EMILY J. LORDI

THE MEANING OF SOUL

BLACK MUSIC AND RESILIENCE SINCE THE 1960s

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BUY

REFIGURING AMERICAN MUSIC

A series edited by Ronald Radano, Josh Kun, and Nina Sun Eidsheim

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EMILY J. LORDI

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To Anthony, Stokely, and Nelson—my loves

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INTRODUCTION KEEPING ON

Our bright revolutionary generation. And its fantastic desires. Its beauty. Its strength. Its struggle. Its accomplishment. Its legacy. What will that be?! AMIRI BARAKA, 1996

The song opens with a demonstration of soul swagger—propulsive bass guitar and drums followed by piano, horns, strings, and the voice of Gladys Knight:

I've really got to use my imagination
To think of good reasons to keep on keepin' on
Got to make the best of a bad situation
Ever since that day I woke up and found that
You were gone.[1]

Gone, gone! go the Pips as if keening, albeit efficiently. There's no time to keep from keeping on and moving up: Knight soon hauls the lyrics up an octave amid ascending strings. Still, her words start to betray new depths of sorrow:

Darkness all around me, blocking out the sun . . .
Emptiness has found me, and it just won't let me go
I go right on living
But why I just don't know.

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Luckily, the Pips are on hand, and they do more than just repeat Knight's words in their stylish falsettos; here, at the song's lyrical nadir, they sing their first and only original response: "You're too strong not to keep on keepin' on!" "Yes I am!" Knight fires back, as if the truth was never in question but she just wanted to hear it. Still, the Pips repeat their reassurance to boost her into the next verse. The song builds relentlessly though multiple counterpoints and intensified dynamics, insisting on affirmation against the undertow of despair.

Released in 1973, "I've Got to Use My Imagination" both describes and enacts the kind of resilience for which Knight and the Pips were, by then, rightly famous. The group enjoyed their greatest success in the early 1970s, at which point it was about a decade overdue. They had formed at a birthday party in Atlanta in 1952, when Knight and her brother Merald (a.k.a. Bubba), eight and ten, joined forces with their sister Brenda and cousins Eleanor and William Guest (the girls were later replaced by Edward Patten). The ensemble cut its teeth singing in church; then played for segregated audiences throughout the South ("white in the day, black at night"); then moved to New York, where for a time Merald packed boxes in the Garment District to pay the bills, and even the best gigs were grueling: six shows a day from 11:00 a.m. to midnight at the Apollo Theater in Harlem.[2] The group could have been forgiven for thinking they had made it when, in 1966, they signed with Berry Gordy's Motown Records and released the smash hit "I Heard It through the Grapevine" (1967). But even Motown underrated them, prioritizing stars like the Supremes and Marvin Gaye.[3] So it was not until Knight and the Pips left Motown for white-owned Buddah Records, where they were given control over song production, that they enjoyed sustained commercial and critical success. Their best-known hit, "Midnight Train to Georgia," topped both white and black charts in 1973, and by the time "Imagination" was released three months later, the group was, in *Ebony* critic Phyl Garland's estimation, "possibly the best soul group of the day performing at its peak."[4]

The group's trajectory registered the historical changes of a people in transition: from the segregated Jim Crow South to the exploitative urban North, from the ambivalent gains of the civil rights movement to the ongoing struggle of Black Power. "Imagination" runs on the mixture of energy and world-weariness one might expect of a group that had broken into formerly white-only venues (in Reno, Miami, Las Vegas), but still needed to tour eleven months of the year.[5] Nonetheless, it's the energy that wins out, as Knight's labored yet surefire vocals attest. It's "such a sad, sad season

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when a good love dies," she sings, but seasons like this one have produced the knowledge Knight is turning to by the end of the couplet: "Not a day goes by when I don't realize . . . I've really got to use my imagination." Pains both past and present have produced a determined resilience—tight, stylized, and, thanks to the Pips, collective. Despite the song's interracial production (hit makers Barry Goldberg and Gerry Goffin wrote it, and white musicians played the instrumental track), its sound and sentiment are coded as black, due to a mix of racial signifiers: Knight's textured, church-raised voice; the gospel drive and intensification;[6] the blues-like lyric that seeks solace not in God but in oneself; the Motown polish; and the economical string arrangement typical of upwardly mobile soul—lush enough to appreciate, but not to luxuriate in. Here, struggle yields black resilience. This is the logic of soul.

That logic shaped a cultural sensibility that was bigger than soul music but that was especially audible in the music due to the commentary that shaped its social life. Early-1970s accounts of Gladys Knight and the Pips in both the black and white press constantly stressed the group's unbroken two-decade run, and, by extension, the payoff of collective struggle. That narrative of unbroken striving, if somewhat overstated (neglecting as it did some personnel changes and Knight's brief departure from the group to raise her children), was central to the group's story about itself and, in particular, to its political self-fashioning. As Merald told a *Washington Post* reporter in 1972, the group often discussed the importance of "giving young black kids and some of the older ones, too, an opportunity to see a black organization stay together throughout its life span. . . . If we don't make a penny," he added, "I want to go down with the same people."[7] This was the group's answer to the splintering of black communities, which had as its industry counterpart the breakup of house bands like Motown's Funk Brothers and the peeling off of solo artists from the groups in which they had started out: Sam Cooke from the Soul Stirrers, Curtis Mayfield from the Impressions, Eddie Kendricks and David Ruffin from the Temptations, Diana Ross from the Supremes. Gladys Knight could have easily followed suit. She was a child prodigy who had debuted at Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Atlanta at age four, studied classical voice and won the nationally televised *Ted Mack's Amateur Hour* by age eight, and started touring with the Pips by age nine. "People have been trying to steal me for years," she told *Ebony* in 1973, "But we are all *one*—a unit."[8]

That commitment to unity does not result in anything like the conformity or masculinism so often associated with soul; on the contrary, in mu-

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sical terms, the group dynamic enables Knight's standout performance. I mean this not just in the obvious sense that the Pips back her up, but more precisely in that their timbral smoothness and melodic faithfulness create a taut canvas against which Knight's vocal colorings and innovations can pop. Those innovations are crucial to filling in the portrait of resilience to which the lyrics only allude. Whether as a matter of privacy or pride, Goffin's lyrics reveal next to nothing about the doomed love affair; it's just a "bad situation" about which there's nothing more to learn or say: "our misunderstanding is too well understood." Neither do we hear much about Knight's recovery—what her "good reasons to keep on keepin' on" might be. We suppose the song itself becomes one of them, thanks in part to the camaraderie of the Pips. But Knight's other reasons will be supplied by an imagination that is her surest source of security and, in a way, her biggest secret.

