed, dragged them through the veil, out, away, over there where no one could hurt them. Over there.[74]

Sethe originally sought sanctuary in an "over there" north of the Ohio River, but its freedom proved ephemeral and illusory. Now she seeks freedom in a more distant "over there," in an otherworldly elsewhere outside the jurisdiction of fugitive slave laws and beyond the reach of a slaveholder called "schoolteacher."[75] The man who reigns over the Kentucky plantation that Sethe fled, schoolteacher is an atrocious agent of antiblack Reason. He proposes that black people are inhuman, and he methodically tortures and dehumanizes them in order to fabricate tautological proof of his claim. He commits merciless

cruelty under the auspices of Reasonable inquiry and scientific method. When he arrives in Ohio to find Sethe in a shed covered in the blood of her dead child, slain only moments before, schoolteacher resolves against re-enslaving her and her offspring. His decision does not appear to be an act of compassion upon beholding that dreadful scene. He seems, instead, to be driven by economic calculation: the family is damaged goods unworthy of repossession.[76] Schoolteacher also appears to judge infanticide as an especially base depravity, unaware or unconcerned that his own evil is what drives the mother to kill her child. After all, Sethe's infanticidal madness is a desperate attempt to escape schoolteacher's genocidal Reason.

Twenty-five years before Garner's tragedy, another enslaved person's violent defiance and alleged madness attracted far greater notoriety in the US public sphere. Nathaniel Turner was a self-avowed prophet who claimed that divine inspiration led him to organize a bloody revolt in Southampton, Virginia, in 1831. Turner and his co-conspirators massacred some sixty local white people and incited horror in countless others. After his capture, while confined in jail and awaiting execution, Turner supposedly dictated his account of the insurrection to his court-appointed counsel, Thomas Gray. In the resulting document, "The Confessions of Nat Turner: The Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, VA," Turner purportedly confesses the following about the weeks before the uprising: "Many were the plans formed and rejected by us, and it affected my mind to such a degree, that I fell sick, and the time passed without our coming to any determination how to commence."[77] This unspecified sickness resulted from the anxiety of devising revolt, of plans proposed and rejected, of apocalyptic dreams deferred, which "affected" his mind. It seems that Turner is describing mental illness and distress.

If Turner's own language implies mental illness, Gray charges madness outright. He deems Turner "a gloomy fanatic" and refers to his "dark, bewildered, and overwrought mind."[78] It comes as no surprise that Gray would label Turner mad. Turner committed the most severe violations of slavery's psychosocial status quo: he rejected the subjection demanded of slaves and chose bloody insurrection instead. More curiously, Gray opines that Turner "is a complete fanatic, or plays his part most admirably. On other subjects he possesses an uncommon share of intelligence, with a mind capable of attaining any thing; but warped and perverted by the influence of early impressions."[79] The possession of "a mind capable of attaining any thing" is commensurate with modern notions of genius. Remarkably, then, the deadliest slave insurrectionist in the history of the antebellum United States was a self-proclaimed *prophet*, an alleged *madman*, and, in Gray's estimation, a perverse *genius*. The prophet, madper-

son, and genius all occupy epistemic alterity. Because of the prophet's access to heaven's revelations, the madperson's exile from the domain of Reason, and the genius's elevation above ordinary intelligence curves, all three of these figures inhabit spheres of mind supposedly inaccessible to normal-minded masses. As portrayed in "Confessions," Turner traverses a genius | prophet | madman triptych, partitioned by those proverbially thin lines that separate madness from genius and lunacy from prophecy.

Gray also suggests that Turner could be pretending all along, "play[ing] his part most admirably." The implication is that Turner might be feigning insanity to elicit mercy or strike fear in his punishers. Fifty years later, Nietzsche would write that those "irresistibly drawn to throw off the yoke of any kind of morality and to frame new laws had, *if they were not actually mad*, no alternative but to make themselves or pretend to be mad."[80] Whether or not this characterization applies to Turner, it alerts us to another use of madness: as equipment for dissemblance. As this study will show, some crazy persons exploit the inscrutability of madness to use it as mask, cloak, and shield.

BLACK RADICAL MADNESS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I have surveyed several discursive conflations, historical intersections, and phenomenal convergences of madness and blackness in early modern through antebellum contexts. Now I turn to a few key expressions and theorizations of black radical madness in the twentieth century.

The figure of the "crazy nigger"[81] swaggered prominently in African American vernacular imagination at the dawn of the twentieth century, the period that historian Rayford Logan labels the "nadir" of (postslavery) US race relations.[82] The "crazy nigger" is an outlaw persona who does as he or she pleases, who is reckless, defiant, courageous, and profane, who flagrantly flouts codes of middle-class respectability and racial propriety. Whereas Reasonable people are chastened by fear of violence, stigma, and death, the "crazy nigger" seems undaunted by such concerns. He or she will fearlessly face any adversary—including powerful white racists—and thus emerges as a superlative representative of insurgent blackness.

The "crazy nigger" was a polarizing figure among black people in the nadir: a folk hero or villain depending upon the perspective of his or her beholder. He or she was a hero to those who sought a model of black defiance—providing vicarious wish fulfillment for black people who dreamed of, but never acted upon, revenge fantasies against antiblack racists. These would-be avengers

might utter the phrase *crazy nigger* like an honorific. On the other hand, this mad figure would be viewed as a nuisance by those invested in placating whiteness and aligning with bourgeois respectability. To such avowedly respectable persons, the "crazy nigger" was a liability for the race, a dangerous rabble-rouser stoking racial antagonism and courting racist retribution. From the mouths of these conformists, the words *crazy nigger* might sound like an invective. What I want to emphasize is that black vernacular cultures recognized and theorized the political resonance of craziness, deploying the term *crazy nigger* to describe agents of rebellion.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, black studies trailblazer William Edward Burghardt Du Bois also theorized a sort of racialized madness. In his 1903 tome *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois famously describes "double consciousness": "one ever feels his twoness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."[83] Double consciousness entails internecine "warring" in mind that might resemble the psychic unruliness and crisis I call phenomenal madness. Whereas the condition is often regarded as an existential affliction and impairment, I want to emphasize that it is also an endowment. Double consciousness grants black Americans a perceptual aptitude and epistemic access unavailable to their white counterparts. To live with this split subjectivity is to behold the spectacular scene of America's black-white racial drama while also privy to the backstage content of black life, full of complex socioracial phenomena concealed from white gazes. Thus, for all of the existential angst it entails, double consciousness might also serve as an instrument for insurgency: a scopic tool and radar technology to secretly seek black horizons of being that are hidden from white surveillance.

Other prominent antiracist and anticolonial theorists centered madness in their accounts of black suffering and black insurgency in the first half of the twentieth century. In 1941, amid world war, anticolonial foment, and Pan-African awakenings, the Négritude critic and theorist Suzanne Roussy Césaire intervened in the discourse of madness and space. In a letter to the surrealist magazine *View*, she refuses to characterize madness as a pit of abjection; rather, she imagines "the domain of the strange, the Marvelous, and the fantastic," wherein lies "the freed image, dazzling and beautiful, with a beauty that could not be more unexpected and overwhelming. Here are the poet, the painter, and the artist, presiding over the metamorphoses and the inversions of the world under the sign of hallucination and madness."[84] Césaire's domain of the Marvelous blooms at the crossroads of a surrealist rebuke of rationalism, an antico-

lonial rejection of colonial Reason, and Négritude's affirmation of black radical possibility. She conjures a decolonial fantasia where radical creativity begets beauty that is surreal, sublime, subversive, and *mad*.

Suzanne Césaire's collaborator and husband, Aimé Césaire, was a Martinican poet, essayist, and statesman who championed surrealism, despised colonialism, and marched at the vanguard of the Négritude movement. Furthermore, he reportedly described his poetic process as "beneficial madness."[85] His 1947 epic poem, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, portrays a colonized black protagonist who endures existential despair but eventually emerges into revolutionary consciousness and embraces the ontological blackness of Négritude. The poem's speaker professes "hate" for colonial "reason" (Reason) and pledges allegiance to a living madness: "the madness that remembers, the madness that howls, the madness that sees, the madness that is unleashed."[86] This madness possesses memory, voice, vision, and agency. Thus vivified, it is a powerful ally of colonized peoples against the colonizer's pernicious Reason.

A mentee of Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon was a black Martinican doctor who developed a radical psychiatry that has influenced black and anticolonial freedom struggles worldwide. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Fanon describes "a massive psychoexistential complex" erected by antiblackness and colonialism.[87] That complex is a metaphysical prison house that confines black people and incites maddening crises of subjectivity, identity, humanity, and ontology. But Fanon, like both Césaires, believes that revolution can rise amid such wretched states. At the start of this chapter, I referenced Fanon's "zone of nonbeing, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born."[88] Fanon's declivity is so low and empty that it grants unobstructed space to gather momentum for "authentic upheaval."

