Black Beauty and Digital Spaces: The New Visibility Politics

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Less than a year after the creation of the viral hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, an equally catchy and politically charged slogan surfaced: #BlackGirlMagic. This latest hashtag insists on making black women's bodies both visible and legible in contexts of beauty, desirability, and dignity. However, more needs to be said about how digital spaces have reified the raced and gendered meanings of black women's bodies, in which representative and performative sites of beauty and defiance contribute to the shaping of black political subjects. At times, this becomes a space for subversion and protest, at other times a way of narrowing definitions and essentialist understandings of 'black womanhood' and 'black girlhood.' A black beauty project must grapple with a more complex examination of the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and disability that can reframe black embodiment beyond commercialized spectacles and toward more diverse representations of liberated bodies.

Less than a year after three black women, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi, created the viral hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, another black woman, CaShawn Thompson, contributed an equally catchy and politically charged slogan: #BlackGirlMagic. First coined as 'Black Girls are Magic' and then promoted as a tee-shirt logo designed by Thompson, the hashtag was eventually trademarked by Beverly Bond of Black Girls Rock, Inc., and is now a shorthand description for any black woman stylishly posing for Instagram selfies or fabulously dominating her profession if she happens to be a public figure in entertainment, sports, politics, activism, or the academy. By the time teenaged actor Amandla Stenberg sported a 'Black Girls are Magic' tee-shirt and posted her selfie on Instagram, she blurred the lines between

everyday black girlhood and celebrity culture to foster a message steeped in the visibility politics of beauty and protest.

This articulation of black beauty as a 'magical' intervention into white supremacist and imperialist narratives extends earlier black liberation and postcolonial projects that have long challenged 'rational,' enlightenment ideologies. As Trinh T. Minh-ha would argue, 'black magic women' exist on the outskirts of colonialist powers, confounding dominant narratives by preserving the power of oppositional speech acts (Trinh 1989, 129). An ancient property wielded by ancient women, this 'magic' takes on new life in the neoliberal spaces of digital culture that perpetually threaten to steal from, appropriate, and disavow the economic labor and cultural value of black women and girls. Such power dynamics are especially perpetuated in the circulated images on the Internet of dead and dying black bodies at the hands of police and civilians – the fodder that fuels the call for black lives to matter – and in the sexual domination of feminized bodies, from pornography to rhetorical threats of rape. Against this backdrop of racialized and sexualized violence, the insistence of 'magical' intervention to reframe the beauty and value of black womanhood maintains its rhetorical and visual power.

The synergies between #BlackGirlMagic and #BlackLivesMatter – the former based in aesthetic appreciation and the latter based in the urgency of protesting anti-black violence – coalesced in the digital circulation of photojournalist Jonathan Bachman's photograph of 28-year-old Ieshia Evans (Fig. 1), who is shown in a standoff with riot police in Baton Rouge, Louisiana during protests in the summer of 2016 against the police murder of yet another unarmed black man, Alton Sterling. The popularity of the image, often compared to the iconic 'tank man' of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in China, recycled themes of the individual versus the state, dignified femininity versus toxic masculinity, and black vulnerability and strength versus white supremacist oppression. Adding to these motifs is the celebrated spectacle of the appealingly young slender black body draped in a fashionable light summer dress. The positioning of Evans's dignified 'respectable' presence as a racial and gender 'threat' that is potentially subdued by the heavily armed and armored police standing opposite her illuminated for viewers of the photograph both the terrifying and absurd power of state violence, as well as the justification for the rallying calls that black lives matter and black women, like Evans, are indeed 'magical.'

Figure 1 – Reuters photography. Photograph by Jonathan Bachman (2016).

As powerful and inspiring as these images tend to be, more needs to be said about how digital spaces – made accessible in our present-day electronic revolution – have reified the raced and gendered meanings of black women's bodies, in which representative and performative sites of beauty and defiance contribute to the shaping of black political subjects. At times, this becomes a space for subversion and protest, at other times a way of narrowing definitions and essentialist understandings of 'black womanhood' and 'black girlhood.' Indeed, the present utilities of digital media have eclipsed the earliest discourse about race and gender on the Internet, which were once viewed as having no tangible presence in the digital revolution.   Examining black-women-centered projects online – featuring both ordinary and celebrity black women – I argue that black beauty has become both an essential and essentialist tool to validate the black body, which has wide scale repercussions on our inclusive politics that represent the collective body politic. A black beauty project must now grapple with a more complex examination of the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and disability that can reframe black embodiment beyond commercialized spectacles and toward more diverse representations of liberated bodies.