That imagination is manifest, however, in her technique. Knight is a powerhouse minimalist with a meticulous sense of the small variations one might play on a lyric or melody. (These choices, again, are thrown into relief by the Pips' right-on-the-money approach.) At first, Knight's variations are slight microtonal shifts through which she lifts the words at the end of each line ("my imaginatio-on," "keep on keepin' o-on," "you were go-one"). The next verse features more changes, with Knight jumping up the octave and switching the word *misunderstanding* to the cleverer, more syncopated "missed understanding." Characteristically sparing with her ad-libs, in the last verse Knight implements several other small but potent changes, changing the phrase "keepin' on" to the more propulsive "pushin' on" and briefly poring over the fact that her lover is "gone gone gone gone." Knight's minimalist, gradualist approach to performance is just as important as the song's composition and arrangement. In the context of "Imagination," her vocal embroidery enacts the many *ways*, if not the *reasons*, that she will keep on keeping on. Her attention to detail and craft exemplify the song's otherwise elusive imaginative will.

Knight and the Pips seldom figure in scholarly discussions of soul music, which tend to privilege charismatic men such as James Brown and unimpeachable movement anthems like Sam Cooke's "A Change Is Gonna Come" and Nina Simone's "Young, Gifted and Black." Fundamentally resistant to paradigms that treat soul music as a mere vehicle for civil rights messaging, the group embodied a wonderfully unruly set of signifiers by the 1970s: righteous problackness; unhip respectability and uplift politics;[9] a queer sounding of gender (high male voices backing a deeper female lead); straight hair for Gladys, naturals for the Pips, cool bellbottoms

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for everyone; a traditional focus on hard work. They didn't sing anthems. Yet the group, in its very complexity, embodies the story of soul that I tell in this book—where the stylization of survival is conditioned by pain, often led by women, and driven by imagination, innovation, and craft. Again, this is not only a story about soul music; it is also about the logic of soul that the music enacts. This logic opposes that of liberal subjecthood and neoliberal individualism by articulating a resilience that is collective, that is about staying with the band. And, despite the way that soul has been remembered, the "band" as I describe it featured a range of women's, femme, and queer voices.

I argue that, whereas the term *soul* had evoked a deep spiritual-racial consciousness at least since W. E. B. Du Bois's theorization of *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), in the 1960s, soul came to signify the special resilience black people had earned by surviving the historical and daily trials of white supremacy.[10] At a moment when it was becoming possible to describe oneself as "spiritual but not religious"[11]—a moment when, according to Amiri Baraka, religious concepts such as faith and conversion "expanded past religion" to "permeate the entire culture"[12]—soul discourse reimagined the Judeo-Christian ideal that suffering might be worth something. But what it earned you was not a heavenly afterlife in which the last might be first, but worldly gifts such as emotional depth and communal belonging. To have soul was to have developed a kind of virtuosic survivorship specific to black people as a group. And soul musicians, through a series of practices drawn from the black church, modeled virtuosic black resilience on a national stage. Soul was not, then, an inherited essence black people held in common. Nor was it simply a genre of music. It was a logic constituted through a network of strategic performances—musical, literary, journalistic—meant to promote black thriving, if not liberation.[13]

This understanding of soul weaves together the many valences Gayle Wald describes when she writes, "That one can *have* soul, *be* soulful, and play *soul music* demonstrates soul's compass over varied terrains of style, politics, ideology, subjectivity, and spirituality."[14] I use an archive of literature, theory, and journalism to illuminate live and recorded performances from the late 1960s and early 1970s, showing how artists and intellectuals of Baraka's "bright revolutionary generation" articulated soul logic and how the music called soul enacted that logic right down to its performative details—the showstopping ad-libs and ethereal falsettos, but also the missed cues, signs of exhaustion, admissions of strain. In short, I draw together soul's conceptual and aesthetic registers to show how an overarch-

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ing theory of soul might bridge the nuances and contradictions yielded by close readings of soul music as well as the idiosyncrasies of individual artists. In so doing, I advance a holistic and complex view of the subject that contests most histories of black popular music (that see soul music as simply transmitting political content); mass-marketed representations of soul music (which sideline black women and mystify musical craft); and theories of "post-soul" black art, which reduce soul itself to an essentializing, heteropatriarchal monolith that later, more enlightened "post-soul" artists must overcome. I will have more to say about the circumstances that give rise to post-soul theory. But I will note here that post-soul's field-shaping assumption that art created during the 1960s reflects a repressive program of compulsory unity explains why scholars, despite having provided rich accounts of blues, jazz, hip-hop, and post-soul aesthetics, have not yet theorized the aesthetics of soul. Despite the crucial work of Portia Maultsby and other scholars who have codified the musicological components of soul music, scholarship on black expressive culture tends to assume that soul as a concept does not have an aesthetics, but only a *politics*—one coded as a short-lived radical energy, at best, and an outmoded essentialism, at worst.[15] In my view, however, soul's logic of overcoming encompasses a diverse and experimental set of aesthetics, which themselves express a range of ways of being black together in a perilous age. This new understanding of soul, finally, recovers past aspirations for a better future than the one in which we ended up.

. . . .

The term *soul* rose to national consciousness at a moment of crisis, which is also to say, at a time of community building and breaking. Maultsby explains that the term became a household word among black people during "the inner-city uprisings (labeled 'riots' by the media) of 1964 (Harlem), 1965 (Watts), and 1967 (Detroit and Newark)," when black business owners, hoping to prevent black residents from looting and destroying their establishments, put signs in their windows reading "soul brother."[16] So soul was fundamentally linked to black solidarity, to the kind of togetherness forged under siege. In an era when poor black people were so desperate for national visibility that they set their own cities on fire, the language and logic of soul served as flares of a different kind—signs of encouragement, belonging, and critique sent up to fortify the group. The term *soul* helped to organize black people's process of self-redefinition in the 1960s,

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a process that was most clearly reflected in the lexical shift from *Negro* to *black*. Soul was also, at that time, used as a general modifier to describe and advertise things created by and for black people: soul food, the television show *Soul Train*. And of course, soul denoted a genre of music rooted in the gospel tradition.