The metaphorical proximity of Fanon's "zone of nonbeing" and Spillers's "*nowhere* at all" is not the only place these theorists adjoin. The two also share a commitment to adapting psychoanalysis to address the lifeworlds of Afrodiasporic peoples. In "All the Things You Could Be by Now If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother: Psychoanalysis and Race," Spillers contends that the African American "lifeworld offers a quintessential occasion for a psychoanalytic reading, given the losses that converge on its naming. . . . The situation of the African American community is more precisely *ambivalent* than any American case we can concoct, in light of its incomplete 'Americanization' even at this late date."[89] She endorses the efficacy of psychoanalysis for interpreting the deep ambivalence that marks blackness in America. For Spillers, however, generic psychoanalysis won't do. She refashions psychoanalytic equipment to

enhance its utility for black subjects—cutting, pushing, stretching, and suturing psychoanalysis in ways that Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan probably did not intend or foresee. For example, Spillers writes that "African persons in 'Middle Passage' were literally suspended in the 'oceanic,' if we think of the latter in its Freudian orientation as an analogy for undifferentiated identity."[90] In Spillers's custody, the oceanic is not merely a feature of infant subjectivity in a transhistorical model of psychological development. Here, the oceanic also signifies racialized subjection and subjectmaking amid the atrocity of the Middle Passage. Spillers stands among a critical mass of black cultural theorists and, more broadly, cultural theorists of color, who critically adapt psychoanalysis to address exigencies of race. Joining this cohort, I occasionally recalibrate Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis to engage the specificities of blackness and its antagonists.[91]

Activist-psychiatrists Price Cobbs and William Grier also retool Eurocentric psy science to address the lives of black people. Published in the immediate aftermath of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination and amid the righteous and riotous rage that ensued, their 1968 study *Black Rage* is a sweeping exploration of the psychosocial lives of black Americans from the colonial era through the age of Black Power. Interweaving psychiatric case studies, historiography, sociological data, and social psychology, the authors chart purportedly "pathological" features of black life as well as the psychosocial and psychocultural adaptations that black people develop for self-protection, catharsis, and healing.[92] The "black rage" announced in their book title is at once a symptom of antiblack trauma, a defense against antiblack trauma, and a mighty force in battles against antiblackness.

In fact, the shift from *Civil Rights* to *Black Power* political paradigms might be framed as a pivot from a politics of respectability to a politics of rage. Frustrated with models of passive resistance, some black activists and artists got mad—embracing rage as a powerful resource against antiblackness. The furious speeches of Kwame Ture; the incendiary, incantatory writings of Amiri Baraka; the exquisitely outraged outbursts of Nina Simone; the seething anger and schizophrenic angst surging through Adrienne Kennedy's drama; Malcolm X's status as "the angriest black man in America";[93] and the "race riots" that King described as "the language of the unheard,"[94] all reflect a politics of rage and mobilization of madness in black radical traditions of the 1960s.

The sociopolitical fervor of the 1960s also fomented the antipsychiatry movement, propelled by a motley array of psychiatric dissidents, including consumers, survivors, ex-patients, activists, academics, and radical clinicians. Members of this movement question the legitimacy of psychiatric diagnosis,

alleging that mainstream psychiatry has little or no basis in objective science. Often regarded as a key figure in the movement, Thomas Szasz suggests that the very notion of *mental illness* is a sham: a system of subjective moral and ideological judgments masquerading as scientific facticity. He contends that the diagnosis of mental illness is merely an expression of social disapproval shrouded in medical jargon and granted exorbitant power. R. D. Laing, another key figure in the antipsychiatry movement, argues that schizophrenia is not an organic disease, but rather the effect of existential antagonisms and alienation from repressive family and social structures.[95]

Like antipsychiatry activists, I recognize that degradation, dispossession, disenfranchisement, dishonor, torture, murder, and other forms of harm have been inflicted on madpersons by psychiatry. Furthermore, I respect antipsychiatry's attention to racism, sexism, classism, colonialism, homophobia, transphobia, and other pernicious ideologies that have effected and affected mainstream psychiatry. And yet, I hasten to note that many psychiatric clients and consumers find healing and even empowerment through clinical intervention. Considering that psychiatry has engendered both harm and benefit for madpersons, we would be wise to approach it with critical ambivalence—rebuking its malicious modes while embracing its therapeutic and insurgent potential. In this vein, I appreciate the radical psychiatry of Fanon, Cobbs, and Grier—as well as later progressive innovations of clinicians like Alvin Poussaint and Joy DeGruy[96]—who grapple with the psychosocial exigencies of blackness.

The 1960s are the primary focus of *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease* (2010), by Jonathan Metzl, a psychiatrist and cultural critic. By the turn of the twenty-first century, African Americans were three to five times as likely as their white counterparts to be diagnosed with schizophrenia, arguably the most stigmatized mental illness.[97] Metzl traces the blackening of schizophrenia to Civil Rights–era psychiatry and the weaponization of the diagnosis against rebellious black men.[98] He culls his book title from a term that two racist psychiatrists coined in 1960s America to characterize schizophrenia. Metzl writes, "Walter Bromberg and Franck Simon described schizophrenia as a 'protest psychosis' whereby black men developed 'hostile and aggressive feelings' and 'delusional anti-whiteness' after listening to the words of Malcolm X, joining the Black Muslims, or aligning with groups that preached militant resistance to white society. According to [Bromberg and Simon], the men required psychiatric treatment because their symptoms threatened not only their own sanity, but the social order of white America."[99] I hasten to note that black women are also widely psychopathologized—as ferocious Sapphires and nymphomaniacal Jezebels—even if patriarchy presumes

them incapable of posing as grave a threat as black men.[100] The fact is that black women are subject to misogynist myths of female hysteria *and* antiblack fantasies of black savagery.

Bromberg and Simon are heirs to the ignominious legacy of Samuel Cartwright. Their invention of "protest psychosis," like Cartwright's invention of "drapetomania," leverages medical authority to discredit black insurgency in an era of racial unrest. Convinced that their antiblackness is perfectly Reasonable, Bromberg and Simon denounce the "delusional anti-whiteness" of black activists. I want to linger briefly on this notion of antiwhiteness. It seems to me that when whiteness is a prized possession whose preservation is pretext for the systematic degradation of black people, antiwhiteness is a justifiable position. When whiteness is a weapon of devastating power wielded against black people, it is no wonder that some would become militant in the interest of self-defense. When whiteness is a structure of power commensurate with white supremacy and antiblackness, "hostile and aggressive feelings" strike me as neither "delusional" nor objectionable. Those "hostile and aggressive feelings" reflect a will to rise up against tyranny, an impulse to thrust the foot off your neck, a manifestation of the freedom drive. To be clear, the antiwhiteness that I am describing is not hatred for white people; rather, it is animus toward the white supremacy that is militated beneath the banner of whiteness. It is possible to care for white people while also despising and opposing the world-historical ravages of whiteness-as-domination.

Remarkably, racist psychiatrists like Cartwright, Bromberg, and Simon share an important conviction with antiracist psychiatrists like Fanon, Grier, Cobbs, Poussaint, and DeGruy. Both groups agree that black people in the West are susceptible to racialized psychopathologies. However, these camps propose dramatically different etiologies. Cartwright, Bromberg, and Simon attribute such madness to inherent defects in black psyches and black cultures. To the contrary, Fanon, Grier, Cobbs, Poussaint, and DeGruy indict antiblack racism as the cause of racialized maladies ailing black people.

Proposing such divergent etiologies and espousing such contrary ideologies, it is no wonder that these cohorts prescribe different treatments. Antiblack psychiatry has variously encouraged enslavement, colonization, institutionalization, incarceration, disenfranchisement, assimilation to whiteness, abnegation of blackness, and mind-dulling or mind-destroying medical procedures as "treatments." To the contrary, antiracist psychiatry prompts us to reckon with the pathology of white supremacy, to attend to the ongoing trauma of antiblackness, and, most ambitiously, to overturn the extant racial order.[101] Regarding that "massive psychoexistential complex" imperiling black people,

for instance, Fanon writes: "I hope by analyzing it to destroy it."[102] By disclosing its sinister blueprint and exposing its corroded foundation, Fanon hopes to help demolish the complex.

