

"Queering" #BlackLivesMatter

Unpredictable Intimacies and Political Affects

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ABSTRACT

#BlackLivesMatter (#BLM) has garnered considerable attention in recent years with its commitment to honor all black lives, yet the affective dimensions of this global cause remain largely under-theorized. Within this piece, I explore how #BLM, as a larger sociopolitical movement, works to collectively bind strangers together by transmitting affects that produce a sense of immediacy, intimacy, and belonging. I argue that these affective intensities incite an 'unpredictable intimacy' that closely connects strangers to black bodies and intensifies the forces of race, gender, and hetero/sexuality in ways that—counter to the movement's purpose—violate the bodies of queer/black women, in particular, via the processes of replication and erasure. I conclude by proposing that, while #BLM aims to empower black lives and build a collective, we remember the political possibilities that affect and queer theories have to offer in order to attend to, and potentially disrupt, the violence that such collectives bring.

*If I die in police custody, know that I want to live! We want to live!
We fight to live! Black Lives Matter! All Black Lives Matter!*
(Black Lives Matter Netroots Mob 2015)

The 2012 shooting of 17-year old Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida has garnered national attention in the United States, fueling intense speculation over what it means to live in a morally ambiguous world where police brutality and unchecked violence against African Americans tragically proliferate. According to *Washington Post* columnist Jonathan Capehart (2015):

Since that rainy night three years ago, we have watched one horrific encounter after another involving unarmed African Americans on the losing end of a gun or a confrontation with police. Jordan Davis, 17, shot and killed in Jacksonville, Fla., on Nov. 23, 2012 by Michael Dunn. Renisha McBride, 19, shot and killed in Dearborn Heights, Mich., on Nov. 2, 2013 by Theodore P. Wafer. Eric Garner, 43, killed in a chokehold on Staten Island in New York City on July 17, 2014, by police officer Daniel Pantaleo. John Crawford, 22, shot and killed

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by police in Beavercreek, Ohio, on Aug. 5, 2014. Michael Brown shot and killed in Ferguson, Mo., on Aug. 9, 2014, by then-police officer Darren Wilson. Tamir Rice, 12, in Cleveland on Nov. 23, 2014, by police officer Timothy A. Loehmann. (sec. 3)

While African-American communities continue to demand justice for these state-sanctioned acts of violence, one grass roots organization, Black Lives Matter, has sought to take action into its own hands. A global cause committed to social justice, Black Lives Matter seeks to honor black lives by challenging the endemic brutality and discrimination directed toward blacks by the state, individuals, and society, writ large. Protesting the insidious nature of racism today, especially as it relates to the way American society naturalizes the death of any black who resists arrest or behaves “suspiciously” (Wanzo 2015), Black Lives Matter definitively positions itself as “an ideological and political intervention in a world where black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise” (Garza 2014, sec. 2).

Within this piece, I explore how #BlackLivesMatter (#BLM), as a larger sociopolitical movement, works to collectively bind strangers together by transmitting affects that produce a sense of immediacy, intimacy, and belonging. At the same time, I highlight how these affective attachments have taken on a life of their own, spurring other cultural moments – both within the #BLM movement and in other events inspired by it – that, in one way or another, dismiss the contributions of the three black women who founded the organization, two of whom identify as queer. I argue that the collective and presumably liberatory spaces of #BLM produce an unpredictable intimacy¹ that closely connects strangers to black bodies

1 Here, I draw upon Lauren Berlant’s (2015) work on intimacy as both affective and unpredictable, while also using this phrase in a specific way that refers to #BLM.

and intensifies the forces of race, gender, and hetero/sexuality in ways that cannot be wholly predicted. I hone in on these intensities and the way they operate to violate the bodies of queer/black women, in particular, via the processes of replication (e.g. the slogan *All Lives Matter*) and erasure. Ultimately, these processes can be thought of as a problematic form of transformation that hinges upon objectification and dehumanization, or the discrediting of black bodies as active, human agents. So while #BLM aims to empower black lives and build a collective, I propose that we remember the political possibilities that affect and queer theories have to offer in order to attend to, and potentially disrupt, the violence that such collectives bring.