Black Beauty Essentials and Digital Circulations

Gone are the days of what Susan Bordo called the 'material effacements' of postmodern culture (Bordo 1993, 245), in which the prevalent discourse in the latter part of the

twentieth century focused on the virtues of transcending one's race and gender in digital space. Although various theorists of color contested these arguments with a reminder of how race and gender framed electronic interactions and assumptions of difference and 'default' identities (white and cis-male), there still remained an outright assertion that one could legitimately leave behind one's racial and gender identities when entering virtual realms. However, social media tools – from Facebook to Twitter to Instagram – combining with smart phones and cameras inevitably altered this discourse once Internet users were encouraged to imprint their digital selves online, from digital photographs and selfies to opinions, commentary, memes, and hashtags.

In other words, no one could deny any longer the existence of race and gender identities online. That, while these identities proliferated in the early years of web 1.0, social media amplified our digital selves and collective body politic. An example of this concerns the mainstream discovery of 'Black Twitter' when the BET Awards trended back in 2009 in the wake of the passing of superstar Michael Jackson, as presumably black users tweeted their complaints of the Michael Jackson tribute during the show. While Black Twitter had already coalesced as a collective presence, it had gained visibility during a time of a black celebrity's death, which galvanized both a marginal television network and the community watching it via social media.

Black Twitter exists precariously between what Michael Warner calls a 'counterpublic' and mainstream media, since the issues tweeted from this community has impacted both national and international discourse, not least of which is the Black Lives Matter campaign that began in social media space. However, what Twitter does for black political rhetoric, Instagram does for black aesthetic politics and visual culture. Combining rhetoric and visual treatments, #BlackGirlMagic insists on the visibility of black women and girls as beauty subjects and aspirational figures in the wider culture to contest negative discourse that frames black womanhood through the lens of dysfunction, unattractiveness, and social failures.

Nonetheless, when Linda Chavers, a disabled black woman writer of Elle Magazine, raised concerns about the #BlackGirlMagic hashtag, her critique was roundly dismissed by several black women on social media. Expressing consternation about its ableist focus on black women's 'superhuman' abilities to transcend racial and sexual oppression, Chavers writes, 'Black girls and women are humans. That's all we are. And it would be a magical feeling to be treated like human beings – who can't fly, can't bounce off the ground, can't block bullets, who very much can feel pain, who very

much can die' (Chavers 2016). However, her critics accused her of taking the phrase too literally and not recognizing the need for celebration of black women's beauty and accomplishments, which are constantly scrutinized and subject to denigration.

Few critics actually engaged the issue of ableism in the rhetoric of 'black girl magic,' the source of Chavers' concern, which troublingly suggests black women's overall investment in what Tanisha Ford calls the 'respectable body.' Borrowing from Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham's theoretical framing of the 'politics of respectability' – a strategy African Americans throughout history have employed to contest white supremacist views of the black body – Ford in her recent study, Liberated Threads, assesses black women's strategic aesthetic and fashion choices to convey both style and progressive black political consciousness, thus reiterating the black woman's body as a political site of resistance, a point I have also argued in Venus in the Dark. Ford further observes, 'With every well-pressed dress and perfectly-coiled tendril of hair, black women were fighting to regain their dignity and assert their political agency' (Ford 2016, 73).

If the body is to assert political agency via aesthetic choices, then how that body is then circulated via photographic technologies leaves black women vulnerable and open to others' interpretations. Given the ways that, as Lisa Gail Collins argues, photography has the power to document and confirm stereotypes of the body – based on the visual frames utilized in imagery to construct scientific 'proof' (Collins 2002, 11) – digital technologies have expanded on traditional technologies to reassert and document the black body as both spectacle and spectacular. With these issues in mind, both the 'selfie' and the social media utilized to frame the selfie gives the average user a modicum of control and self-definition.

As such, the 'magical' in #BlackGirlMagic, which can then frame the larger collective self that represents a community of black women, heightens their aesthetic value. On the one hand, digitized black subjects continue the centuries-long project of self-fashioning and self-assertion in which black photographic subjects, as Deborah Willis has argued in her work, consciously signify on stereotypes of the black body or subversively upend them (Willis 1996). On the other hand, digital culture has constructed a hegemonic effect in the prescription of blackness and black womanhood.