A SHORT NOTE ON THE MADNESS OF ANTIBLACKNESS

This study centers insurgent madness in black expressive cultures. However, I want to remark upon the tyrannical madness at the core of antiblackness. In an interview with journalist Charlie Rose, Morrison describes the psychopathology of antiblack racism: "The people who do this thing, who practice racism, are bereft. There is something distorted about the psyche. It's a huge waste and it's a corruption. . . . It's a profound neurosis that nobody examines for what it is. It *feels* crazy. It *is* crazy. . . . It has just as much of a deleterious effect on white people . . . as it does [on] black people."[103] Regarding the madness of "extreme racism," Poussaint puts it this way: "It is time for the American Psychiatric Association to designate extreme racism as a mental health problem by recognizing it as a delusional psychotic symptom. Persons afflicted with such psychopathology represent an immediate danger to themselves and others."[104] Both Morrison and Poussaint recognize that racism is an existential threat to its targets as well as its adherents. Appropriating psychiatric and psychoanalytic discourse, we might conceptualize any number of racist pathologies: racist neurosis, racist delusion, racist narcissism, racist melancholia, racist anxiety disorder, homicidal racist angst, and so forth.

The risk in framing antiblack racism as mental illness is that it potentially locates the problem of racism in individual psychopathology rather than deeply entrenched systems and structures. Such a maneuver might cast racism as a medical issue to be treated primarily in the psychiatric office or examination room, when, in fact, racism is a global catastrophe that must be eradicated with social, cultural, political, epistemological, and, indeed, psychic upheaval. It is worthwhile to pursue psychiatric understanding of individual racists, but this pursuit must take place within a broader project of denouncing, dismantling, and demolishing racist structures. We can and must address individual psychopathology and systemic injustice at once—recognizing how they are co-constitutive and symbiotic.

If Donald J. Trump, the forty-fifth president of the United States, is mentally ill, he offers a colossal case study in the convergence of individual psychopathology and structural violence. Trump's power as US president means that his individual mental condition can generate structural outcomes and alter

global history. However, glib attempts to label Trump mentally ill are fraught with psychonormative presumptions and distortions. Trump's unpredictable behavior, astounding incompetence, extreme egotism, and profound evil have led some to conclude that he *must be* mentally ill—as though unpredictability, incompetence, egotism, and evil *must be* symptoms of mental illness. These pseudodiagnoses reflect a psychonormative tendency to cast bad behavior as mental illness and to conflate evil with madness.[105]

The term *evil* is often affixed to anything that dramatically opposes the moral codes of an avowedly good majority—much like the term *mad* is ascribed to whatever perplexes and vexes the avowedly sane majority. However, over the past thousand years, myriad atrocities have ensued when supposedly *good* majorities label outsiders *evil* and set upon combatting, correcting, or cleansing away said evil. The Crusades, the Atlantic Slave Trade, and the Holocaust, for example, all entailed leaders labeling others *evil* and stoking violence against that alleged evil. I propose a different notion of evil: I regard it as a radical will to harm, without mercy or compunction, that seeks , wreaks, and relishes said harm. This definition indicts many of the so-called good leaders and majorities I've referenced above, exposing the vicious irony that much evil is committed in the name of, and under the cover of, "good."

In short, the discourse around Trump occasions four critical reminders: not all bizarre behavior is mental illness; not all ineptitude results from psychiatric deterioration; not all egregious deeds are clinical symptoms; and madness is not synonymous with evil.

Though I caution against the haphazard use of *crazy* to describe Trumpian malfeasance, I acknowledge that Trump might be mad on some register. He might experience a chaos of mind and crisis of meaning that is phenomenal madness; he might meet diagnostic criteria for any number of mental illnesses, perhaps antisocial or narcissistic personality disorder; and he surely exploits and channels right-wing, white supremacist rage. However, I hold that Trump does not instantiate psychosocial madness. Across the broad arc of American and Western modernity, his worrisome behavior is not psychosocial alterity; instead, it is white supremacist Reason laid hideously bare. More broadly, he is a blatant extension of, rather than a rupture from, the white supremacist, antiblack, sexist, xenophobic, belligerent, and chauvinist psychosocial norms that have historically prevailed in the United States. The Afropessimist philosopher Frank Wilderson has proclaimed, citing and riffing on the work of David Marriott, that antiblack psychopathology is "supported and coordinated with all the guns in the world."[106] If Trump is crazy, his madness is literally "supported

and coordinated" with more guns than the madness of any other living person as I write these words.[107]

If we are invested in black liberation, it may feel satisfying to condemn antiblackness as pathological and affirm black resistance as sane. However, such a move would reinforce the psychonormative binary that casts madness as patently bad and Reason as inherently good on opposite sides of a metaphysical wall; we would simply be swapping the occupants from one side to the other. I propose a more profound transformation: topple the wall and create liberated spaces where psychosocial variance and racial plurality (among infinite other modes of variance and plurality) can thrive in the care of radical compassion.

HOW TO GO MAD: CHAPTER BY CHAPTER

The chapters in this book span a broad range of genres and forms, from experimental fiction to hip-hop performance to stand-up comedy to poetry to memoir. Each chapter is also polyvalent, exploring madness in its phenomenal, medicalized, psychosocial, and furious forms. Furthermore, each chapter is transdisciplinary, traversing and taking up approaches including cultural studies, discourse analysis, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, black feminist theory, disability theory, performative writing, mad methodology, and beyond.

Following the present chapter's meditation on madness and modernity, chapter 2 is "'He Blew His Brains Out through the Trumpet': Buddy Bolden and the Impossible Sound of Madness." Set in New Orleans at the dawn of the twentieth century, amid the nadir of post-slavery US race relations and the rise of jazz music, chapter 2 illuminates the lifeworld and afterlifeworld of Charles "Buddy" Bolden. He was a turn-of-the-twentieth-century ragtime phenom sometimes credited as the "inventor" of jazz music; an alleged madman who spent a quarter-century in a Louisiana insane asylum; and a historical enigma and archival phantom who cannot be apprehended with positivism, but demands a mad methodology instead. I am interested in both Bolden's historical life, which leaves scant archival trace, and his mythical afterlife, which teems with activity. That mythical afterlife is an assemblage of artistic surrogations, fantasies, and recuperations—created by artists like Jelly Roll Morton, Ralph Ellison, Nina Simone, August Wilson, Michael Ondaatje, and Natasha Trethewey—inspired by Bolden and proliferating into his wake. Beyond inspiring this surge of art, Bolden also inaugurates an intriguing archetype in the pantheon of jazz: the mad jazzman. In the decades after Bolden's confinement, a number of jazz icons, including Sun Ra and Charles Mingus, would also allegedly go mad

and spend time in psychiatric confinement. The chapter closes by convening Bolden, Ra, and Mingus in a mad trio.[108]

From the specter of a mad jazzman, I turn to the "soul" of a mad blueswoman in an interlude called "'No Wiggles in the Dark of Her Soul': Black Madness, Metaphor, and 'Murder!'" This section begins with a provocation from Clay, the protagonist of Amiri Baraka's 1964 play *Dutchman*. In his climactic monologue, Clay declares, "If Bessie Smith had killed some white people she wouldn't have needed that music. . . . No metaphors. No grunts. No wiggles in the dark of her soul. Crazy niggers turning their backs on sanity. When all it needs is that simple act. Murder. Just murder! Would make us all sane."[109] Amid his incendiary speech, Clay diagnoses a racialized madness afflicting black Americans and argues that it must be sated by "metaphor" or "murder!" Launching from Clay's words, this interlude carefully considers interrelations between metaphor and murder to set the scene for two subsequent chapters: one concerning a mad black woman who commits murder and the other centering a mad black woman who makes art.

Chapter 3, "The Blood-Stained Bed," surrounds the life of Eva Canada, the protagonist of Gayl Jones's 1976 novel *Eva's Man*. Since her working-class girlhood in New York City in the 1940s and 1950s, Eva's life has been overrun by sexual predation and violence. At age thirty-eight, as though unleashing decades worth of rage and vengeance, Eva murders and mutilates a man who seeks to sexually objectify her. She is quickly apprehended, deemed criminally insane, and condemned to a psychiatric prison. Carefully, I read Eva's violence as a terrible catharsis aimed at (a man who becomes proxy for) a racist-sexist world. The chapter reveals how madness animates and structures Eva's first-person narrative, how symptomology becomes narratology in the book, how an act of "murder!" and a creation of "metaphor" converge in the story. Because Eva's deeds violently violate moral norms, she pushes the limits of radical compassion.