The most determined efforts to unite soul's diverse musical and sociohistorical meanings were made during the soul era itself, when black critics hastened to claim the newly codified, and incredibly lucrative, genre of soul music as the province of black people whose historical suffering it both registered and worked to overcome. Still, these early efforts reflected a disjuncture between historical and musical understandings of soul that has persistently marked its theorization. In the introduction to her landmark book *The Sound of Soul* (1969), Phyl Garland drew a straight line from the field hollers of the enslaved to the agitated energy of contemporary soul singers; the rest of her book collected interview-based profiles of blues and soul artists that Garland had originally published in *Ebony*.[17] The book's structure itself therefore raised the question of how the individual artists Garland profiled might represent the racial-historical charge of soul music. A. X. Nicholas, in his 1971 book *The Poetry of Soul*, followed Garland's lead (which was itself shaped by that of LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka, in *Blues People*) by framing soul music as a sonic reflection of black people's past and present in which all prior forms of vernacular music (work songs, field hollers, jazz) combined to express "the Black man's condition (in fascist Amerika)—his frustrations, his anger, his pride."[18] But Nicholas repeated Garland's bifurcated form: a historical introduction followed, in his case, by a collection of song lyrics reprinted as poetic verse, which Nicholas used to illustrate, though not exactly to support, his claim that soul music was "*the poetry of the Black Revolution*."[19]

That segregation of abstract and concrete, ideal and particular meanings of soul continues to shape recent scholarship. Most discussions of soul now emphasize either musical or ontological meanings. Paul Gilroy and Fred Moten venture performance-based ontologies of the concept, which Gilroy describes as an energy that "resists the reach of economic rationality and the commodifying process" and which Moten describes as a "will to proceed."[20] Scholars such as Mark Burford (writing about Sam Cooke) and Daphne Brooks (writing about Nina Simone) combine Garland's interest in biography and Nicholas's interest in composition with attention to the sound of soul music itself.[21] Yet their exemplary discussions of musicians' techniques do not yield theories of soul per se. Maultsby, William

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Van Deburg, Mark Anthony Neal, and Brian Ward have all offered rich, in-depth discussions of soul as ideology, commodity, and musical practice, but without advancing a theory of soul that would bind these dimensions together.[22] The same is true, finally, of Monique Guillory and Richard C. Green's anthology *Soul: Black Power, Politics, and Pleasure* (1998), which represents both the most extensive and the least conclusive theorization of the concept to date. In an effort to respect what they call "the chameleon-like nature of soul," the editors seek only "to grasp soul in some of its many guises and articulations."[23] That approach, while suited to both the genre of the anthology and the 1990s focus on the vagaries of subject formation, is too expansive to constitute a useful theory of soul—one that would reveal the visions of black struggle and survival the concept helped to create.

Writers and scholars have struggled to bridge the different valences of soul because they have mistaken it for a discrete thing instead of a habit of thinking, a logic. But the most consistent feature of soul discourse is the recuperative logic I have described, whereby suffering is made to pay off. Hence, linguist Geneva Smitherman, in her dictionary of black vernacular terms, defines *soul* as "the essence of life; feeling, passion, emotional depth—all of which are believed to be derived from struggle, suffering, and having participated in the Black Experience. Having risen above the suffering, the person gains *soul*."[24] Zadie Smith likewise later notes, more simply, soul is "an alchemy of pain."[25] People who had soul believed in—had to believe in—the value of pain, and they showed how it could be alchemized into artistic expressions of deep feeling. Both the belief and its creative expression secured one's place in a community of other black people who understood that suffering had meaning and who lived that understanding through a life-affirming style. What the discourse of soul gave people, then, was an assurance that even their most chilling experiences of grief did not isolate them but rather connected them—with their contemporaries, to be sure, but also with a procession of ancestors whose personal griefs were unknowable but whose historical traumas were rendered increasingly present through national discourse about slavery. "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world," James Baldwin told an interviewer in 1963; but it turned out "the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who ever had been alive."[26] Whereas Baldwin credited Dostoevsky and Dickens with inspiring that epiphany for him, soul discourse would, by the end of the 1960s, racialize that habit

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of thought, training black people to recuperate their past and present struggles into a narrative of belonging to and with other black people.

Sufficiently essentialist to keep white Americans from appropriating it and capacious enough to allow many black Americans to tailor it to their own lives, soul discourse developed alongside, yet independently of, the turn from civil rights–era models of peaceful protest and interracial alliance toward the more defiant praxis of black self-reliance signified by Black Power. Amid conservative retrenchment and spectacular antiblack violence (Nikki Giovanni recalled of the 1960s that, in light of the assassinations of Medgar Evers, John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and Bobby Kennedy, "You woke up every day being surprised that *you* were alive"[27]), soul helped to mark black cultural production as the desired yet inappropriable result of oppression while organizing a community's redefinition around the concept of stylized survivorship. At a moment when, as Imani Perry notes, the integration black people had worked so hard for seemed destined to fail, with black Northerners consigned to ghettos and black Southerners beaten and killed for claiming their civil rights, black people began, in Perry's words, "to reach even more deeply into their cultural repertoire to find what had kept the enslaved and their spirits alive."[28] In place of the peaceful energy needed to survive violent attacks—what King had termed "soul force"—arose a more generalized ethos of readiness and resilience in the form of soul itself: a belief that black people, having already overcome, were spiritually fortified for the necessity of doing so again.[29]

