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The Black Arts Enterprise and the Production of African American Poetry

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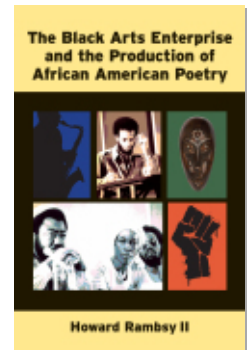
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Notes

Introduction

1. Larry Neal, "Cultural Front," 27.
2. Gates, "Black Creativity," 74.
3. Bornstein, *Material Modernism*; Shillingsburg, *Resisting Texts*; Schulze, *Becoming Marianne Moore*; McGann, *Textual Condition*.
4. McGann, *Textual Condition*, 15, 13. Over the past few decades, several literary texts by black authors have been "rediscovered" or unexpurgated, including books by Hannah Crafts, Zora Neale Hurston, and Richard Wright, to name a few. Also over the last decade, the Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers has released several books by authors such as Phillis Wheatley, Pauline Hopkins, and Harriet Jacobs. Despite all of this activity on the level of technical production, at present there remains a paucity of criticism on the editorial practices and policies that inform the presentation and reprinting of black books.
5. Sullivan, *On the Walls and in the Streets*, 21.
6. Sullivan, "Killing John Cabot," 560 (subsequently cited in the text).
7. Reid, *Black Protest Poetry*; Benston, *Performing Blackness*; Nielsen, *Black Chant*; Thomas, *Extraordinary Measures*; Bolden, *Afro-Blue*.
8. Smethurst, *Black Arts Movement*, 7.
9. Llorens, "Writers Converge at Fisk University," 62.
10. Fuller, "Black Writers' Views on Literary Lions and Values," 33.
11. Pool, "Robert Hayden," 41–42; Hayden, "1949 Runagate Runagate," 44–45; Hayden, "1964 Runagate Runagate," 46–47.
12. Smitherman, "Black Power Is Black Language," 91.
13. Joans, "Let's Get Violent!" 23.
14. Giovanni, "True Import of Present Dialogue," 318 (subsequently cited in the text).
15. Hernton, "Jitterbugging in the Streets," 206.
16. Malcolm X was not the sole author of the document, but it is often attributed to him because of his leadership role with the Organization of Afro-American Unity. Malcolm X, "Statement of Basic Aims and Objectives," 557, 563.
17. Amiri Baraka, "Dutchman," in *LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*, 97.

18. Larry Neal, "Don't Say Goodbye to the Pork-Pie Hat," 290; Sanchez, "Liberation / poem," 337.
19. Giovanni, "For Saundra," 322.
20. Toure, "Notes from a Guerilla Diary," 220–22.

Chapter 1

1. The Editors, "A Portfolio of Poetry," *Negro Digest* (Sept.–Oct. 1968): 53.
2. Gerald, Untitled, 29.
3. Hall, "On Sale at Your Favorite Newsstand"; Abby Arthur Johnson and Ronald Maberry Johnson, *Propaganda and Aesthetics*, and "Charting A New Course"; Redmond, "Stridency and the Sword"; Thompson, "Literary and Critical Analysis."
4. Redmond, "Stridency and the Sword," 558.
5. Sanchez, "a ballad for stirling street," 16.
6. Larry Neal, "Black Contribution to American Letters: Part II," 777, 778.
7. I am not suggesting that journals such as *Liberator* and the *Journal of Black Poetry* were insignificant. Indeed, several journals made important contributions to the presentation of the New Black Poetry. However, none had the reach and resources of *Negro Digest/Black World*. Abby Arthur Johnson and Ronald Maberry Johnson, *Propaganda and Aesthetics*, 187.
8. Semmes, *Roots of Afrocentric Thought*, xi.
9. Hall, "On Sale at Your Favorite Newsstand," 191.
10. Semmes, *Roots of Afrocentric Thought*, xi.
11. Salaam, "Black Arts Movement," 73.
12. For an index of poems, poets, articles, and reviews published in *Negro Digest/Black World*, see Semmes, *Roots of Afrocentric Thought*.
13. "Question," *Black World* (Dec. 1970): 65.
14. "Perspectives," *Negro Digest* (July 1968): 49.
15. Crouch, "Howling Wolf," 60.
16. LeRoi Jones, "Who Will Survive America?" 20.
17. Evans, "A good assassination should be quiet," 24.
18. Forms of literary criticism that focus on the words of poems and ignore the surrounding visual representations perhaps underestimate the effect that images have on readers. Scanning through dozens of black arts publications has made me aware, however, that in addition to offering sites for the publication of literary works of art, the Black Arts Movement also gave rise to the presentation of a multitude of visual texts.
19. Hoyt Fuller, interoffice communication (letter) to Mr. J. H. Johnson, Oct. 1, 1970, Hoyt W. Fuller Collection, Archives Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Atlanta University Center.
20. Johnson returned Fuller's letter regarding the two issues with a line drawn from Fuller's request for the increase to the top of the letter with an "ok" and his signature.
21. "About the Cover," 92.
22. "Down deep, we should know," back cover.
23. Hall, "On Sale at Your Favorite Newsstand," 203.