Chapter 4 is "A Portrait of the Artist as a Mad Black Woman." Therein I read Ntozake Shange's 1994 experimental novel, *Liliane: Resurrection of the Daughter*, as a meditation on black sublimation where black madness becomes black art. Born to black elites in suburban New Jersey circa World War II, Liliane Lincoln grows to become an avant-garde performance artist, painter, sculptor, sexual adventurer, cosmopolitan world-wanderer, feminist, and faithful patient of psychoanalysis. Her peculiar madness—the product of antiblack antagonisms, misogynist traumas, and bourgeois repressions, all revealed in stylized scenes of psychoanalysis—achieves release through metaphor and art. Liliane spins neurosis into artful language and constantly sublimates fury,

angst, and self-avowed "crazy" into beauty. But she is not always an exemplar of sublimation. When demeaned and imperiled by a white male lover, Liliane ponders the ethics and efficacy of killing. Alongside *Eva's Man*, *Liliane* prompts a careful meditation on artistic and violent vicissitudes of madness.

Shifting from literature to performance, but remaining in the field of black women's radical creativity, chapter 5 is "'The People Inside My Head, Too': Ms. Lauryn Hill Sings Truth to Power in the Key of Madness." At the heart of this chapter is hip-hop musician Lauryn Hill, who was twenty-three years old when her 1998 solo debut album, *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, became one of the most critically and commercially successful hip-hop releases in history. Within three years, however, Hill had supposedly fallen from favor in American pop culture and had allegedly gone mad. This chapter illuminates how various pundits and publics impute madness to Hill and how Hill herself produces, activates, and brandishes madness in service of poignant protest music. Toward these aims, I chart the specter of madness in several of her performances, especially her 2001 *MTV Unplugged No. 2.0* album; I examine interviews wherein she explains her "crazy" music and conduct; and I analyze media depictions of Hill as a black woman askew. This chapter also features hip-hop musician and producer Kanye West, who cites Hill as one of his greatest influences, makes black radical music (sometimes interspersed with right-wing provocations), and endures widespread accusations of madness.

Chapter 6 considers another iconic postsoul performer supposedly gone mad: the comedian Dave Chappelle. Titled "The Joker's Wild, but That Nigga's Crazy: Dave Chappelle Laughs until It Hurts," this sixth chapter begins with an incident in 2004 on the set of his hit series *Chappelle's Show*. When he performed a satirical blackface sketch, Chappelle heard what sounded like a sinister inflection in a crewmember's laughter. The moment was both *snap* and *click* for Chappelle, who suddenly realized that his comedy might inadvertently endorse antiblackness. He became disillusioned with fame, abandoned the third season of his show, reneged on a lucrative contract, absconded from America altogether, and headed to South Africa. Remarkably, tabloid media and public discussion insinuated that he *went* crazy and *went* to Africa—as though the two were parallel journeys—evoking racist tropes of Africa as epicenter of unReason and savagery. In this chapter, I examine the specter of madness within Chappelle's performance repertoire and public persona. In particular, I read his comical threats that he might lose his mind; his satires of the madness of white supremacy and black abjection; the tabloid allegations that he had gone mad; his journey across a mad diaspora; and his affinities with the iconoclastic comedian and self-avowed "crazy nigger," Richard Pryor.

Collectively, chapters 5 and 6 investigate what I call the *maddening of black genius*, a phrase denoting the antiblack derision of blackness as "crazy," the outrage of black artists antagonized by such antiblackness, and the unruliness of mind that sometimes ensues.

The seventh and final chapter, "Songs in Madtime: Black Music, Madness, and Metaphysical Syncopation," advances a theory of madtime. As I conceive it, madtime is a transgressive temporality that coincides with phenomenologies of madness. It includes the quick time of mania; the slow time of depression; the infinite, exigent now of schizophrenia; and the spiraling now-then-now-then-now of melancholia, among other polymorphous arrangements. As a critical supplement to *colored people's time*, *queer time*, and *crip time*, madtime flouts the normative schedules of Reason, trips the lockstep of Western teleology, disobeys the dominant beat, and swerves instead into a metaphysical offbeat. I contend that some black musicians are prime practitioners of madtime, adapting it as a time signature in protest music. In order to bear out and sound out this claim, I sample the music of Buddy Bolden, Nina Simone, Charles Mingus, Lauryn Hill, Kendrick Lamar, and Frank Ocean—featuring the lyrical language of Amiri Baraka, Toni Morrison, and Suzan-Lori Parks—to stage a medley in madtime. Throughout the chapter, I consider how black protest movements might critically, ethically, radically activate madtime in pursuit of liberation.

I close with a brief afterword, "The Nutty Professor (A Confession)," which ponders the specter of madness and the figure of the black scholar. In the process, I reveal my personal investments in mad black study.

Across these chapters, I recognize and foreground madpersons as subjects and protagonists. Indeed, many of the cultural producers centered in this study are "mad," whether they have been diagnosed with serious mental illness (Bolden, Mingus, and Simone), institutionalized (Bolden, Ra, Mingus, and very briefly Jones), labeled suicidal (Ra and Shange), subject to pop culture allegations of madness (Hill and Chappelle), or known to channel spectacular outrage (Simone, Baraka, and Hill). It bears noting that, alongside these *historical persons*, my project's protagonists include *fictional characters* and *psychological phantasms*. I know better than to crudely conflate these three categories of being—so I traverse them gingerly and meticulously. Yet the most careful approach cannot guarantee a neat account of madness. Indeed, madness erodes neat epistemological and ontological taxonomies, throwing into question—and sometimes into crisis—distinctions between history, fiction, and delusion. Madness induces uncertainty over what counts as real.

Consider Buddy Bolden, for example. In the artifacts I examine, he is a historical person, a fictionalized character, and sometimes an outburst of marvelous

sound that invades the senses like a voice in one's head. Then there are performers like Ra, Chappelle, Hill, and Lamar, who cultivate public personae blending biographical personhood with dramatized character. Another poignant blurring of the "real" and "unreal" occurs in Charles Mingus's memoir. He sometimes recounts historical events, sometimes crafts fabrications, and sometimes swerves into ostensibly psychotic-*cum*-fantastic reveries, often without clear indication or notice. The result is a narrative that is alternately—and sometimes simultaneously—historical, fictional, and delusional. In short, mad black study must crisscross metaphysical registers to follow the sometimes unruly flows of madness. I warned you: our passage, which began where a "fruitless expanse" joined "nowhere at all," may be dizzying.[110]

TOWARD HEALING

In "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," Spillers annotates an "American Grammar Book," a complex assemblage of symbols, discourses, archetypes, themes, and recursive dramas reflecting and reproducing America's racial and sexual regimes. Following Spillers, I want to envision some contents in what we might call an American Picture Book, a repertoire of images that lately abound in American public spheres. I have in mind scenes of state-sanctioned black wounding and death that saturate our information age: black people fleeing, charging, hands up, hands clenched, battered, throttled, shot, kneeling, flailing, staggering, convulsing, slumped over, prostrate on asphalt or grass, then photographed or video-recorded, then bandied about endlessly on social media timelines and network news broadcasts. While spectacles of antiblack violence are perennial tableaux in a centuries-old American Picture Book,[111] twenty-first-century proliferation of camera technologies and social media platforms enable unprecedented capture, circulation, and consumption of such images. Then there are the terrifying sounds, which might be said to constitute an American Score: shouted commands, invectives, pleas of *Don't shoot!*, gasps, gunshots, shrieks, bloody gurgling, cries out to God, weeping, the hissing and crackling of walkie-talkies, calls for backup, and stretches of stunned silence.

Exposure to such spectacular images and strident sounds of antiblackness—compounding first-person encounters with everyday antiblackness—is enough to drive a person mad. I mean mad on multiple registers. It is enough to incite crises of selfhood and meaning that I call *phenomenal madness*; it is enough to instigate the impassioned discontent that is *rage*; it is enough to inspire rejection of extant psychonorms and an embrace of *psychosocial alterity*; and it is also enough to induce symptoms that meet diagnostic criteria for *medicalized mad-*

ness. Regarding the latter, psychologist Monnica Williams suggests that watching and listening to loops of mediatized black death inflicts "vicarious trauma": empathic secondhand trauma born of witnessing others' pain, especially others with whom one holds affinity or shares identity. According to Williams, onslaughts of vicarious trauma, as amplified in cultures of spectacle, "can lead to depression . . . and, in some cases, psychosis."[112]

But mental illness is not only a potential *outcome* of witnessing such violence; mental illness is also a *risk factor* correlated with an increased likelihood of suffering such violence. In the United States, people with untreated serious mental illness are sixteen times more likely than other civilians to be killed in encounters with law enforcement.[113] Meanwhile, black people in the US are 2.5 to 3 times more likely than their white counterparts to be murdered by police.[114] I have found no statistical data on the particular vulnerability of people who are both mentally ill and black. Nevertheless, the names Eleanor Bumpurs, Anthony Hill, Danny Ray Thomas, Isaiah Lewis, and Deborah Danner—all mentally ill black people killed in outrageous confrontations with police—testify to the tragedy of mad black death at the hands of Reasonable law enforcement.[115]