The “Roots” of #BLM: A Brief History

In recent years, #BLM has emerged as a powerful social movement in support of black civil rights, yet it has historical roots dating back more than three centuries (Mineo 2015). The United States has indeed had a long history of both violence against blacks and advocacy for black lives (PBS Learning Media 2016). As far back as the 17th century, and perhaps the most horrific crime against black humanity, the institutionalization of slavery created an economic system where African people of all ages were treated as chattel, or the legal property of white slave owners. Deprived of basic human rights, blacks were physically separated from their native land and family members, forced to work against their will, and often mercilessly beaten. Deploring the evils of slavery, free blacks and white activists started a movement to emancipate enslaved blacks and abolish slavery altogether. Despite the fact that these abolitionists held conflicting views regarding the dissolution of slavery, their collective efforts served to intensify anti-slavery sentiments and fuel the Civil War of 1861. While the war eventually led to the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, which

freed slaves, and the 13th amendment to the American Constitution, which legally abolished the institution of slavery in 1865, it did not manage to grant African Americans equal status to whites.

Decades after the war, inhumane treatment of blacks persisted, namely through Jim Crow laws that maintained blacks and whites were “separate but equal”. These laws mandated the legal segregation of schools, drinking fountains, buses, restaurants, restrooms, et cetera, where services and facilities for blacks were almost always inferior to those for whites. Moreover, segregation contributed to increased racial violence against blacks and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the South. According to the Equal Justice Initiative, between 1877–1950, there were as many as 3,959 reported “terror lynchings” against blacks who were, in many cases, unjustly killed for committing minor social transgressions, such as accidentally bumping into a white woman (see Luckerson 2015).

In 1954, the ongoing efforts of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and countless activists were, in part, realized when the US Supreme Court declared the doctrine of “separate but equal” unconstitutional. This landmark decision fueled the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and made it possible for many leaders in the African-American community to rise to prominence, most notably Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who urged others to fight for equality through respectable, peaceful, and non-violent practices.

In 1964, a decade after the Supreme Court’s ruling, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, thereby legally ending racial segregation and addressing “the civil and political rights that were denied to black people – access and the use of public accommodations, the right to vote, and ensuring fair employment and housing opportunities” (Harris 2015, sec. 2). Despite this legislation, African Americans continued to suffer

from economic disparity, social inequality, and ongoing police harassment and violence. In response to these racial inequities, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense emerged in 1966 to defend black rights and take a militant stand against the state, namely by “policing the police” (NPR 2015). Taking up Malcolm X’s call to end segregation and discrimination “by any means necessary,” Black Panther supporters engaged in radical street-theater tactics, such as openly carrying guns in black communities so as to monitor police behavior and prevent police brutality against black citizens.

In time, the Panthers’ tactics incited an aggressive, as well as fearful, response from federal and state officials. Declaring the party to be both a terrorist organization and a threat to national security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) directly surveilled Panther activity by following and harassing members, tapping phone lines, and encouraging police to “cripple” the party (Workneh and Finley 2016). In turn, police made it virtually impossible for the organization to continue its cause: constantly raiding Panther offices and often killing members – even those who did not resist arrest.

While the fight to advocate for black lives certainly did not end with the Panthers, many historians argue that there exist strong parallels between the Black Panther Party and the current #BLM movement: most notably, the shared focus on police brutality and the use of aggressive tactics, such as disrupting public events, to confront police and state violence (Chancellor 2016). In fact, according to #BLM co-founder Patrisse Cullors, the Black Panther Party has deeply inspired the current #BLM movement, which seeks to take up a somewhat similar conversation: that black people have the right to both decide their own fate and not fear death at the hands of police and state officials (Chancellor 2016).

What's Affect Got to Do with It?

Building upon the legacies of those social movements that came before, #BLM reminds us that the fight for black civil rights persists even to this day, as American society has historically denigrated, and continues to devalue, black lives. In this piece, I am particularly interested in the devaluation and reclamation of black lives as *affective* processes. Drawing upon Teresa Brennan's (2004) theory of affective transmission, I conceptualize affects as energetic forces that, quite literally, enter social bodies² of all kinds: binding individuals to each other, to other things, and to their social environments. As Brennan (2004) argues:

We are not self-contained in terms of our energies. There is no secure distinction between the 'individual' and the 'environment'... transmission breaches individual boundaries ... this bound energy is felt in the flesh.