24. Reginald Hayes, untitled press release containing note “For Release after May 1, 1970,” box 19, folder 14, 2, Fuller Collection.
25. Fuller, “Editor’s Notes,” 4.
26. Fuller, “Editor’s Notes,” 4; Lee, “Blackman/an unfinished history,” 22; Okai, “African,” 30.
27. See, e.g., Hill-Collins, *Fighting Words*, 167–74.
28. Virginia C. Fowler, *Nikki Giovanni*, 47.
29. Giovanni, quoted in Virginia C. Fowler, *Nikki Giovanni*, 47.
30. Giovanni, “Black Poets, Poseurs, and Power,” 32.
31. Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, 219.
32. Christian, “But What Do We Think We’re Doing Anyway,” 499–500.
33. LeRoi Jones, “Poem for Black Hearts,” 58.
34. Llorens, “One Year Ago,” 67.
35. Evans, “A good assassination should be quiet,” 24; Gilbert, “Mirrors,” 37.
36. I am indebted to Paul Youngquist for talking through this particular phrasing with me.
37. Moreland, “a panther, named paul,” 72; Sutton, “Poem for a Panther,” 73.
38. Parks, “Tenth Anniversary Celebration in Detroit,” 84–90.
39. Plumpp, “Decade (for Dudley Randall),” 82–83; Brooks, “For Dudley Randall,” 91.
40. Madhubuti, “One-Sided Shoot-Out,” 90 (subsequently cited in the text). Also see William Hampton’s “Fred Hampton: Martyr,” 46–48.
41. Jordan, “Poem,” 63 (subsequently cited in the text).
42. Kgositsile, “Lumumba Section,” 46.
43. Haki Madhubuti (Don Lee), *Negro Digest* (January 1968): 44.
44. Rivers, “Malcolm, A Thousandth Poem,” 47.
45. Marvin X, “Don L. Lee Is a Poem,” 59.
46. Alicia L. Johnson, “To (2) Poets,” 59.
47. Raphael, “Roi,” 84.
48. Knight, “Elvin Jones: Jazz Drummer,” 93.
49. Fabio, “Tribute to Duke,” 243–46 (in *Understanding*).
50. LeRoi Jones, “Evolver,” 58.
51. Thompson, “Literary and Critical Analysis,” 248.
52. “OBAC—A Year Later,” 94.
53. “Chicago’s OBAC,” 44, 48.
54. Redmond, “Stridency and the Sword,” 560.
55. Reed, “You Can’t Be A Literary Magazine and Hate Writers,” 20.
56. Amiri Baraka, “How Black Is *Black World*?” 13.
57. The exact reason for Johnson’s ending of the publication of *Black World* remains sketchy. Some suggest that the magazine’s pro-Palestine sentiments angered some of Johnson’s white advertisers for *Ebony*. On the other hand, the publication was not financially profitable, and thus Johnson may have finally considered the publication too much of a financial liability. See Hall, “On Sale at Your Favorite Newsstand,” 188–206.
58. Kalamu ya Salaam explains that in addition to the demise of *Black World*, the disruption of the Black Power movement and the commercialization and co-optation of black culture during the mid-1970s were among other factors that con-