In the face of antiblack violence and trauma, theater historian and critic Harry Elam advances a theory of "racial madness" and proposes a project of "healing." Elam explains that

> within modern America, racial madness has been inextricably connected to the abuses of racism and oppression as well as to the struggle for black liberation. My point here is not to pathologize blackness. Rather, by foregrounding this concept of racial madness, I want to recognize the relationship of, and work between, the clinical, the literary, and the philosophical, between the literal and figurative symptoms and significance of this dis-ease, always conscious of the cultural and the social orientation of this condition. Racial madness was and is not simply a mental condition, not simply a social one, but one that demands nevertheless a healing.[116]

How to Go Mad is animated by deep concern for black people, mad people, and other beleaguered beings. If this project brings attention to people who have been persecuted because of their blackness and/or/as madness; if it alerts rationalist readers to the grave repercussions of demeaning the mentally ill; if it teaches techniques for practicing ethical, radical, critical, and beautiful madness; if it instigates righteous rage in the interest of social transformation; if it broadens understanding of who and what comprises a black radical tradition; if it encourages black studies to more carefully address madness; if it prompts

mad studies to think more rigorously through blackness; if it urges black studies and mad studies to join forces;[117] if it testifies to the possibility of bearing fruit in a "fruitless expanse" and finding home "*nowhere* at all"; if it models radical compassion; if it urges us toward liberation; or if it simply contributes to someone's relief or healing, then, to my mind, this book succeeds.

For some, healing might mean banishing madness. For others, healing might mean harnessing madness and putting it to good use—a readiness to rally the voices inside one's head rather than silence them.[118] Now, toward the voice calling from the "deep black mouth" of jazz's "first man."[119]

NOTES

Chapter One: Mad Is a Place

Epigraphs: Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage, 1988), 11; emphasis mine; Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *Diacritics* 17, no. 2 (summer 1987): 72.

1 The phrase *freedom dreams* comes from Robin D. G. Kelley's theorization of black radical thought in *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002). My reference to "blood in my eyes" recalls the title of George Jackson's prison memoir, *Blood in My Eye* (New York: Random House, 1992).

2 Christina Sharpe theorizes the "wake" of the slave ship—and its various historical and existential effects—in her book, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

3 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 2.

4 Regarding the Afropessimistic perspective, see Frank B. Wilderson III, *Red, White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

5 Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 72; emphasis in original.

6 See Winifred B. Maher and Brendan Maher, "The Ship of Fools: Stultifera Navis or Ignis Fatuus?," *American Psychologist* 37, no. 7 (1982): 756–61.

7 Concerning these controversies over the number dead and the harm done in the Middle Passage, see Maria Diedrich and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds., *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Herbert S. Klein, Stanley L. Engerman, Robin Haines, and Ralph Shlomowitz, "Transoceanic Mortality: The Slave Trade in Comparative Perspective," *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001): 93–117; Patrick Manning and William S. Griffiths, "Divining the Unprovable: Simulating the Demography of African Slavery," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 19, no. 2 (1988): 177–201.

8 Hortense Spillers, Saidiya Hartman, Farah Jasmine Griffin, Shelly Eversley, and Jennifer L. Morgan, "'Whatcha Gonna Do?': Revisiting 'Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book,'" *Women's Studies Quarterly* 35, nos. 1–2 (2007): 308.

9 Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe," 72.

10 *Collins English Dictionary*, http://collinsdictionary.com/. My attention to the spatial registers of the word *derange* parallels Foucault's emphasis upon the etymology of the word *delirium.* He writes: "The simplest and most general definition we can give of classical madness is indeed *delirium*: 'This word is derived from lira, a furrow; so that deliro actually means to move out of the furrow, away from the proper path of reason.'" Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 99–100; citing *Dictionnaire universel de medicine*, vol. III, translated, 1746–48.

11 Marcus Rediker generates an extensive cultural and social history of the slave ship in *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Penguin, 2007).

12 According to Foucault's account, ships of fools peaked in prevalence during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (*Madness and Civilization*, 8). Meanwhile, slave ships began to proliferate after the 1452 issuance of the papal bull *Dum Diversas*, which sanctioned Catholic nations in perpetual enslavement of "pagan" peoples, and granted moral license to Portugal to take its place at the vanguard of the Atlantic slave trade. If Foucault's account of the ship of fools is historically accurate, the two sorts of vessels overlapped in time. A packed slave ship and a ship of fools would scarcely encounter each other in space, though, since laden slave ships primarily traversed the Atlantic Ocean, while ships of fools, if they physically existed, commuted primarily along Europe's internal rivers and canals.

13 Wordference.com, *reason* from *Random House Unabridged Dictionary* 2020.

14 See V. B. Schneider, "What Is It to Be Rational?" *Philosophy Now: A Magazine of Ideas* 1, no. 1 (summer 1991), https://philosophynow.org/issues/1/What_Is_It_To_Be_Rational; Achille Mbembe, *Necropolitics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019); and James Bohman and William Rehg, eds., *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

15 Regarding the exclusions of nonwhite people from Enlightenment ideals, see Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, ed., *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1997). Eze compiles key passages on race authored by David Hume, Thomas Jefferson, and Immanuel Kant, and other philosophers. Essays excerpted include David Hume, "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations" and "Of National Characters"; Immanuel Kant, "Geography" and "On National Characters"; and Thomas Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia."

Concerning the exclusion of women from Enlightenment ideals, see Susanne Lettow, "Feminism and the Enlightenment," in *Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, ed. Ann Gary, Serene Khader, Alison Stone (London: Routledge, 2017), 94–107. See also Carina Pape, "'Race,' 'Sex,' and 'Gender': Intersections, Naturalistic Fallacies, and the Age of Reason," in *Thinking about the Enlightenment: Modernity and its Ramifications,* ed. Martin L. Davies (London: Routledge, 2016).

Regarding the exclusion of poor people from Enlightenment ideals, see Fred Powell, "Civil Society History IV: Enlightenment," in *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society*, ed. Helmut Anheier and Stefan Toepler (New York: Springer, 2010).

16 Mbembe, *Necropolitics*, 67.

17 See Eze, *Race and the Enlightenment*.

18 I use the masculine possessive pronoun *his* because the patriarchal protocols of early modern Europe dictated that the paradigmatic early modern person was male. Regarding the function of such othering and ontological foiling in colonial and antebellum America, Toni Morrison proclaims that "black slavery enriched [America's] creative possibilities. For in that construction of blackness *and* enslavement could be found not only the not-free but also, with the dramatic polarity created by skin color, the projection of the not-me. The result was a playground for the imagination." *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 38. These formulations exist within a broader system of binaries—man|woman, light|dark, mind|body, and good|evil, among them—that structure Western modernity and arrange its epistemic orders.

19 In his own articulation of the centrality of black slavery to the invention of Western modernity, Paul Gilroy designates the slave ship as the "central organizing symbol." He announces that "getting on board [the slave ship] promises a means to reconceptualise the orthodox relationship between modernity and what passes for its prehistory. . . . [M]odernity might itself be thought to begin in the constitutive relationship with outsiders that both found and temper a self-conscious sense of western civilization." Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London: Verso, 1993), 17.

20 In "The Case of Blackness," *Criticism* 50, no. 22 (2008), Fred Moten describes a (black) "radicalism" that is "the performance of a general critique of the proper" (177).

21 Rinaldo Walcott, *Black Like Who? Writing Black Canada* (Toronto: Insomniac Press, 1997), xiv.

22 In *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2019), Saidiya Hartman honors and centers black girls and women who "have been credited with nothing: they remain surplus women of no significance, girls deemed unfit for history and destined to be minor figures" (xv).

23 My notion of black radical creativity is influenced by Angela Y. Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Pantheon, 1998); Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Robin D. G. Kelly, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon, 2002); and Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

24 Though the term *insanity* has been disavowed by the Anglophone medical establishment since the 1920s, its clinical connotation endures in its current legalistic and colloquial usage. See Janet A. Tighe, "'What's in a Name?': A Brief Foray into the History of Insanity in England and the United States," *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* 33, no. 2 (2005): 252–58.

25 See "Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders," *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Arlington, VA: American

Psychiatric Association, 2013), https://doi-org.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.dsm02.