This political engagement with the meanings of our raced and gendered embodiment also intertwines with our access to media technologies and our acknowledgement of the power dynamics that frame not only which bodies gain visibility but also who controls how that visibility is then consumed and interpreted. In her recent study,

Shine, Krista Thompson notes how young people in the African diaspora are continually engaging visual cultures with an understanding of how imagery dominates 'their sense of the world and their place within it' (Thompson 2015, 2). Utilizing film theorist Richard Dyer's arguments on lighting technology in film that explicitly promotes and normalizes whiteness as both political hegemony and an aesthetic ideal, Thompson recasts the practices of people of African descent, who consume, appropriate, and recreate images of whiteness – from skin-bleaching to signifying on celebrity culture via fashion, posing, and video-lighting displays – as subversive engagements with power and the repositioning of black bodies for maximum exposure and visibility. While this may echo a similar argument made by controversial rapper Azealia Banks, who defended her use of skin-lightening techniques to gain visibility in the dominant culture, other women of African descent have defiantly contested the need for whiteness as a means to visibility.

Academic and cultural critic Yaba Blay comes to mind with her Tumblr project, **Pretty.Period** (http://prettyperiod.me/) . Carefully assessing the colonialist effects of white supremacy on African subjects, with regards to fairer skin and skin-bleaching practices, Blay utilizes 'Pretty. Period' to contest whiteness and fairness as the only definitions for beauty. The title itself asserts a counter-narrative, in which the oft-repeated phrase 'you're pretty for a dark-skinned girl' is challenged with a 'period.' No transitions or explanations are needed to convey the beauty and desirability of black women's dark-skinned selves. Her Tumblr feed, which features a vast digital collection of stylized photographs and selfies of darker-skinned black women throughout the African diaspora, serves as visual testimony of black beauty.

A different project of black beauty relies on photographic and digital alterations to heighten the beauty subject. In his '**Black Girl Magic** (https://www.instagram.com/pierre_artista/?hl=en) ' series, Haitian-American artist Pierre Jean-Louis fuses scenic natural landscapes and deep-space celestial imagery with a variety of pictorials featuring black women's natural hair – from celebrity photos to selfies and glamour shots (Fig. 2). Beginning with images of his sister, who documented her 'natural hair' journey in photography, Jean-Louis reframed black women's natural afros, dreadlocks, twists, and braids through Instagram filters and photoshopped techniques of blurring and collaging that capture his views of black women as 'Mother Nature' and 'Goddess.' As he expressed in an interview with the Huffington Post: 'I want the whole world to know that Mother Nature is actually black and we wouldn't be here without her. I want every young black queen to remember that' (quoted in Finley 2016).
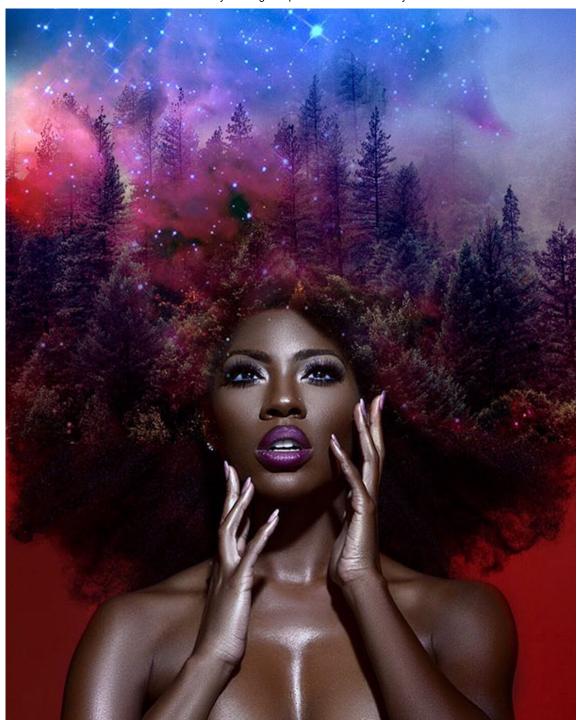
Figure 2 – Pierre Jean-Louis, from 'Black Girl Magic' series (2016). Permission given by @pierre_artista and @tattedchulo.

While using language steeped in Afrocentric respectability politics – black women as 'queens' and 'goddesses' – Jean-Louis nonetheless constructs breathtakingly stunning imagery to uplift and herald black women's bodies in ways that counter their devaluation in the larger dominant culture. Such ethereal qualities that project celestial and earthly properties onto black women's 'natural' hair position their bodies through the lens of a racially essentialist 'naturalism,' negating values of artifice, even though the photographic fusion already upends the naturalness of the image. That said, the

push for black women to embrace their natural hair – a site of contention especially for professional black women whose afros, locs, twists, and cornrows have been dismissed as 'unprofessional' in the workplace – requires aesthetic projects that extol the virtues of embodied blackness.