Underpinning this cultural logic was a theory of reading history similar to what Fredric Jameson advances through his engagement with Paul Ricoeur. In *Valences of the Dialectic* (2009), Jameson outlines an ideal mode of reading that could hold together "multiple dimensions of time": individual and national temporalities; past, present, and future.[30] When soul theorists such as Garland and Nicholas described soul music as synthesizing musical genres from all of black American history, they were advancing a similar hermeneutic. Soul fans should, these critics suggested, relate their personal trials to those described in the music, but they should also hear the music itself as the latest chapter in a "single great collective story" (to cite Jameson) in which they each played a role.[31] It was not unusual for writers, especially in the black press, to describe soul music in such all-encompassing terms. "Gladys, reaching back into time, pulled out the roots of black pain, black hope and black joy and described them

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with a revival-meetin' voice," wrote B. J. Mason of a concert in 1973; meanwhile, "the Pips, rocking to a motherland beat, sidestepped busted black dreams in a *danse de joie* like it was somehow the last gig in the world."[32] Such descriptions suggest that the language of "depth" that often attended discussions of soul was not merely an individual emotional depth but a *historical* depth—the sort that Langston Hughes had ascribed to the generic "Negro" who had witnessed all of human history and emerged to declare, "My soul has grown deep like the rivers"; and the kind that Black Aesthetic theorists of the 1960s (many of them indebted to Hughes) had in mind when they invoked "the racial memory."[33] Julian Mayfield defined that concept with particular clarity: as "the unshakable knowledge of who we are, where we have been, and, springing up from this, where we are going." "Where have we been?" Mayfield asked: "Up a hell of a long, hard road."[34] The language of soul encouraged black people to understand their own "long, hard road[s]" as part of a grand historical narrative of a people who had survived and arrived (as the title of Franklin's 1968 album *Aretha Arrives* declared she had)—and were ready to do so again. For Jameson, the practice of reading multiple vectors of history offers a glimpse of future possibility; the soul hermeneutic fostered a similarly open-ended readiness for whatever might come to pass—be it death, revolution, or more of the same.[35] This was its greatest gift to a people in transition.

To show how soul circulated in this way, I develop a vision of the concept that is capacious enough to encompass the term's racial-political meanings and sensitive enough to draw out the details of the music, as well as the less academically prestigious but equally crucial details of artists' biographies, and fans' habits of identification therewith. Soul's recuperative logic helps explain how, for instance, James Brown, the self-designated "Soul Brother No. 1," made the concept of being "the hardest-working man in show business" not a source of frustration or shame but a badge of honor. Soul logic illuminates Nina Simone's decision to cover a song from the rock musical *Hair* in which she declares she has nothing but "life," while mobilizing several musical idioms in a virtuosic display of life's musical richness and therefore enacting a flamboyant survivorship that, in light of murders and assaults on black people, could sound like a taunt or a victory. Through rigorous revival-style vocal and physical performances, singers like Brown, Simone, and Franklin performed a cultural logic by which racialized labor yielded ascendant style. In this sense, they embraced the charge that generations of black parents had given their children—to do everything twice as well as their white counterparts in order to get over as far—and turned

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it into an affirmative conceit. (*Yes, we have had to work harder; but one effect of having done so is that now we are better than you.*)

Although song lyrics were an obvious way to express such affirmation—"Everybody is a star!" Sly and the Family Stone sang out, on the brink of the '70s—I focus more on the musical techniques or practices through which artists enacted soul ethos. These practices include transformative cover versions of popular songs; vocal ad-libs and falsetto singing; and false endings that trick listeners into thinking a performance is over. While these practices did not all begin with, and are certainly not exclusive to, soul music, they did enact with particular clarity the logic of overcoming that was politicized and racialized in the soul era. By privileging the performative and biographical detail—an aesthetic category that, as Alexandra Vazquez notes, following Naomi Schor, has been gendered as feminine—I mean to destabilize and materialize the idealized category of soul, which has been figured as impenetrably masculine.[36] But whereas Vazquez privileges the detail, which she sees as "refus[ing] analytical capture," in order to puncture the myth of Cuban music's knowability (as anthropological object, colonialist fantasy, global commodity), I use the detail differently: to puncture the idea that soul *cannot* be known.[37] I resist the concept of soul's inscrutability ("If you have to ask [what it is], you'll never know," according to the popular dictum) by using the detail to concretize soul, to draw it closer, make it personal.

I also deploy a rather shamelessly presentist method of listening—by which I mean, one grounded in a moment-to-moment description of what is happening in the music. This mode of close listening, in addition to helping make soul a more knowable quantity, reflects the presentism of my artists, who often throw themselves into the moment of performance as if there might not be another—as if the time to say what needs saying is always, to cite the Pips again, about to be "gone, gone!"[38]

These efforts to detail and clarify soul, to draw us into its present, are important because the notion of soul's inscrutability, which was strategically advanced in the late 1960s for reasons I will explain in the following chapter, has since become a fetishized justification for simplifying the craft and politics of soul-era artists. Several biopics, documentaries, tribute albums, and histories of soul stars and major labels that have been released in the last two decades bear this out. The 2004 biopic *Ray* frames Ray Charles's music as the mystical expression of childhood trauma; James McBride unironically begins his book-length search for James Brown in a South Carolina field at midnight, "a land of a thousand ghosts";

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the 2013 documentary *Muscle Shoals* features U2 front-man Bono crediting the sound of the music recorded at Fame Studios to the proximity of the Tennessee River: "It's like the songs come out of the mud."[39] These works exemplify the at times unbelievably obfuscating, atmospheric image of soul that drummer Uriel Jones critiques in *Standing in the Shadows of Motown* (2002): "People would always credit everything but the musicians," he notes. "They would say it was the [solo artists], the producers, the way the building was structured, the wood in the floor, even the food."[40]

Another problem with contemporary soul biopics is they tend to isolate soul stars from the communities that made them possible. These communities were often religious. Although the logic of soul develops, as I will explain in the following chapter, from cultural discourse about the blues, the *music* called soul might owe more to gospel. And it is those gospel roots—which, in addition to being gendered and classed, have not been subject to white revival or capture in a manner akin to the blues—that account for soul's relative illegibility, compared with the blues and jazz, in many scholarly circles.[41] To recognize gospel as a key force in soul music—not simply as a point of origin but as a "living tradition," which scholar Fredara Hadley calls "the greatest black conservatory"—is, moreover, to highlight the women and queer people who dominate black gospel spaces and are therefore crucial to the sound and meaning of soul.[42] The brilliance and work of these people is constantly obscured by texts of the twenty-first-century soul boom.