26 Regarding the myriad frames through which schizophrenic symptoms have been interpreted, see John M. Ingham, *Psychological Anthropology Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); John Weir Perry, *Trials of the Visionary Mind: Spiritual Emergency and the Renewal Process* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998); Dick Russell, "How a West African Shaman Helped My Schizophrenic Son in a Way Western Medicine Couldn't," *Washington Post*, March 24, 2015; Tanya Marie Luhrmann and Jocelyn Marrow, eds., *Our Most Troubling Madness: Case Studies in Schizophrenia across Cultures* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); and Ann Cooke, ed., *Understanding Psychosis and Schizophrenia*, rev. ed. (Leicester, UK: British Psychological Society, 2017).

27 Concerning the pathologization of blackness, see, for example, Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985) (especially chapter 5); and Jonathan Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease* (Boston: Beacon, 2009). Concerning the pathologization of (rebellious) femininity, see Maria Ramas, "Freud's Dora, Dora's Hysteria: The Negation of a Woman's Rebellion," *Feminist Studies* 6, no. 3 (1980). Regarding the pathologization of transness, see Cecilia Dhejne, Roy van Vlerken, Gunter Heylens, and Jon Arcelus, "Mental Health and Gender Dysphoria: A Review of the Literature," *International Review of Psychiatry* 28, no. 1 (2016): 44–57. Concerning the pathologization of homosexuality, see Ronald Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987). Concerning the pathologization of poverty, see Helena Hansen, Philippe Bourgois, and Ernest Drucker, "Pathologizing Poverty: New Forms of Diagnosis, Disability, and Structural Stigma under Welfare Reform," *Social Science and Medicine* 103 (2014): 76–83.

28 For an especially eloquent discussion of how hegemonic judgments impact science and medicine in the United States, see Steven Epstein, *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). My declaration that "no science is pure" is inspired, in part, by Epstein's study and its title.

29 The words are lyrics from Solange, "Mad," *A Seat at the Table* (New York: Saint/Columbia, 2016).

30 Kelly Baker Josephs arrives at a similar conclusion. She observes, "While mad can define a person, situation, or event, it more often describes the person attempting to define said person, situation, or event. That is, the term says as much, if not more, about the subject employing it as about the object it attempts to label" in *Disturbers of the Peace: Representations of Madness in Anglophone Caribbean Literature* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 8.

31 Regarding "critical ambivalence," I have written elsewhere that "Sometimes it is useful, even crucial, to tarry in the openness of ambiguity; in the strategic vantage point available in the interstice (the better to look both ways and beyond); in

the capacious bothness of ambivalence; in the sheer potential in irresolution . . . Lingering in ambivalence, we can access multiple, even dissonant, vantages at once, before pivoting, if we finally choose to pivot, toward decisive motion. To be clear, I am not describing an impotent ambivalence that relinquishes or thwarts politics. Rather, I am proposing an instrumental ambivalence that harnesses the energetic motion and friction and tension of ambivalent feeling. Such energy might propel progressive and radical movement." La Marr Jurelle Bruce, "Shore, Unsure: Loitering as a Way of Life," *GLQ* 5, no. 2 (2019): 357.

32 Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984), 127.

33 In *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Saidiya Hartman unpacks the epistemic violence wrought by hegemonic *empathy*. She writes: "Properly speaking, empathy is a projection of oneself into another in order to better understand the other or 'the projection of one's own personality into an object, with the attribution to the object of one's own emotions.'" Hartman further writes that "by exploiting the vulnerability of the captive body as a vessel for the uses, thoughts, and feelings of others, the humanity extended to the slave inadvertently confirms the expectations and desires definitive of the relations of chattel slavery . . . empathy is double-edged, for in making the other's suffering one's own, this suffering is occluded by the other's obliteration." Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 18–19.

Empathy entails a projection of oneself *into* another's shoes, a feeling into their predicament, and an imaginative occupation, as it were, of their perspective. The *em-* in *empathy* is a prefix signifying "to put (something) into or on" (as per "en-, prefix1," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, https://www-oed-com/view/Entry/61499). I prefer *compassion*, containing the prefix *com-*, signifying that which is "together, together with, in combination or union" (as per "com-, prefix," *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, https://www-oed-com/view/Entry/36719?rskey=hS5I9y&result=2).

34 For further information on positivism as a philosophical tradition and orientation, see Seth B. Abrutyn, "Positivism," in *Oxford Bibliographies in Sociology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

35 Regarding these respective parapositivist formulations, see Hebrews 11:1–31 in the King James Bible; Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wang (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14; Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 13; Patricia J. Williams, "Gathering the Ghosts," *A-Line* (August 30, 2018), https://alinejournal.com/vol-1-no-3-4/gathering-the-ghosts.

36 I am grateful to the audience at the 2018 Harold Stirling Lecture at Vanderbilt University for encouraging me to center this *unknowability*. Special thanks to Robert Engelman for his important comments on this matter.

37 Édouard Glissant, *The Collected Poems of Édouard Glissant* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xxxii–xxxiii. Bracketed definitions in original.
38 Kelley, *Freedom Dreams*.
39 Moten, *In the Break*, 39.
40 Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850–1910* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).
41 D. Scott Miller, "Afrosurrealist Manifesto: Black Is the New Black—A 21st Century Manifesto," *D. Scott Miller: AfroSurreal Generation*, May 20, 2009, http://dscotmiller.blogspot.com/2009/05/afrosurreal.html.
42 Sarah Cervenak, *Wandering: Philosophical Performances of Racial and Sexual Freedom* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).
43 L. H. Stallings, *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015).
44 GerShun Avilez, *Radical Aesthetics and Modern Black Nationalism* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2016).
45 Emma Bell provides a pithy genealogy of the embrace of madness by Western artists and theorists. See Emma Bell, "Imagine Madness: Madness, Revolution, Ressentiment and Critical Theory," *Madness: Probing the Boundaries*, Interdisciplinary.Net 1st Global Conference, Mansfield College, Oxford, September 2008, unpublished.
46 Plato, "Phaedrus," in *Symposium and Phaedrus* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2012), 79.
47 William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d.), II.II.204–5, www.folgerdigitaltexts.org.
48 Edgar Allen Poe, "Eleonara," *Edgar Allan Poe: Complete Tales and Poems* (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 2002), 591.
49 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13–14.
50 Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, especially chapters 1–3.
51 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983). That this list of Western canon-dwellers from antiquity through postmodernity consists entirely of white men reflects the gendered and racialized exclusions that permeate Western canonicity.
52 Within disability studies, I am especially inspired by the critical race interventions of Christopher Bell; the queer "crip" provocations of Robert McRuer; the feminist-materialist correctives of Nirmala Erevelles; Alison Kafer's careful critique of the social construction of "health," and the harm it potentially perpetrates on people deemed unhealthy or pathological; and the recent black feminist intersectional innovations of Sami Schalk and Therí Pickens. Significantly, each of the aforementioned scholars recognizes and theorizes how disability is co-constitutive with other categories of difference.

See Christopher Bell, "Introducing White Disability Studies: A Modest Proposal," in *The Disability Studies Reader* (2nd ed.), ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York: Routledge, 2006); Robert McRuer, "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence," in *Disability Studies: Enabling the Humanities*, ed. Sharon L.

Snyder, Brenda Jo Brueggemann, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson (New York: Modern Language Association, 2002); Nirmala Erevelles and Andrea Minear, "Unspeakable Offenses: Untangling Race and Disability in Discourses of Intersectionality," *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 4, no. 2 (2010): 127–45; Margaret Price, "The Bodymind Problem and the Possibilities of Pain," *Hypatia* 30, no. 1 (2014): 268–84; Alison Kafer, "Health Rebels: A Crip Manifesto for Social Justice," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqcOUD1pBKw (2017); Sami Schalk, *Bodyminds Reimagined: (Dis)ability, Race, and Gender in Black Women's Speculative Fiction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); and Therí Alyce Pickens, *Black Madness :: Mad Blackness* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

53 Regarding the medical and social models of disability, see Justin Anthony Haegele and Samuel Hodge, "Disability Discourse: Overview and Critiques of the Medical and Social Models," *Quest* 68, no. 2 (2016): 193–206; Tom Shakespeare, "The Social Model of Disability," in *The Disability Studies Reader* (2nd ed.), ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York: Routledge, 2006), 214–21; Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Feminist Disability Studies," *Signs* 30, no. 2 (2005): 1557–87; and Arlene S. Kanter, *The Development of Disability Rights under International Law: From Charity to Human Rights* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

54 Brenda A. LeFrançois, Robert Menzies, and Geoffrey Reaume, "Introducing Mad Studies," in *Mad Matters: A Critical Reader in Canadian Mad Studies* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2013), 10.

55 LeFrançois, Menzies, and Reaume, "Introducing Mad Studies," 13.

56 LeFrançois, Menzies, and Reaume, "Introducing Mad Studies," 13.

57 Tanja Aho, Liat Ben-Moshe, and Leon J. Hilton, "Mad Futures: Affect/Theory/Violence," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (2017): 291–302.