Indeed, black celebrity women like Amandla Stenberg and indie artist Solange Knowles have created radical discourses in the public sphere concerning the black women's 'natural hair' movement. This includes Stenberg's viral video 'Don't Cash Crop on My Cornrows,' which highlights the hypocrisy of a culture that denigrates black women's hairstyles while celebrating the same styles worn by white women, and Knowles proclaiming in her conversation with Stenberg for Teen Vogue 'a secret language shared among black girls who are destined to climb mountains and cross rivers in a world that tells us to belong to the valleys that surround us…[But] here we are… sprinkling black girl magic in every crevice of the universe' (Knowles 2016).

Tellingly, Knowles outlines her primary goal of 'sprinkling black girl magic,' which had already occurred in 2014 when she 'broke the Internet' with her release of her wedding photos, documenting her marriage to her long-time partner Alan Ferguson. These marital portraits of black womanhood, photographed by Rog Walker, were widely celebrated as they showcased Knowles sporting an Afro hairstyle while wearing a stylish bridal white-cape gown. Other black women were featured in elegant white attire, including her mother, her sister Beyoncé, and R&B artist Janelle Monae (Fig. 3). While Knowles is known for her own unique style and for resisting conventionality, especially when carving out a path that diverges from her more popular and mainstream big sister, her stylish photographs were greeted by Black Twitter and others as 'the right way to break the Internet' (Hemingway 2014). Here, writer Mollie Hemingway refers to a different moment of 'breaking the Internet,' when reality television star Kim Kardashian a few days earlier posed nude by recreating Jean-Paul Goude's photograph 'Carolina, 1978' for Paper magazine (Fortini 2014).

Figure 3 – Solange Knowles wedding picture, from Vogue Magazine. Photographed by Rog Walker.

The original 1978 image featured Carolina Beaumont, a black model appearing nude while holding a bottle guzzling champagne in a glass balanced on her generous-sized behind (Goude 1981). Goude collaborated with Kardashian for the 2014 update, in which Kardashian inserted her body into the place of Beaumont and subsequently repositioned herself clothed in a black evening gown that reifies her whiteness, wealth, and class status. However, a different photograph depicts her disrobing and displaying her much-talked about booty – pictorially depicted as glossy and plasticized. Herein lies the complexity of an image that can appropriate blackness while maintaining whiteness. Nonetheless, in the wake of Kardashian's bid for attention-grabbing headlines, Knowles tapped into an online atmosphere filled with tedium over white appropriations of blackness, disdain for overt sexual expressions, and enthusiasm for black respectability politics represented by the promise of black marital bliss and the black body repositioned for beauty and elegance.

Moreover, Knowles serves as a counterpoint to the Kardashian symbol, a public figure who is guilty of what Stenberg calls 'cash cropping on' black women's cornrows, in addition to appropriating via plastic surgery the voluptuous curves associated with black women's bodies. Subsequently, the white hypersexualized plasticity of Kardashian is upended by the black 'natural' realness of Solange Knowles's sophistication. In these ways, 'black girl magic' imagery can receive mainstream validation – as Knowles's wedding pictures were featured in the online pages of Vogue –

which further serves the respectable agenda of an online community of black women who find solace in such digital offerings.