These texts betray one further, related problem: a subconscious cultural association of soul with a vague, essential masculine charisma. In an effort to dismantle that paradigm, I prioritize the creative innovations of women soul artists; I explore the gendered implications of men's and women's work; and I analyze the workings of patriarchal power in the music. This feminist approach calls attention, for instance, to *Simone's* role in catalyzing the political turn in soul music so often credited to men like Curtis Mayfield and Marvin Gaye; it means examining the gendered meanings of men's and women's falsetto singing; and it means highlighting the power dynamics between Isaac Hayes and his backup singers, as well as between Sly and Rose Stone.[43] What this book does not do is provide a comprehensive history of soul music that includes everyone's—or all of my own—favorite artists. Instead, it models a method of listening to and apprehending soul through especially salient examples of soul ethos and techniques. While I focus on solo artists, I try to maintain soul's communitarian ethos

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by describing the networks out of which soul stars emerge—networks, again, that are often religious and therefore gendered, sexualized, and classed. In the end, the most basic point I hope to make, in the midst of the soul boom in American culture, is that the *way* we represent soul, how we tell these stories, matters. It is not enough to celebrate soul icons if that celebration just remarginalizes women, remystifies soul artistry, and reduces soul's complex meanings to a single, easily digestible message.

While my ambition to shift the terms of soul's representation is broad, my specifically academic intervention is to challenge theories of post-soul art that create their own mystical versions of soul by framing soul as post-soul's vague yet racially essentialist, masculinist, heterosexist other. The term *post-soul* is used most neutrally as a historical marker; it helps scholars designate the cultural productions of black Americans born after 1963. However, scholars inspired by Trey Ellis's and Greg Tate's laudatory accounts of black aesthetic diversity in the late 1980s and abetted by Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s influential dismissal of Black Arts–era writing often frame post-soul as the liberated alternative to soul itself.[44] Their accounts conjure soul as a distant yet tyrannical mirage, a shroud covering all black people in the interest of coercive unification. Even Bertram Ashe, the most dedicated theorist of post-soul aesthetics, explains that his conception of soul simply "refers to a centuries-old, historical black tradition that post-soul artists somehow both extend and critique."[45] To the question of what soul actually is or who might represent its "set of traditional black expectations," Ashe cites but one thinker, Larry Neal, whose 1968 manifesto "The Black Arts Movement" exemplifies, in his view, the "prescriptive" attitude toward black art that post-soul artists such as Ellis and Tate refute.[46]

Now that several scholars have reduced soul to a mere shorthand for hegemonic forms of collective black politics that seem undesirable, we must again ask what soul actually is. To conflate it with the worst impulses of the Black Arts and Black Power movements—for instance, with the masculinism, misogyny, and binary vision of race that are indeed extant in Neal's Black Arts manifesto (though not in all Neal's work)—is insufficient.[47] Not only does that view reduce soul's complexity, but the uncritical embrace of post-soul also overemphasizes integration as a positive turning point in the history of African American aesthetics and, most misguidedly, reframes a set of movements explicitly tied to black liberation as the primary obstacle to black expressive freedom, thereby critiquing not the repressive state but the movements designed to defeat it.

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The problem was not, of course, black radicalism but antiblack praxis; not black revolution but the world that made it seem necessary. If post-soul theory, at its best, critiques intraracial oppression in the interest of democratizing black critical discourse, at its worst, it conflates community with conformity and advances an individualistic, even consumerist, understanding of liberated blackness as the freedom to buy and identify with many different things—"both Jim and Toni Morrison," as Ellis famously put it.[48] I hope this book's mode of close reading and listening will show that soul-era work was just as beautiful, flawed, and complex as the artistic and political movements that followed it—and, more to the point, that soul-era artists were, at their best, co-conspirators in a vision of community that privileged not self-sacrifice but self-expression, not conformity but shared struggle and pleasure.

As a mode of thought and a way of being available to any and all black people who elected to practice it, soul was at once exclusively and nonessentially black. If by 1968 Aretha Franklin could offer a reporter what had to be the briefest definition of the era—"Soul is black"[49]—that did not mean that either soul or blackness was *rigidly* defined. Rather, what Margo Crawford writes of the Black Arts movement is true of the soul era as well: this was a moment when "black consciousness-raising and black experimentation [were] inseparable."[50] Few artists were as versatile as "High Priestess of Soul" Nina Simone, who mastered numerous musical idioms, or Donny Hathaway, who did the same. Few writers were clearer about the construction of racial and sexual identities than James Baldwin, or more committed to difference within unity than Audre Lorde. I see these artists as exemplary creators of, not exceptions to, soul aesthetics and ethics. But they will always be written out of accounts of soul so long as that formation is conflated with patriarchal versions of cultural nationalism. To disarticulate the two is to perceive soul's many nuances, as well as its continued resonance beyond the Black Power era. Each of my latter four chapters ends by examining contemporary echoes of a soul strategy—for instance, in the work of Prince and Solange Knowles—while showing how those strategies change in response to the Black Lives Matter movement and the neoliberal co-optation of narratives of resilience.

What I delineate in this book as the soul era proper—the period of the late 1960s through the early 1970s—describes a complex sociopolitical moment in which revolution vies with reform before the latter emerges as the dominant mode. As Lyndon Johnson's Great Society gives way to

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Richard Nixon's enterprise zones, as the energies of Black Power are themselves neutralized by a focus on electoral politics, the cultural focus shifts from an emphasis on collective thriving toward a valorization of the enterprising individual on his/her hustle. That shift, while it does not spell the end of soul logic, does result in a perverse redefining of resilience, which now primarily connotes individual economic fitness, the ability to rebound from the blows of an inhumanely profit-driven global economy.