- tributed to the decline of black arts activity. Abby Arthur Johnson and Ronald Maberry Johnson, *Propaganda and Aesthetics*, 370; Salaam, “Black Arts Movement,” 74.
59. For a complete list of the editorial advisors, see *First World* 1, no. 1 (1977): 2.
 60. Smethurst, “Pat Your Foot and Turn the Corner,” 261.
 61. Lawrence P. Neal, “LeRoi Jones’ *The Slave* and *The Toilet*,” 22, 23.
 62. Lawrence P. Neal, “Development of LeRoi Jones,” 4.
 63. Lawrence P. Neal, “Development of LeRoi Jones (part 2),” 18 (subsequently cited in the text).
 64. Larry Neal, “Black Arts Movement,” 33 (subsequently cited in the text).
 65. Clayton Riley, “The Black Arts,” *Liberator* (April 1965): 21.
 66. Larry Neal, “Cultural Front,” 27.
 67. LeRoi Jones, “Revolutionary Theatre,” 4.
 68. Fuller, “Negro Writer in the U.S. Assembly at Asilomar,” 43.
 69. LeRoi Jones, “In Search of the Revolutionary Theatre,” 20.
 70. Amiri Baraka, “Toward the Creation of Political Institutions,” 54.
 71. See *Ebony*, Aug. 1969.
 72. Llorens, “Ameer (LeRoi Jones) Baraka,” 75 (subsequently cited in the text).
 73. Llorens, “Poet Is Acclaimed Creator of Black Art,” 72 (subsequently cited in the text).
 74. Bailey, “Nikki Giovanni,” 48–49 (subsequently cited in the text).
 75. For more on the ways that feminism poses threats to black nationalism, see Hill-Collins *Fighting Words*.

Chapter 2

1. Randall, *Black Poetry*, back cover.
2. Randall, *Black Poets*, xxiii.
3. Nelson, “Murder in the Cathedral,” 321.
4. Kinnamon, “Anthologies of African-American Literature from 1845 to 1994,” 461.
5. Major, *New Black Poetry*, 12.
6. Alhamisi and Wangara, *Black Arts*, 13.
7. LeRoi Jones, “Foreword,” xvii–xviii (subsequently cited in the text).
8. Randall and Burroughs, *For Malcolm*, xix (subsequently cited in the text).
9. Smethurst, *Black Arts Movement*, 223.
10. Randall, “Broadside Press,” 140.
11. Redmond, *Drumvoices*, 354.
12. Larry Neal, “And Shine Swam On,” 638 (subsequently cited in the text).
13. “Contributors,” in Jones and Neal, *Black Fire*, 668 (subsequently cited in the text).
14. “Note to First Paperback Edition of *Black Fire*,” in Jones and Neal, *Black Fire*, xvi (subsequently cited in the text).
15. The Civil Rights Movement and the media attention it received helped create a strong interest in African American issues nationally and internationally and thus made it financially profitable for mainstream white publishers to add black-au-

thored books to their lists. As Hettie Jones, Amiri Baraka's former wife, pointed out, "Negroes were now newsworthy. A trend had been spotted. Book sales could be predicted." Hettie Jones, *How I Became Hettie Jones*, 147.

16. Henderson, *Understanding the New Black Poetry*, xi, 3 (subsequently cited in the text).
17. Barksdale and Kinnamon, *Black Writers of America*, 809.
18. Jordan, *soulscript*, 17 (subsequently cited in the text).
19. Gates, *Trials of Phillis Wheatley*, 83.
20. Randall, "Broadside Press," 144.
21. Giovanni, "Nikki-Rosa," 15–16.
22. Boyd, *Wrestling with the Muse*, 170.

Chapter 3

1. Although Toni Morrison is more widely known as a novelist, she was also an editor at Random House and assisted in the publication of writers such as Gayl Jones and Toni Cade Bambara. She also played a role in the publication of Henry Dumas's posthumously published poetry. Morrison, "Behind the Making of the Black Book," 90.

2. Giovanni, *ego-tripping*, 6–7 (subsequently cited in the text).
3. Amiri Baraka and Fundi, *In Our Terribleness*, 24.
4. Middleton Harris, *Black Book*, 55 (subsequently cited in the text).
5. LeRoi Jones, "Sound for Sounding," i (subsequently cited in the text).
6. Nielsen, *Black Chant*, 220.
7. Virginia C. Fowler, "Chronology," xxxvii.
8. Murray, *Sonny's Time Now*.
9. Amiri Baraka, "Black Art."
10. Sullivan, "Killing John Cabot," 568 (subsequently cited in the text).
11. Randall, "Broadside Press," 139–48; Boyd, *Wrestling with the Muse*; Smethurst, *Black Arts Movement*; Sullivan, *On the Walls and in the Streets*; Thompson, *Dudley Randall*.
12. Smethurst, *Black Arts Movement*, 209 (subsequently cited in the text).
13. Boyd, *Wrestling with the Muse*, 172–85. Boyd also writes that "between 1966 and 1975, Dudley Randall's Broadside Press published eighty-one books, seventy-four of which were poetry, including single collections by forty poets, and of those forty, fifteen authored two or even three titles. . . . Under the auspices of Dudley Randall, Broadside Press published eighty-six books by more than two hundred poets." *Wrestling with the Muse*, 3–4.
14. Randall, "Broadside Press," 145.
15. Sullivan, *On the Walls and in the Streets*, 45–46.
16. Randall, "Broadside Press," 139.
17. Redmond, "Planter of Trees," 9.
18. Don Lee, introduction to Sanchez, *Homecoming*, 6 (subsequently cited in the text).
19. Brooks, "Further Pioneer," 9 (subsequently cited in the text).
20. Alhamisi, "News," 87.