To be clear, by the transmission of affect, I am not suggesting that, within the #BLM movement, one supporter's feelings or emotions simply become another's. Rather, I mean that all kinds of bodies *affect* and transform one another in myriad ways: where emotions have the affective power to orient #BLM supporters toward and away from other bodies, as well as move them to do particular things. While many affect theorists clearly differentiate between affects and emotions, I resist dichotomizing the two and, like Ann Cvetkovich (2012) and Michalinos Zembylas (2014), use affect in a more generic sense: as a category that includes energies, emotions, forces, intensities, "impulses, desires, and feelings that get historically constructed in a range of ways" (Cvetkovich 2012, 4).

2 Bodily matter can take multiple forms, e.g. human bodies, bodies of knowledge, objects (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

With this in mind, I would briefly like to connect this conceptualization of affect to John Protevi's (2009) concept of *political affect(s)*, the idea that affects are politically shaped by and entangled within relations of power, history, and politics. According to Protevi, following the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the US federal government delayed relief to hundreds of thousands of New Orleans victims until military forces arrived, in large part due to the racial fear associated with rumored reports of mass crime, rape, and murder among blacks. Arguing that black bodies are inextricably connected to violent histories of slavery and revolt, Protevi (2009, 173) explores how such histories impact "white America," whether consciously or subconsciously, by creating a fear of blacks, especially "crowds of blacks without sufficient armed guards around them". This transmitted or racialized fear triggers certain actions or, as noted with Katrina, inactions that may have deadly consequences for black Americans.

I would like to now consider how this fear of black bodies plays out in the case of Trayvon Martin and neighborhood watchman George Zimmerman, who was found innocent of second-degree murder. Due to Zimmerman's desire to protect a Sanford neighborhood from Martin, aka some suspicious "thug" wearing a hoodie, Zimmerman, who was technically off-duty at the time, decided to follow around and then subsequently shoot the unarmed teenager. Zimmerman claims to have shot the victim in self-defense and for fear of his own life. Sadly, we can never ask Trayvon Martin how he felt about being followed around by a strange man with a gun. This leads me to wonder: Why are Zimmerman's fears and feelings — not Trayvon Martin's — allowed to count, and what does this "not/counting" have to do with affects? As Rebecca Wanzo (2015, 230) so powerfully asserts: when fear of black bodies becomes reasonable in a court of law, it somehow "privileges affect[s] of the [white] state over the affect[s] of [black] citizens," which serves to affirm white fear and make the killing of black lives natural. Ultimately, what I would like to suggest, here and throughout, is that the

matter of black lives *always* involves affective in/equalities, which hold both promise and threat.

#BlackLivesMatter: Feel the Love, Feel the Noise

Black Lives Matter surged into public view in 2013, following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin. Co-founder Alicia Garza immediately took to social media to express her anger and frustration over the verdict and the string of heated tweets or comments³ posted in relation to it on-line (Guynn 2015; Pleasant 2015). Composing what she calls “a love letter to black folks” (Pearce 2015), Garza wrote the following message on her Facebook wall: “I continue to be surprised by how little black lives matter, and I will continue that. Stop giving up on black life... Black people, I love you. I love us. Our lives matter” (McEvers 2016, sec. 1). Garza’s words resonated with Los Angeles activist and friend Patrisse Cullors who put a hashtag⁴ in front of the phrase *Black Lives Matter* (#BlackLivesMatter) to draw awareness to and to protest against the perpetual violence directed toward black people. Within days, the two teamed up with fellow activist Opal Tometi to create #BlackLivesMatter, a network where people could come together off- and on-line as a community to share, as Cullors noted, their stories, grief, and rage in order to take “collective action to build collective power to achieve collective transformation” (Cullors, quoted in King 2014).

3 E.g.: How do I explain this to my young boys??? (Dwayne Wade); We must mourn the unnecessary & unjust death of a child, but to honor him we must rededicate ourselves to the very ideals that were violated. (Cory Broker); It could have been me. It could have been my son. We’ve got to protect them from the #Zimmermans of the world and their helpers. #Trayvon. (Vanessa Robinson) <http://www.towleroad.com/2015/02/queer-origins-of-blacklivesmatter-highlighted-in-msnbc-mini-documentary/>

4 A word or phrase that is preceded by a hashtag (#) and used on social media sites, such as Twitter, to identify specific messages around a given topic.