Overall, *The Meaning of Soul* recovers the promise and texture of the previous era by advancing a new understanding of soul: as a capacious narrative of black overcoming that illuminates an eclectic set of musical aesthetics and signals unexpected futures. This book therefore offers both a richer version of soul than one finds in most popular representations of the music and an extended critique of those scholarly paradigms that celebrate post–civil rights black cultural production in opposition to a reductive image of late 1960s black cultural politics. Against the deeply influential historiographical framework that pits Black Arts–era calls for black unity against post–Black Arts investments in intraracial diversity, I show how soul itself combined both: it was a general theory of black group vitality whose discrete manifestations were as flexible and mutable as the details of life and performance.

This revisionary reading relies on several sources: accounts of soul music and artists published in the black press in the soul era proper; writings about black music and politics by such figures as Baraka, Giovanni, and Baldwin; and, of course, recordings and performances, which, to my way of listening, contain their own arguments about and insights into soul and so serve to modify other commentaries. I am also deeply enabled and inspired by cultural studies of soul music published in the 1990s and 2000s by such scholars as Neal and Ward, and by two more recent bodies of scholarship: work in popular music studies on the regional and emotional nuances of soul music (Charles Hughes's *Country Soul* [2015], Mitchell Morris's *The Persistence of Sentiment* [2013]) and work in African American studies on the aesthetic and political complexities of Black Arts and Black Power (Gayle Wald's *It's Been Beautiful* [2015], GerShun Avilez's *Radical Aesthetics and Modern Black Nationalism* [2016], Tanisha Ford's *Liberated Threads* [2015], Ashley Farmer's *Remaking Black Power* [2017], Margo Crawford's *Black Post-Blackness* [2017]). I depart from these outstanding studies by disarticulating soul from the Black Power movement, which allows me to access the complexities of soul's musical, gender, and

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sexual politics; provide a stronger account of its female leadership; and offer a longer if gestural sense of its resonances beyond the 1970s.

My first chapter presents a genealogy of soul—as cultural logic, marketing category, musical genre—and, in so doing, sets the stage for my analyses of music in the following chapters. By situating the development of both soul and post-soul theory in relation to the blues, Black Power, and the Black Aesthetic, I crystallize soul's unique place and power within late twentieth-century American culture, and explain how and why post-soul theory has negated soul's complexity.

My second chapter reveals how Nina Simone, Aretha Franklin, Donny Hathaway, and Minnie Riperton (in her work with the band Rotary Connection) enact soul's logic of overcoming by covering white and black artists' songs. Several of their cover recordings reflect not only competitive attempts to unseat the original versions but the more intimate, intraracial forms of struggle and transformation that are also the focus of chapter 3. There I show how Sly and Rose Stone, Simone, Hathaway, Franklin, Prince, and Rosie Gaines use vocal ad-libs to revise and enforce conventional social scripts. Chapter 4 extends these meditations on experimental vocal performance by showing how Ann Peebles, Al Green, Isaac Hayes, Riperton, and Solange Knowles use falsetto singing to generate an expansive interiority that tests the boundaries of black creative expression and permissible social behavior. The boundaries my artists test in chapter 5 are more temporal; there I examine the practice of the "false ending," where an artist brings a song to a close and then strikes it back up. Tracing this strategy through live and recorded performances by Mahalia Jackson, James Brown, Otis Redding, Franklin, and Marvin Gaye, as well as through a music video by contemporary artist Flying Lotus, I show how these artists enact as well as complicate soul's message of black group resilience.

My conclusion treats the narrative of soul's death as its own kind of false ending. There I analyze twenty-first-century redeployments of soul to theorize a mode of black cultural production I call Afropresentism. Using the presentist method of listening I have described to reopen the present as a question, I show how Beyoncé, Erykah Badu, and Janelle Monáe revive classic soul artists' dreams of an alternate future that would have been superior to our present. My analysis challenges the progressive model of history advanced by Afrofuturism (as well as by post-soul), whereby the present improves on the past and becomes solid ground from which to launch imagined futures. Afropresentists, in contrast, excavate the dreams

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beneath our feet. They critique the ongoing *need* for black resilience, while trying to ensure that the soul generation's "fantastic desires" will keep on keeping on.

How and why those dreams get tamped down and need reviving is a subject for the next chapter, but here I will say that the historical shift from revolution to reform I have described, which is also a narrowing of imagined horizons of future possibility, explains why soul has been misremembered. The systemic failure to theorize soul is the product of a postrevolutionary conservative backlash—what Toni Cade Bambara, writing in 1980, called "the impulse to pronounce the Movement dead."[51] That backlash is the reason why Gates's derisive take on the Black Arts movement became the canonical version of that movement and why African American literary studies has embraced Ralph Ellison—that is, a conveniently conservative vision of Ellison as a democracy- and diversity-loving liberal—but not the more radical "militant" Baraka.[52]

In short, soul's misremembering is linked to a broader misremembering of the civil rights and Black Power movements. If one clear sign of that misremembering, in the academic context, is a self-aggrandizing version of post-soul as soul's more enlightened successor, then its sign in the realm of black politics is the representation of the Movement for Black Lives/Black Lives Matter. That movement is often framed, both from within and without, as the corrective to previous struggles for justice: more inclusive and nonhierarchical in its practice of leadership, more intersectional in its analysis of power. That view of Black Lives Matter—as an updated version of Black Power but with better politics—does not only betray a blinkered vision of the past; it also neglects a crucial body of scholarship being created right now, as historians such as Ford and Farmer highlight the feminist and queer nuances of the Black Power movement itself.[53] I hope to contribute to that project of historical revision by showing soul to have been much more inclusive than its current framing suggests. In fact, it is a consequence of our postrevolutionary moment that soul's diversity has been suppressed. So the close reading of soul I advance here is also a closer reading of American history.

If, as I have said, soul's gift to its own generation was a sense of resilience and readiness, its gift to us, as contemporary readers and listeners,

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is a richer sense of the past and the future. I do not claim that soul songs provided perfect models of togetherness, but I do think that the logic of soul, as a force of group encouragement, offers a crucial alternative to our current state of personal and political atomization. By seeing soul's complex beauty as a site of alternative futures, I refute suggestions from all quarters that what we have now—post-soul, the neoliberal hustle, the carceral state, electoral politics—is the best we could possibly get. Soul-era visionaries worked for and imagined more.