58 According to the landmark MacArthur Violence Risk Assessment Study, mental illness alone does not correspond to a statistically significant increased likelihood of committing violent crimes. However, the mentally ill are significantly more likely to be victims of violent crimes. See John Monahan, Henry J. Steadman, Eric Silver, Paul S. Appelbaum, Pamela Clark Robbins, Edward P. Mulvey, Loren H. Roth, et al., *Rethinking Risk Assessment: The MacArthur Study of Mental Disorder and Violence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). See also MacArthur Research Network on Mental Health and the Law, "The MacArthur Violence Risk Assessment Study: September 2005 Update of the Executive Summary," MacArthur Research Network, http://www.macarthur.virginia.edu/risk.html.

59 Elizabeth Donaldson, "The Corpus of the Madwoman: Toward a Feminist Disability Studies Theory of Embodiment and Mental Illness," *NWSA Journal* 14, no. 3 (autumn 2002): 102.

60 Robert J. Barrett, "The 'Schizophrenic' and the Liminal Persona in Modern Society," *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 22, no. 4 (December 1998): 488.

61 The section head echoes the title and theme of Soyica Colbert's *Black Movements: Performance and Cultural Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press,

2017), with its emphasis upon the convergence of physical movement and social movement.

62 Sociologist Orlando Patterson suggests that the status of the slave is one of "social death," which entails three primary characteristics: violent subjection, natal alienation, and general dishonor. See Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 1–16.

63 For an extended account of suicide as a mode of agency among slaves, see Terri L. Snyder, *The Power to Die: Slavery and Suicide in British North America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

64 Concerning the campaign of confinement that swept Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—and in particular the treatment of purportedly violent madmen—Foucault writes that "those chained to the cell walls were no longer men whose minds had wandered, but beasts preyed upon by a natural frenzy. . . . This model of animality prevailed in the asylums and gave them their cagelike aspect, their look of the menagerie" (Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 72). Alas, Foucault does not connect the "animality" imputed to the insane and the animality concomitantly ascribed to Africans; he does not note any resemblance between "cagelike" asylum technology and cagelike slave ship and plantation technology. Foucault fails to critically engage the matter of blackness—especially noteworthy considering the importance of blackness as foil to whiteness in the drama of Western modernity and the worldwide colonial and racial upheavals concurrent with the composition of *History of Madness*. For a discussion of asylums in the mid-twentieth century (based on extensive ethnographic research), see Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York: Anchor Books, 1961).

65 Benjamin Reiss, *Theaters of Madness: Insane Asylums and Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 15. Regarding the "association of blackness and madness," Gilman explains that is "product of distortive fantasies of both the black and the mad. . . . Both are focuses for the projection of Western culture's anxieties" in *Difference and Pathology*, 148.

66 For a rich exegesis of diaspora as process, see Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

67 Samuel Cartwright, "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race," *DeBow's Review: Southern and Western States* 11 (1851): 331.

68 Frank Wilderson suggests that black people in modernity are subjected to relentless and categorical social death, which positions them structurally as slaves. Wilderson writes "Blackness and slaveness cannot be dis-imbricated, cannot be pulled apart." See Frank B. Wilderson III, "Blacks and the Master/Slave Relation," in *Afro-pessimism: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Racked and Dispatched, 2017), 15–30, https://rackedanddispatched.noblogs.org/files/2017/01/Afro-Pessimism2.pdf.

69 Cartwright, "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race," 332.

70 Cartwright, "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race," 333. John C. Calhoun, prominent proslavery senator, similarly asserted that freedom had a detrimental impact on the mental health of blacks. As Douglas C. Baynton explains, "John C. Calhoun, senator from South Carolina and one of the most influential spokesmen for the slave states, thought it a powerful argument in defense of slavery that the 'number of deaf and dumb, blind, idiots, and insane, of the negroes in the States that have changed the ancient relation between the races' was seven times higher than in the slave states." See Douglas C. Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," in *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York: Routledge, 2017), 20.

71 Regarding such pathologization of black freedom, Barbara Browning writes that "the terrifying contagion which the United States really feared in 1793 [amid the Haitian Revolution] was the contagion of black political empowerment." See Barbara Browning, *Infectious Rhythm: Metaphors of Contagion and the Spread of African Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 82. US slaveholders feared that black slaves might be inspired by Louverture to seek *black* revolution and *black* liberty—not to be confused with the decidedly *white* revolution and *white* liberty accomplished by the slave-holding, settler-colonial state in 1776.

72 Robert W. Wood, *Memorial of Edward Jarvis, M.D.* (Boston: American Statistical Association, 1885), 11.

73 Toni Morrison quoted in Paul Gilroy, "Living Memory: A Meeting with Toni Morrison," in *Small Acts* (Essex, UK: Serpent's Tail, 1993), 178. Morrison's insight about "deliberately going mad, as one of the characters says, 'in order not to lose your mind,'" helped inspire the title of the present book.

74 Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 192.

75 The name *schoolteacher* is written in lowercase in the novel. I have preserved that syntax in my own usage.

76 Margaret Garner's fate was different. She, her husband, and her surviving offspring were *confiscated*, as it were, and plunged back into Southern slavery. Avery Gordon offers a poignant meditation on the life of Margaret Garner in *Ghostly Matters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 137–92.

77 Nat Turner and Thomas Gray, *The Confessions of Nat Turner, the Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton* (Baltimore: T. R. Gray, 1831); electronic edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999), 254, https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/turner/turner.html.

78 Turner and Gray, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, 246.

79 Turner and Gray, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, 261–62.

80 Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, 14; emphasis in original.

81 For further insights on the figure of the "crazy nigger," see Nathan McCall, *Makes Me Wanna Holla: A Young Black Man in America* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 55–56; and Adam Gussow, "'Shoot Myself a Cop': Mamie Smith's 'Crazy Blues' as Social Text," *Callaloo* 25, no. 1 (2002): 8–44.

82 See Rayford Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir, 1877–1901* (New York: Dial Press, 1954).

83 W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 8.

84 This passage is excerpted from a letter originally published in American Surrealist magazine *View*, in 1941. See the full text of the letter in Suzanne Césaire, "The Domain of the Marvelous," in *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology*, ed. Penelope Rosemont (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998).

85 Along with Aimé Césaire, Léopold Senghor and Léon Damas are credited with cofounding the Négritude Movement. As described on the back cover of the Wesleyan Poetry Series edition of *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, "Césaire considered his style a 'beneficial madness' that could 'break into the forbidden' and reach the powerful and overlooked aspects of black culture." See Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, trans. Clayton Eshleman (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001), back cover.

86 Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, 18.

87 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 14.

88 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 2.

89 Hortense Spillers, "'All the Things You Could Be by Now, If Sigmund Freud's Wife Was Your Mother': Psychoanalysis and Race," *boundary 2*, 23, no. 3 (autumn 1996): 88.

90 Spillers, "Mama's Baby," 72.

91 Alongside the works of Fanon and Spillers, the following studies mobilize psychoanalysis to analyze the lives of various peoples of color: Claudia Tate, *Psychoanalysis and Black Novels: Desire and the Protocols of Race* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Anne Anlin Cheng, *The Melancholy of Race: Psychoanalysis, Assimilation, and Hidden Grief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); David Eng and Shinhee Han, *Racial Melancholia, Racial Dissociation: On the Social and Psychic Lives of Asian Americans* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); Margo Crawford, *Dilution Anxiety and the Black Phallus* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008); Badia Sahar Ahad, *Freud Upside Down: African American Literature and Psychoanalytic Culture* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2010); and Michelle Stephens, *Skin Acts: Race, Psychoanalysis, and the Black Male Performer* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

92 William Grier and Price Cobbs, *Black Rage* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

93 Regarding Malcolm X's legendary status as "the angriest black man in America," see TaNoah Morgan, "Malcolm X Gets Stamp of Approval; Leader Honored on King's Birthday by Government He Faulted," *Baltimore Sun*, January 16, 1999, and Frank James, "The Malcolm X Factor," *Chicago Tribune*, November 8, 1991.

94 Martin Luther King, "September 27, 1966: MLK—A Riot Is the Language of the Unheard," interview with Mike Wallace, *60 Minutes*, 1966, YouTube video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K0BWXjJv5s.

95 Both Szasz and Laing rebuked coercive forms of psychiatric treatment, pursuing radical therapeutic alternatives. Szasz suggested "autonomous psychotherapy," wherein the therapist would not medicalize or pathologize the patient, but rather

would unobtrusively converse with the patient and serve as "catalyst" for the patient's own self-discovery. See Thomas Szasz, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: The Theory and Method of Autonomous Psychotherapy* (New York: Basic Books, 1965). Meanwhile, Laing experimented with patient-therapist cohabitation in an immersive therapeutic community. See Cheryl McGeachan, "'The World Is Full of Big Bad Wolves': Investigating the Experimental Therapeutic Spaces of R. D. Laing and Aaron Esterson," *History of Psychiatry* 25, no. 3 (2014): 283–98.