Beauty Remix and Digital Disruptions

With her savvy finger on the digital pulse of black womanhood, pop star Beyoncé masterfully marketed the ethos of #BlackGirlMagic with a dash of #BlackLivesMatter to her fan community, as her 2016 visual album, Lemonade, artfully crafted and remixed powerful and striking imagery of black women. Not only does Beyoncé, a consummate consumer-producer of digital culture, exhibit what songwriter Sia describes as a 'very Frankenstein' approach (quoted in Katz 2015) to sampling and mixing different songs, she has also interwoven visual clues and digital conversations throughout her Lemonade project. In particular, her signifying of Knowles's wedding pictorial narrative – in which different black women of varying hues, hair length and textures recreate the same poses on a built stage in the segment for her song 'Pray You Catch Me' (Fig. 4), and later around the natural landscape of a Louisiana plantation in the climactic song 'Freedom' – indicates her intention to provoke a mass reaction from an online community of black women who had already praised her little sister for capturing black beauty and elegance.   Alluding to the wedding-photo moment, Beyoncé alters the imagery with her troupe of black women donning Victorian Steampunk couture, which invokes an Afrofuturism that collapses time travel and the meanings of race and class. Envisioning black women in high fashion on a plantation where their ancestors were deprived of these material possessions, the pop star boldly reclaims and rewrites a history that elevates the beauty and dignity of black womanhood both in the past and in the present. Not only does Beyoncé reflect similar aesthetic projects of contemporary black artists like Fabiola Jean Louis (http://www.fabiolajeanlouis.com/) and Kehinde Wiley (http://kehindewiley.com/) , but she also recaptures the cinematic history of Julie Dash's Daughters of the Dust while also echoing Carrie Mae Weems's photo series, The Louisiana Project (http://carriemaeweems.net/galleries/louisiana.html) . Her multimedia collage, as represented by her song remixes and her artistic allusions, constructs an important project of digital and political resistance, especially with her inclusion of cameo appearances by black women who have experienced online abuse (including Stenberg, actor Zendaya Coleman, tennis champion Serena Williams, and young actor Quvenzhané Wallis) as well as the mothers representing the Black Lives Matter movement, who were depicted holding pictures of their slain sons – such as Sybrina Fulton (mother of Trayvon Martin), Gwen Carr (mother of Eric Garner), and Lesley McFadden (mother of Michael Brown).

Figure 4 – Still from Beyonce's *Lemonade* (2016).

Having already demonstrated her skilled ability to mine YouTube for dance movements (for her 'All the Single Ladies' music video) and feminist speeches (Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk, 'We Should All Be Feminists,' sampled for her song ***Flawless), along with her spotlighting of Somali-British poet Warsan Shire in her voiceover narrative for Lemonade, a poet who came to prominence through her Tumblr poetry site (http://warsanshirepoetryreblogs.tumblr.com/) , Beyoncé has expanded her digital reach and incorporates digital tools to foster surprise announcements and album drops via iTunes or through her co-owned digital distribution multimedia site Tidal, which strategically featured Lemonade after its world premiere on the premium cable channel HBO. In other words, rather than fall victim to the Internet, which has already decimated the music industry's distribution power, Beyoncé has instead subverted digital culture to boost her sales and cultural dominance. The power of Lemonade, in particular, is based in its unabashed focus and celebration of the aesthetic appeal and inspirational story of black womanhood, while cleverly marketed as a shared event for a community that continued its support for Beyoncé's world tour.

The visual album premiered to almost universal praise and critical acclaim. Even black feminist cultural critic bell hooks, who once denounced the pop star as a 'terrorist' and 'slave,' acknowledged that her creative output in Lemonade was an aesthetic triumph of 'ordinary everyday black women … poised as though they are royalty' (hooks 2016). Nonetheless, hooks warns that Lemonade is 'all about the body, and the body as commodity. This is certainly not radical or revolutionary.' Fascinating to observe with this critique is the swift response from other black feminists who took hooks to task for not recognizing what to them was indeed a radical and revolutionary project, best represented when fellow black feminist Melissa Harris-Perry publicly disagreed with

hooks's position by organizing an online roundtable of several critics to contest hooks's reading of Lemonade (Adelman 2016). While there are different ways to engage an artistic project, the tensions that exist in these black feminist public conversations underscore, once again, the collective investment in the project of black beauty.

Hooks employs an anti-capitalist critique that may seem outdated for a millennial generation of black feminists who have engaged in a complex dance of collusion with and subversion of the neoliberal capitalist project that frames this digital age. What hooks views as excessive commercialism, others view as a clever use of commercial images remixed for political reclamations. Whether or not she was being fair in her assessment of Beyoncé's politics, hooks nonetheless highlighted the problem of emphasizing the black body, which may serve as a site of resistance but is also too easily commodified and reduced to commercial appeal rather than to any commitments to liberation. Much like Chavers, hooks challenges our reliance on beauty as an empowering tool, which tends to leave out other types of bodies that don't fit neatly into 'respectable bodies' – an assessment already observed by different bloggers who noticed the absence of fat black women and gender-nonconforming persons in Lemonade. And although Beyoncé included certain disabled black women in the project – from the vitiligo model Winnie Harlow to breast cancer survivor Paulette Leaphart – the ableist presentation of the overly glamorized black body prevails.