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NOTES

Introduction: Keeping On

Epigraph: Amiri Baraka, “Toni” (eulogy for Toni Cade Bambara, 1996), in *Eulogies* (New York: Agincourt Press, 2002), 232.

1 Gladys Knight and the Pips, “I’ve Got to Use My Imagination,” comp. Gerry Goffin and Barry Goldberg, prod. Kenny Kerner, *Imagination*, Buddah, 1973.
2 Edward Patten, qtd. in James Johnson, “Gladys Knight and the Pips: A Day with Miss Knight,” *New Musical Express*, June 2, 1973.
3 The group later sued Motown for “miscalculation of royalties and illegal management” (“Gladys Knight, Pips Sue Motown for $1.8 Million,” *Philadelphia Tribune*, March 8, 1975).
4 Phyl Garland, review of *All I Need Is Time* by Gladys Knight and the Pips, *Ebony*, December 1973, 28.
5 See Ian Dove, “Gladys Knight Finding New Listeners for Soul,” *New York Times*, November 9, 1973.
6 Mellonee Burnim shows how gospel songs themselves mimic the structure of traditional church services by moving “from the simple to the complex”; musically, this means “gradually adding layers of hand-claps, instrumental accompaniment, and/or solo voices” (“The Black Gospel Music Tradition: A Complex of Ideology, Aesthetic, and Behavior,” in *More Than Dancing: Essays on Afro-American Music and Musicians*, ed. Irene V. Jackson [Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1985], 163).
7 Merald Knight, qtd. in Richard E. Prince, “Gladys Knight and the Pips,” *Washington Post*, March 10, 1972. The group’s longevity was especially unique, Prince wrote, “in an industry where the pressure of egos, finances and fickle public tastes make most groups last only long enough to take the money and run.”

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8 Gladys Knight, qtd. in B. J. Mason, "Gladys Knight and the Pips: It's a Family Affair," *Ebony*, June 1973, 178.

9 See, for instance, Knight's stated desire in Mason's *Ebony* profile to "be the example a young black woman can follow without destroying herself" or "going astray" (Mason, "Gladys Knight," 178), as well as the several images of the Pips as "family men" enjoying time with their wives and children (178, 179).

10 To argue for the prevalence and utility of this understanding of soul is not to deny other meanings. Other definitions include the spiritual life force expressed through black people's truthful "description of the world" (Amiri Baraka, "The Phenomenon of Soul in African-American Music," in *The Music: Reflections on Jazz and Blues*, ed. Amiri Baraka and Amina Baraka [New York: William Morrow, 1987], 273); "the cultural manifestations of the feelings, thoughts, and emotions of a black person's inner being, a spirit that had survived the Middle Passage, slavery, and Jim Crow, as well as apartheid" (Tanisha Ford, *Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015], 6); and the insistence on being oneself (see Al Jackson Jr.'s remarks in Phyl Garland, *The Sound of Soul* [Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1969], 164).

11 I take Josef Sorett's point that, in the history of religious-aesthetic theory he traces, "church and spirit almost require each other" (*Spirit in the Dark: A Religious History of Racial Aesthetics* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2016], 8). The very claim to be "spiritual but not religious" manifests this interdependence, suggesting as it does the need to define spirituality in relation to more orthodox or organized ways of accessing the spirit.

12 Baraka, "Phenomenon of Soul," 270.

13 My sense of soul as a logic or cultural logic is informed by Wahneema Lubiano's work on black nationalism as a similarly pervasive, even unnamed, force in black life—see "Black Nationalism and Black Common Sense: Policing Ourselves and Others," in *The House That Race Built*, ed. Wahneema Lubiano (New York: Vintage, 1998), 232–52.

14 Gayle Wald, "Soul's Revival: White Soul, Nostalgia, and the Culturally Constructed Past," in *Soul: Black Power, Politics, and Pleasure*, ed. Monique Guillory and Richard C. Green (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 147.

15 See Portia Maultsby, "Soul," in *African American Music: An Introduction*, ed. Mellonee V. Burnim and Portia K. Maultsby (New York: Routledge, 2014), 277–98.

16 Maultsby, "Soul," 278.

17 Garland, *Sound of Soul*.

18 A. X. Nicholas, ed., *The Poetry of Soul* (New York: Bantam, 1971), xxii, xiii.

19 Nicholas, *Poetry of Soul*, xiii (italics in original).

20 Paul Gilroy, "Question of a 'Soulful Style'" (interview with Richard C. Green and Monique Guillory), in Guillory and Green, *Soul*, 251; Fred Moten, review of *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century*

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America by Saidiya V. Hartman and *Soul: Black Power, Politics, and Pleasure*, ed. Monique Guillory and Richard C. Green, *TDR: The Drama Review* 43, no. 4 (1999): 174.

21 Mark Burford, "Sam Cooke as Pop Album Artist—A Reinvention in Three Songs," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65, no. 1 (2012): 113–78; Daphne A. Brooks, "Nina Simone's Triple Play," *Callaloo* 34, no. 1 (2011): 176–97.

22 Maultsby, "Soul," 277–98; William L. Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965–1975* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 192–247; Mark Anthony Neal, *What the Music Said: Black Popular Music and Black Public Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

23 Monique Guillory and Richard C. Green, "By Way of an Introduction," in Guillory and Green, *Soul*, 3.

24 Geneva Smitherman, "Soul," in *Black Talk: Words and Phrases from the Hood to the Amen Corner*, rev. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 266.

25 Zadie Smith, "*Their Eyes Were Watching God*: What Does *Soulful* Mean?," in *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 13.

26 James Baldwin, qtd. in Jane Howard, "Doom and Glory of Knowing Who You Are" (profile of James Baldwin), *Life*, May 24, 1963, 89.

27 Nikki Giovanni, conversation with the author, February 19, 2018.

28 Imani Perry, *May We Forever Stand: A History of the Black National Anthem* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 167, 166.

29 Martin Luther King Jr., "The American Dream" (1965), in *A Knock at Midnight*, ed. Clayborne Carson and Peter Holloran (New York: Warner, 2000), 97.

30 Fredric Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 2009), 532.

31 Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 19, qtd. in Kevin Honan, "The Political Conscious: 'A Further Round of Reflection' on Fredric Jameson's *Valences of the Dialectic*," *Field Day Review* 7 (2011): 98.