21. Randall, “Broadside Press,” 142.
22. Smethurst, *Black Arts Movement*, 227.
23. Parks, “Black Publishers,” 76.

Chapter 4

1. Gerald, “Black Writer and His Role,” 349 (subsequently cited in the text).
2. Randall, “Different Image,” 142.
3. Joans, “Jazz Is My Religion,” 117.
4. Knight, “Elvin Jones,” 93.
5. Fabio, “Tribute to Duke,” 245 (in *Understanding*).
6. Gerald, Untitled, 28.
7. Gerald, Untitled, 28.
8. Julia Fields, quoted in Nielsen, *Black Chant*, 26–27 (subsequently cited in the text).
9. Amini, “Saint Malcolm,” 230.
10. Amiri Baraka, *Autobiography of LeRoi Jones*, 311.
11. Killens, *Cotillion*, 25.
12. Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*, 39.
13. Kgositsile, “Brother Malcolm and the Black Revolution,” 4.
14. Rodgers, “Poems for Malcolm,” 348.
15. Cortez, “How Long Has Trane Been Gone,” 16.
16. Emanuel, “For Malcolm, U.S.A.,” 235.
17. Larry Neal, “Malcolm X—An Autobiography,” 315–17.
18. Ellison, *Invisible Man*, 441.
19. For an engaging and extended discussion of black aesthetics, as well as Ralph Ellison’s tendency to keep “checking out style,” see Larry Neal, “Ellison’s Zoot Suit,” 31–52.
20. Quoted in Abby Arthur Johnson and Ronald Maberry Johnson, *Propaganda and Aesthetics*, 185.
21. Charles Johnson, *Being and Race*, 22 (subsequently cited in the text).
22. Knight, “It Was a Funky Deal,” 21.
23. Amiri Baraka, “Poem for Black Hearts,” 211–12.
24. Quoted in Baker, “Our Lady,” 181.
25. Sanchez, “Malcolm,” 38–39.
26. Breitman, *Malcolm X Speaks*, 40.
27. Ossie Davis, “Our Shining Black Prince,” xii.
28. Phillip Brian Harper, *Are We Not Men?* 1996, 68.
29. W. Smith, “malcolm,” 286 (subsequently cited in the text).
30. Neal, “Black Contribution to American Letters: Part II,” 771.
31. Crouch, Review of *Black Fire*, 69.
32. Ford, *Gender and the Poetics of Excess*, 182.
33. Nelson, *Anthology of Modern American Poetry*, 1062.
34. Liner notes to Coltrane’s *Live at the Village Vanguard*.
35. Rodgers, *Songs of Black Bird*, 10.
36. Several critics have discussed jazz aesthetics represented in poetry. See, e.g., William J. Harris, *Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka*; Feinstein, *Jazz Poetry*.

37. William J. Harris, *Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka*, 13.
38. Szwed, *Jazz 101*, 211–12.
39. Kofsky, *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*, 256 (subsequently cited in the text).
40. Szwed, *Jazz 101*, 225.
41. Larry Neal, “Social Background of the Black Arts Movement,” 15.
42. Amiri Baraka, *Autobiography of LeRoi Jones*, 260.
43. Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), *Black Music*, 197–98.
44. William J. Harris, *Poetry and Poetics of Amiri Baraka*, 13.
45. Michael Harper, “Dear John, Dear Coltrane,” 238, 239.
46. Cortez, “How Long Has Trane Been Gone,” 13–14, 14–15 (subsequently cited in the text).
47. Sanchez, “a/coltrane/poem,” 278.
48. Toure, *Juju*, 13, 16.
49. Spellman, “Did John’s Music Kill Him?” 262.
50. Kgositsile, “Acknowledgment,” 109.
51. Ben Ratliff, “The Spiritual Serenity of Coltrane and the Scream,” *New York Times*, Feb. 19, 2002.
52. Madhubuti, “Don’t Cry, Scream,” 338.
53. Troupe, “Ode to John Coltrane,” 230, 237 (subsequently cited in the text).
54. Troupe does not specify exactly what he means by phrases such as “america’s illusions.” However, I would argue that Troupe’s seemingly vague and subtle critique offers more room for readers to interpret how America has failed to live up to its purported principles from their own perspectives. Troupe, “Ode to John Coltrane,” 234.
55. Shirley Anne Williams, “Blues Roots of Contemporary Afro-American Poetry,” 187.