Cullors’ emphasis on collective emotions and experiences highlights the intimacies that animate #BlackLivesMatter, as an on-line network and larger movement. Here, I would like to draw attention to the way affects not only become public, but also circulate within #BLM to pull individuals into an alternative collective environment or *intimate public* sphere (see Berlant 2009). According to Sara Ahmed (2004), emotions do not reside within individuals and then move outward to affect others; they instead *affectively flow* among bodies, objects, and signs, forming “sticky” attachments that impact both the making of individual subjects and their movement throughout collective social spaces. It is Garza’s emotional reading of the Trayvon Martin verdict (her rage, surprise, support, encouragement, love) and the outpouring of tweets in its aftermath that help to create such a shared collective (our lives, black lives, we/us), even among strangers. While individuals may not necessarily feel, encounter, or experience the #BLM movement in the same way, they nevertheless affectively cohere together through “passionate attachment[s] tied closely to love” (see Ahmed 2004, 118). It is the love, then, of black lives that not only binds folks together but also affectively aligns them against that which threatens love, i.e. racism, as well as certain figures who embody the loss of love, namely police and state officials.

An intimate public, however, is not simply about shared social messages, such as *Black Lives Matter*. The publics actively encourage people to rethink their lives in terms of intimacy, specifically by examining what it has meant for human beings to live and survive within collective social worlds. As Berlant (1998) argues, in order to rethink intimacy we need to both assess how we have been living and how we currently live so as to reimagine better lives than the ones so many human beings are living. For many #BLM activists, reimagining what it might mean for blacks to “have a life” directly involves the “noisy” occupation of public spaces. While the founders repeatedly emphasize love as the sustaining force behind #BLM

(Garza, quoted in Pleasant 2015), protesters and demonstrators, time and time again, continue to engage in confrontational and aggressive tactics. In this way, love for black lives is not a mere emotion that connects #BLM activists; it affectively moves them to take some rather unpredictable actions. Such actions include stopping business as usual in major cities. For example, in November 2014, thousands of #BLM activists took to the streets to protest the non-indictment of police officer Darren Wilson for the murder of Michael Brown. Physically closing down three bridges leading in and out of New York City, they repeatedly chanted phrases such as, “Shut it down” and “Black Lives Matter!” Activists have also made their presence known and felt by interrupting and even shutting down public events. For instance, on August 8, 2015, #BLM supporters brought Vermont Senator and Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders’ rally to a sudden halt by jumping on stage, grabbing the microphone from Sanders, and demanding a four and a half minute moment of silence to honor Michael Brown, who was shot and killed in Ferguson, Missouri a year earlier on August 9, 2014.

Even though these tactics have been criticized as “emotional” and not “mindful” (Reynolds 2015), I would argue that is partly the point. Unlike the male-dominated, centralized, peaceful leadership of the Civil Rights Movement associated with Martin Luther King, Jr, #BLM has a self-governing, populist vibe where anyone — e.g. male, female, trans, queer, straight — can and should consider themselves a leader (Guynn 2015). The idea is to reject the kind of respectability politics⁵ (Pearce 2015) of past black justice work that often focused on mainstream propriety, while excluding marginalized or queer black bodies (see Casper 2014). #BLM, thus, hopes to communicate a different, perhaps even radical, message:

5 Such politics are often perceived to be an attempt at assimilation or “uplifting one’s race,” for example, where middle-class blacks strive to be “proper” or compatible with whites and white mainstream values.

one that deprivileges rational communication in order to transmit an authentic, “unmediated,” more inclusive message about black lives. According to Berlant (2009), “People imagine alternative environments where authenticity trumps ideology, truths cannot be concealed, and communication feels intimate, face to face” (sec. 1). Such an alternative environment is imagined within the #BLM movement through these “in your face” tactics, which strive to actively dismantle the filter that separates out noise or affects from communication. As such, #BLM activists desire to not only transmit the message but also *the noise*, that is, get the public to physically experience discomfort so that they too might feel the pain and frustration that blacks in America encounter (see Altman 2016). The transmission of noise, then, enables the public to *feel* the live intensities that make the message *Black Lives Matter* so affectively seductive and immediate.