Unfortunately, because of the power given to beauty in our media-saturated culture, black women are inclined to dismiss criticisms leveled against black beauty projects. One example of this is the vitriolic response to comedian Leslie Jones, who made what many believed to be an inappropriate 'slave joke' during a **segment** (http://www.nbc.com/saturday-night-live/video/weekend-update-leslie-jones/2779226) of the television show Saturday Night Live that aired on May 3, 2014. In response to the celebration of dark-skinned Kenyan actor and fashionista Lupita Nyong'o, who was chosen for People's 'Most Beautiful Person' in 2014, Jones ironically called attention to the way that dark skin had suddenly become an appreciated commodity in the elevation of Nyong'o's short-haired, petite, and dark-skinned body as a site for beauty and effortless femininity.

While we may consider Nyong'o's mainstream acceptance as a 'win' for darker-skinned black women, Jones reminded viewers that her own muscularly-built, six-foot-frame, and sharp facial features are still dismissed from categories of beauty, which prompted the joke that, in the era of chattel slavery – an allusion to the film 12 Years a Slave, for

which Nyong'o received an Oscar for portraying an abused slave – Jones's 'desirability' would be based on her functionality to reproduce 'strong slaves.' Hence the absurd commentary that in 'slavery days,' the 'master' would 'regularly hook her up with a brother.' The backlash on Black Twitter focused on her trivialization of slavery and the sexual violence that such 'hooking up' entailed, while many ignored Jones's problematizing of the beauty politics to which we have become so deeply invested. That Jones would later receive the brunt of anti-black-woman hatred in 2016, when racist misogynists hacked her website and polluted her Twitter feed with racist slurs and rape threats, proves her point that her lack of a 'respectable body' poses severe limits in the arena of social change.

However, many in the online black community were slow to respond to the online abuse leveled against Jones. In other instances, both Beyoncé's daughter Blue Ivy and Olympic gymnast and champion Gabby Douglas received relentless complaints about their 'bad hair' from fellow black women on social media. Even the historical body of famed Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman has been subjected to grievances when the Department of the Treasury announced that she would serve as the new face on the new $20 paper currency, thus prompting complaints that she is 'not pretty enough.' After various mockup designs of the twenty-dollar bill featured images of an elderly Tubman, some took to social media to circulate and later mislabel a photographic portrait called 'Young Harriet Tubman.' Here, ageism rears its ugly head, considering the archival recovery work on the part of some black Internet users in their quest to find a 'more attractive' portrait that they imagined to be Harriet Tubman.

Portrait of Sara Forbes Bonetta, photographed by Camille Silvy (1862). National Portrait Gallery, London.

The mistaken portrait dating from 1862 (Fig. 5) actually depicts the aristocrat Sara Forbes Bonetta – the goddaughter to Queen Victoria whose birthplace originated in West Africa – which was viewed as a more appropriate choice to place on paper currency, due to the photographic subject's youthful appearance and her stylish wardrobe afforded by the patronage of the queen. That African Americans today would prefer the colonized subject adorned in fashionable attire, represented by Bonetta, over the liberated subject of Tubman – who self-fashioned her own modest yet dignified portrait in a project of emancipatory black body politics, as represented by her iconic 1868 photograph (Fig. 6) – highlights our present-day preoccupation with the glamorized body, the 'respectable body.' As hooks already observed, this has become the main acceptable form of our visibility politics.

Figure 6 – Portrait of Harriet Tubman, circa 1868. Library of Congress.

Conclusion

Such investments in black beauty politics remind us of the limits of the 'beauty myth' that Naomi Wolf identifies in patriarchal societies, in which 'women's identity must be premised on our "beauty," so that we will remain vulnerable to outside approval, carrying the vital sensitive organ of self-esteem exposed to the air' (Wolf 1991, 14). It is this vulnerability that makes any beauty project, premised on liberation, flawed and susceptible to the policing of bodies that fall outside categories of beauty and desirability, or to the cooptation of black women's various aesthetic expressions and styles by the dominant culture with no acknowledgment of their origins. Subsequently, black beauty is imperfect at 'black girl magic,' which must be recognized for its limitations in advancing the liberatory black body.

Considering the ways that the image of Ieshia Evans's standoff with police, Tumblr and Instagram sites, Solange Knowles's wedding photos, and Beyoncé's Lemonade have all utilized beauty to amplify black women's visibility, the specter of respectability lingers over these projects. Although beauty has its place, function, and power, it is not an essential component for black liberation. After all, visibility is only a means to liberation, not the goal itself. We must envision a black body politic beyond digital surveillance, disciplinary policing, and perpetuation of black beauty myths. Only then could we proclaim the 'magic' and dignity of all black lives.

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