96 See Alvin F. Poussaint, "Is Extreme Racism a Mental Illness?," *Western Journal of Medicine* 176, no. 1 (2002): 4; and Joy DeGruy, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Legacy of Enduring Injury and Healing* (Milwaukee, WI: Uptone Press, 2005).

97 Robert C. Schwartz and David M. Blankenship, "Racial Disparities in Psychotic Disorder Diagnosis: A Review of Empirical Literature," *World Journal of Psychiatry* 4, no. 4 (2014): 135.

98 Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis*, ix. Concerning the psychopathologization of Africanity and blackness, see, for example, Cartwright, "Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race"; Grier and Cobbs, *Black Rage*; Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis*.

99 Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis*, ix.

100 Regarding these stereotypes of Sapphires and Jezebels, see Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990).

101 See Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*; Grier and Cobbs, *Black Rage*; Alvin F. Poussaint, "Is Extreme Racism a Mental Illness?" *Western Journal of Medicine* 176, vol. 1, no. 4 (2002); and Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis*.

102 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 14.

103 Toni Morrison and Charlie Rose, "Novelist Toni Morrison Looks Back on Her Youth and Family and Presents Her Newest Book, 'Jazz,'" *The Charlie Rose Show*, PBS, May 7, 1993, https://charlierose.com/episodes/18778.

104 Poussaint, "Is Extreme Racism a Mental Illness?," 4.

105 Regarding Trump's alleged madness, see, for example, Bandy X. Lee, ed., *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump: 27 Psychiatrists and Mental Health Experts Assess a President* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2017); and Keith Olbermann, *Trump Is F*cking Crazy* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2017).

106 I'Nasah Crockett, "'Raving Amazons': Antiblackness and Misogynoir in Social Media," *Model View Culture*, June 30, 2014, https://modelviewculture.com/pieces/raving-amazons-antiblackness-and-misogynoir-in-social-media.

107 Realizing the derogatory power in allegations of madness and pathologizing rhetoric, Trump argues that his opposition suffers from "Trump Derangement Syndrome"—as though suspicion of presidential malfeasance must be delusion, as though acts of protest are bouts of hysteria, as though speaking truth to his power is rant and rave. See Anne Flaherty, "Trump's Diagnosis for Critics: 'Trump Derangement Syndrome,'" *Associated Press News*, July 18, 2018, https://apnews.com/48225d1360864dcb861b12e5cda12a32.

108 I am grateful to Wendell Holbrook for his invocation of a mad jazz ensemble in his response to my own keynote, "Looking for Lauryn: Madness, Genius, and the Black Prophetess," at the "Ruminations on Blackness" conference at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, in 2011.

109 Amiri Baraka, *Dutchman and the Slave* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1971), 35.

110 It bears mentioning that there are extraordinary depictions and practices of madness in black expressive culture that I do not address at length in this book. I could write another dozen chapters on Huey Newton's call for radical personal and collective upheaval under the sign of "revolutionary suicide"; on Beauford Delaney's exquisite portraits produced as he lived with schizophrenia and was eventually destitute in a French insane asylum in 1979; on Kara Walker's paper silhouettes of perverse plantation scenes that resemble Rorschach inkblots and reveal the racial madness that is America's inheritance; or the final flourish of George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* (1986), when the character Topsy chants "THERE'S MADNESS IN ME, AND THAT MADNESS SETS ME FREE," before beckoning the full cast of characters and announcing, "My power is in my . . ." to which they respond, "*Madness!*"; or Victor LaValle's *The Ecstatic* (2002), whose darkly comedic narrator is "a girthy goon suffering bouts of dementia"; or Gloria Naylor's *1996* (2007), a semifictionalized memoir espousing conspiracy theories about government-led mind control and read, by many, as an account of paranoid madness. I encourage the reader to seek out these mad artists and materials.

111 See Elizabeth Alexander, *The Black Interior* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2004), 79.

112 Monnica Williams, qtd. in Kenya Downs, "When Black Death Goes Viral, It Can Trigger PTSD-like Trauma," PBS *News Hour*, PBS.org, July 22, 2016, www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/black-pain-gone-viral-racism-graphic-videos-can-create-ptsd-like-trauma. See also Jacob Bor, Atheendar S. Venkataramani, David R. Williams, and Alexander C. Tsai, "Police Killings and Their Spillover Effects on the Mental Health of Black Americans: A Population-based, Quasi-Experimental Study," *Lancet* 392 (10), no. 144 (July 2018). Regarding racial trauma, see Kristin N. Williams-Washington and Chmaika P. Mills, "African American Historical Trauma: Creating an Inclusive Measure," *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 46, no. 4 (2018): 246–63. See also E. Ann Kaplan, *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), especially chapter 4, "Vicarious Trauma and 'Empty' Empathy: Media Images of Rwanda and the Iraq War."

113 Doris A. Fuller et al. report that mentally ill people are sixteen times more likely to be killed in encounters with law enforcement. See Doris A. Fuller, H. Richard Lamb, Michael Biasotti, and John Snook, "Overlooked in the Undercounted: The Role of Mental Illness in Fatal Law Enforcement Encounters" (Arlington, VA: Treatment Advocacy Center, 2015), TACReports.org/overlooked-undercounted.

114 Surveying civilian mortality in encounters with police officers 2010–14, James W. Buehler determined that black males 10+ years old were 2.8 times as likely as their

white counterparts to die in lethal encounters with police. See Buehler, "Racial/Ethnic Disparities in the Use of Lethal Force by US Police, 2010–2014," *American Journal of Public Health* 107, no. 2 (February 2017). According to the Mapping Police Violence Project, in 2019, black people were three times as likely as their white counterparts to be killed by police; https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/.

115 Concerning Eleanor Bumpurs, see Michael Wilson, "When Mental Illness Meets Police Firepower; Shift in Training for Officers Reflects Lessons of Encounters Gone Awry," *The New York Times*, December 28, 2003; Nirmala Erevelles and Andrea Minear, "Unspeakable Offenses: Untangling Race and Disability in Discourses of Intersectionality," *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 4, no. 2 (2010): 127–45. Regarding Anthony Hill, see Richard Fausset, "Police Killing of Unarmed Georgia Man Leaves Another Town in Disbelief," *New York Times*, March 11, 2015; Christian Boone, "Who Was Anthony Hill? Figure in DeKalb Police Shooting Case Suffered from Mental Illness," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 22, 2016. With respect to Danny Ray Thomas, see Shaun King, "Danny Ray Thomas Was a Broken Man Who Needed Help. Instead He Was Gunned Down by a Cop in Broad Daylight," *The Intercept*, March 30, 2018; Alex Horton, "A Deputy in Houston Shot and Killed an Unarmed Black Man—Days after Stephon Clark's Death," *Washington Post*, March 24, 2018. Concerning Isaiah Lewis, see Tasneem Nashrulla, "An Unarmed Teen Was Running Around Naked in an Oklahoma Neighborhood. Then Police Shot and Killed Him," *Buzzfeednews.com*, May 2, 2019. Regarding Deborah Danner, see Kenrya Rankin, "NYPD Officer Kills Deborah Danner, Mentally Ill Black Woman," *Colorlines.com*, October 19, 2016, and Joseph Goldstein and James C. McKinley Jr., "Police Sergeant Acquitted in Killing of Mentally Ill Woman" *New York Times*, February 15, 2018.

116 Harry Elam, *The Past as Present in the Drama of August Wilson* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 60.

117 I share this commitment with Pickens, whose *Black Madness :: Mad Blackness* is devoted to placing these fields in critical conversation.

118 Lauryn Hill and Joan Morgan, "They Call Me Ms. Hill," *Essence*, December 2009, https://www.essence.com/news/they-call-me-ms-hill/.

119 This "first man" designation appears in the title of Donald Marquis's biography of Bolden, *In Search of Buddy Bolden: First Man of Jazz* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005).

Chapter Two: "He Blew His Brains Out through the Trumpet"

Epigraph: Natasha Trethewey, "Calling His Children Home," *Callaloo* 19, no. 2 (1996): 351.

1 Cultural studies scholar Krin Gabbard credits Bolden with inventing jazz among other pathbreaking accomplishments in trumpet-playing and black masculine performance. Gabbard writes, "Buddy Bolden did more than invent jazz. He took hold of the royal, ceremonial, and military aspects of the trumpet and remade