Tensions and Unpredictable Intimacies

The notion of a totalized black liberation movement in which all blacks work together to embrace love and eradicate racism, while idyllic, is not particularly helpful when trying to understand the unpredictable intimacies that inevitably circulate within public spaces. Although the founders of #BLM have specifically proclaimed that all black lives matter — “the lives of black queer and trans folks, disabled folks, black-undocumented folks, the folks with records, women and all black lives along the gender spectrum” (#BlackLivesMatter 2015, sec. 4) — not every/body seems to be orientated toward the same directive. This raises the question: Which black lives are we really talking about? According to co-founder Opal Tometi:

The larger public narrative and discourse, particularly in this moment, is still focused on black male bodies, cisgender males. We still experience [e.g. queer, trans] resistance ... Black Lives Matter

has been viral and people are taking it, appropriating it, and using it however they see fit. We [the founders] become invisible... (Smith 2015, see interview question 3)

As Tometi's words suggest, intimate spheres are, at times, entangled within heteronormative forces, which here work to make the founders' bodies *invisible*. We observe, then, a kind of symbolic violence happening against queer/black women within the public spaces of #BLM — a movement which has, in some ways, taken on a life of its own. In what follows, I explore the kind of re/appropriation and subsequent erasure of marginalized black bodies that Tometi gestures toward through examining two specific cultural moments: the linguistic reclamation of *All Lives Matter* and the volleying of death threats in relation to a Webster University #BLM event.

As of December 2016, #BlackLivesMatter had 198,000 Twitter followers alone, thus pointing to its popularity. Yet, there are those Americans who do not support the movement and assume that if African Americans die, either at the hands of law enforcement or as a result of civilian self-defense, they were surely guilty of committing some crime (Metla 2015). There is also a sense that the movement is exclusionary and should expand to include *all* races, *all* lives. For this reason, the hashtag and slogan #AllLivesMatter (#ALM) has emerged to, in some ways, counter #BLM's message and, incidentally, increase racial tension. Attempting to defuse this tension, President Barack Obama has publically come out on the issue in order to defend #BLM:

We as a society, particularly given our history, have to take this seriously.... I think everyone understands all lives matter.... I think the reason that the organizers use the phrase "Black Lives Matter" was not because they were suggesting that nobody else's lives matter.... Rather, what they are suggesting was, there was a specific problem that is happening in African-American communities that

is not happening in other communities. (Obama, quoted in Sands 2015, sect. 6)

Obama's words suggest that many proponents of #AllLivesMatter view the phrase *Black Lives Matter* as insulting, even racist. Troubling that assumption, Obama attempts to provide some historical context so that non-blacks can both understand the significance of emphasizing black lives and take seriously the concerns of African-American communities. However, in spite of the president's efforts, the desire to advocate for *all* lives in response to the call for black lives (#BLM) remains and persists. According to Garza (quoted in Brydum 2015), insisting that all lives matter when blacks are being killed daily not only denies the reality of race and racism in America but also represents "a lack of humanity." More than that, this re-appropriation of #BLM serves to *dehumanize* black bodies by linguistically reclaiming other bodies who desire to be at the center: mainly white ones. By doing so, #ALM operates as an objectification tool that draws attention to blacks — not as human beings with distinct historical and social experiences, but as mere objects of discussion. At the same time, this new slogan shifts the conversation away from queer/black women and other marginalized black folks who are at once privileged and re/humanized through Garza, Cullors, and Tometi's intended message that *all black lives matter*. As Mel Chen (2012) notes, dehumanization involves both transformation — here the substitution and erasure of black bodies with, for example, white bodies — and the active making of a subject into an object. In this way, the slogan *All Lives Matter* functions to contain black bodies by coercing blacks, especially marginalized blacks, into a form of "non-being."