32 Mason, "Gladys Knight," 173.

33 Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (1921), in *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. Arnold Rampersad (New York: Vintage, 1994), 23. See Amiri Baraka, "The Changing Same (R&B and New Black Music)," in *Black Music* (New York: Quill, 1967), 183; Larry Neal, "Some Reflections on the Black Aesthetic," in *The Black Aesthetic*, ed. Addison Gayle (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 12–13; Julian Mayfield, "You Touch My Black Aesthetic and I'll Touch Yours," in Gayle, *Black Aesthetic*, 26; Ron Welburn, "The Black Aesthetic Imperative," in Gayle, *Black Aesthetic*, 131, 133.

34 Mayfield, "You Touch My Black Aesthetic," 26.

35 Jameson, *Valences of the Dialectic*, 532.

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36 Alexandra T. Vazquez, *Listening in Detail: Performances of Cuban Music* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 27. For Vazquez, who engages Naomi Schor's 1987 work *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*, the purpose of highlighting the feminization of this aesthetic category is to critique its "fetishistic deployment" by scholars who use analysis of the detail to display masculine prowess over Cuban music (Vazquez, *Listening in Detail*, 28). Vazquez hijacks the detail for the opposite purpose: to dispute the presumption that the music can be known.

37 Vazquez, *Listening in Detail*, 21.

38 I am grateful to Sarah Chihaya for this formulation.

39 *Ray*, dir. Taylor Hackford (Universal City, CA: Universal, 2004); James McBride, *Kill 'Em and Leave: Searching for James Brown and the American Soul* (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2016), 31; *Muscle Shoals*, dir. Greg Camalier (New York: Magnolia Pictures, 2013).

40 *Standing in the Shadows of Motown*, dir. Paul Justman, prod. Paul Justman, Sandford Passman, and Allan Slutsky, written by Walter Dallas, Ntozake Shange, and Allan Slutsky (Van Nuys, CA: Artisan, 2002).

41 Thanks to Sean McCann for this concept.

42 Fredara Hadley, remarks at "Aretha's Amazing Grace: From Watts to Detroit" symposium, University of California, Los Angeles, March 25, 2019.

43 This feminist approach to soul should help remedy the problem that Daphne Brooks identifies when invoking a "black feminist soul genealogy that . . . remains under-theorized" in "Bring the Pain: Post-Soul Memory, Neo-Soul Affect, and Lauryn Hill in the Black Public Sphere" (in *Taking It to the Bridge: Music as Performance*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Richard Pettengill [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013], 190).

44 Trey Ellis, "The New Black Aesthetic," *Callaloo*, no. 38 (1989): 233–43; Greg Tate, "Cult-Nats Meet Freaky-Deke: The Return of the Black Aesthetic," *Village Voice Literary Supplement* (December 1986), 5–8, repr. in Greg Tate, *Flyboy in the Buttermilk: Essays on Contemporary America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 198–209; Henry Louis Gates Jr., *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the "Racial" Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

45 Bertram D. Ashe, "Theorizing the Post-Soul Aesthetic: An Introduction," *African American Review* 41, no. 4 (2007): 617.

46 Ashe, "Theorizing the Post-Soul Aesthetic," 617, 611.

47 Larry Neal, "The Black Arts Movement" (1968), in Gayle, *Black Aesthetic*, 257–74.

48 Ellis, "New Black Aesthetic," 234. The worst-case scenario I invoke is embodied by Touré's 2011 manifesto *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?*, in which Touré follows Thelma Golden's foundational definition of "post-black" art in rejecting "the idea that there is a correct or legitimate way of doing Blackness" but shifts the definition of post-blackness away from Golden's conception of collective artistic freedom and toward privatized consumer agency. See Touré,

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Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness? What It Means to Be Black Now (New York: Free Press, 2011), 11. Richard Purcell develops a rigorous critique of Touré's work in "Trayvon, Postblackness, and the Postrace Dilemma," *boundary 2* 40, no. 3 (2013): 139–61.

49 Aretha Franklin, qtd. in Guillory and Green, "By Way of an Introduction," 1.

50 Margo Natalie Crawford, *Black Post-Blackness: The Black Arts Movement and Twenty-First-Century Aesthetics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 2.

51 Toni Cade Bambara, "What It Is I Think I Am Doing Anyhow," in *The Writer on Her Work*, ed. Janet Sternburg (1980; New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), 160.

52 Gates, *Figures in Black*. I elaborate this point in chapter 1.

53 Ford, *Liberated Threads*; Ashley Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

Chapter 1: From Soul to Post-soul

1 Lerone Bennett, "The Soul of Soul," *Ebony*, December 1961, 112.

2 Amiri Baraka, "The Phenomenon of Soul in African-American Music," in *The Music: Reflections on Jazz and Blues*, ed. Amiri Baraka and Amina Baraka (New York: William Morrow, 1987), 271, 272.

3 Bennett, "Soul of Soul," 114.

4 David Brackett, *Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 294.

5 See "James Brown Just 'Sings His Heart Out,'" *Chicago Defender*, September 4, 1965, in *The James Brown Reader: 50 Years of Writing about the Godfather of Soul*, ed. Nelson George and Alan Leeds (New York: Plume, 2008), 13. The lexical shift from blues and R&B to soul is staggered. As early as 1964, Berry Gordy tells the British press (with the soon-to-be-unnecessary disclaimer that it might "sound corny") that he "refers to the sound he is always striving for as 'soul'" (qtd. in Dave Godin and Norman Jopling, "A Great Visit to Hitsville U.S.A.," *Record Mirror*, September 4, 1964). On the other hand, as late as 1973, a writer for *Jet* describes Marvin Gaye's music not as soul but as "urban blues" (William Earl Berry, "Marvin Gaye: Inner City Musical Poet," *Jet*, February 1, 1973, 59).

6 Brackett, *Categorizing Sound*, 271.

7 Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 201. Ward notes that there was nothing new about soul's synthesis of sacred and secular idioms, which had informed African American musical practice across the twentieth century. What changed in the soul era was black listeners' widespread *embrace* of this mixture, theretofore a perennial subject of critique (191).

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