This coercion becomes more apparent when considering the death threats that Garza, Cullors, and Tometi received before their scheduled talk at Webster University in St. Louis. In February 2016, when the Webster

University event was announced, social media erupted over the origins of the movement. Garza stated that many questioned her right to speak on behalf of #BLM and called her contribution to the movement a lie. She added that people either did not know or simply refused to acknowledge that three black women, two of whom identify as queer, founded the #BLM hashtag and network (McEvers 2016): “Oh wow, queer women helped to start his?” (see Smith 2015, interview question 4). While the three founders did not wish to comment further on the death threats and on-line attacks, we can imagine that they mirror the disturbing death threat a New Jersey #BLM supporter recently received, where a Houston man threatened to “burn her asshole shut” (Terrell 2016). Ultimately, as a result of receiving their own personal attacks and threats, Garza and her co-founders cancelled the talk (Terrell 2016).

In a related interview, Garza relayed the concern expressed on social media that #BLM is essentially a gay movement that is merely masquerading as a black one (Cobb 2016). Cullors added, “I think there was this sort of thing for black folks where it was like, being black was already hard enough. It’s too much to try to be black and gay, black and trans, black, trans, and poor, black, gay and poor — it’s too much” (as cited in Garcia 2015). It is interesting to note the way that the word *gay* gains affective force here. It seems that, for some #BLM supporters, there is a real fear that *queer* has the power to somehow erase race and therefore endanger the larger racial liberation movement for blacks (see Chen 2012 for a discussion of queer affects and racial mattering). As an identity marker, then, *queer* threatens to simply be *too much* — at odds with dominant, heteronormative discourses that shape who and what should count as a worthy black life. More than an individual feeling, this fear of queerness acts as a moving force with the capacity to intensify the interests of the dominant social order, while simultaneously diminishing “the other” (see Hemmings 2005 for a discussion of affect as a critical object). Hence, the

circulation of death threats, in addition to being a violent act against three black women, might also be read as an attempt to *erase* queer identities — to diminish or discredit particular black bodies by refusing to bestow upon them “lifeliness” (Chen 2012, 41).

Conclusion: Reanimating *Queer* and Embracing *Too-Muchness*

Though *queer* has been identified with a kind of *too-muchness*, I wonder if this response might help us rethink past and present histories of violence against blacks, as well as the denigration of queer/female and other marginalized black bodies within the intimate public spaces of #BLM. Queer theories, like feminist theories, attempt to challenge dominant discourses and disrupt the notion of a normal/essential/natural woman and/or man (see e.g. Britzman 1995; Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002), yet the word *queer* itself continues to be affectively mobile and historically un/sticky (Chen 2012). Chen (2012, 57) asks, “how might a historically objectifying slur like *queer* be reanimated?” And, I would add, how might this reanimation embrace, instead of reject, *too-muchness*?

To be *too much* suggests an abundance of something – an overflow that might slip away (Ahmed 2006). Within this piece, I have explored how affects ebb and (over)flow, intimately moving #BLM supporters and non-supporters toward and away from black bodies in unexpected ways that are not always rational or intentional. I have also suggested that white bodies and the affects associated with whiteness, as a dominant social order, become “somatic norms” (Ahmed 2006, 113), serving to potentially displace, devalue, and violate *all* black lives. Perhaps, then, in order to support and possibly disrupt the intimate public spaces of #BlackLivesMatter we might work harder to see publics as affectively messy and slippery, as always in the process of moving in new directions

and becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) in ways that foster both equality *and* inequality, promise *and* threat (Stewart 2007). Despite this uncertainty and unpredictability, it is my hope that turning to affect will help us better understand the complex ways that bodies come to matter, *or not*, within intimate public spheres. In the end, what I would like to propose is this: rather than fearing *too-muchness*, or that which exceeds the “norm,” we might instead embrace it as an affective tool in order to orient our bodies *toward* – and not away from – “queering,” that is, “a way of inhabiting the world by giving ‘support’ to those whose lives and loves make them appear oblique, strange, and out of place” (Ahmed 2006, 179). We, therefore, might strive to see things from a different orientation or angle – to remember material bodies as energetic flows that affectively spill beyond the boundaries of flesh, transmitting political affects which intensify, energize, and enervate black bodies in myriad ways. By doing so, maybe, just maybe, we can actively envision other social worlds where difference, possibility, and wonder abound – worlds where *too-muchness* and *all black lives* truly matter.

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