Chapter 5

1. Gates, *Figures in Black*, 32, 32–33.
2. Gates notes at one point, for instance, that Baker’s appear to be “rather oversimplified, basically political criteria, which are difficult to verify.” Gates observes that Gayle’s criticism displays “an alarming disrespect for the diversity of the black experience itself and for the subtleties of close textual criticism.” Gates, *Figures in Black*, 35–39.
3. Rowell, “Interview with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.,” 445.
4. See Gates, *Figures in Black*, 31–41; Baker, *Blues, Ideology*, 64–112.
5. Benston, “Introduction,” 5 (subsequently cited in the text).
6. Larry Neal, “Cultural Front,” 26–27 (subsequently cited in the text).
7. Larry Neal, “Black Arts Movement,” 29 (subsequently cited in the text).
8. Larry Neal, “Any Day Now,” 57 (subsequently cited in the text).
9. Larry Neal, “And Shine Swam On,” 653.
10. Larry Neal, “Ellison’s Zoot Suit,” 49.
11. See Thompson, “Literary and Critical Analysis,” 248.
12. Semmes, *Roots of Afrocentric Thought*.

13. Rodgers, “Black Poetry—Where It’s At,” 7–16 (subsequently cited in the text); Rodgers, “Literature of Black,” 5–11; Rodgers, “Breakforth, In Deed,” 13–22; Rodgers, “Un Nat’chal Thang,” 4–14.
14. The favorable comment on Rodgers’s essay that Darwin Turner made was initially published in *Black World* magazine in July 1970. I cite from the version of the article published in Addison Gayle’s *The Black Aesthetic*. See p. 72.
15. Ameer Baraka, “We Are Our Feeling,” 5–6.
16. Usually, *Negro Digest/Black World* printed bylines for authors at the end of their essays. For some reason, no information is provided on Rodgers at the end. The statement appeared as the opening byline and offered no information about what books she had published or her affiliations. See Rodgers, “Black Poetry—Where It’s At,” 7.
17. See Ward, “N. J. Loftis’ *Black Anima*”; D. Smith, “Black Arts Movement and Its Critics”; Bolden, *Afro-Blue*, 18–36.
18. “Writers’ Questionnaire,” 48.
19. Larry Neal, “Social Background of the Black Arts Movement,” 20.
20. Fabio, Untitled, 39.
21. Knight, Untitled, 38.
22. Larry Neal, untitled response, 35.
23. Fuller, “Black Writers’ Views on Literary Lions and Values,” 22–23, 24.
24. Fuller, “Black Writers’ Views on Literary Lions and Values,” 17.
25. LeRoi Jones, “Myth of a ‘Negro Literature,’” 194, 195, 196, 197.
26. LeRoi Jones, “Revolutionary Theatre,” 4–6.
27. LeRoi Jones, “In Search of the Revolutionary Theatre,” 20.
28. Ameer Baraka, “Black Aesthetic,” 5–6.
29. Stanley Crouch to Hoyt Fuller, Oct. 15, 1968, box 16, folder 12, Fuller Collection.
30. Stewart, “Development of the Revolutionary Artist,” 8, 10.
31. D. Smith, “Black Arts Movement and Its Critics,” 95.

Chapter 6

1. Gates and McKay, *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*.
2. Baker, “Black Arts Era, 1960–1975,” 1848–49.
3. Gates and McKay, *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, xxx.
4. Salaam, “Black Arts Movement,” 74.
5. Some of those “events” include the extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by the U.S. Senate in 1975, the election of political figures such as Maynard Jackson in Atlanta, and the selection of Muhammad Ali in 1974. Baker, “Black Arts Era, 1960–1975,” 1848.
6. Also see Baker, *Journey Back*, 129–30.
7. Boyd, *Wrestling with the Muse*, 259.
8. Henderson, “Question of Form and Judgment,” 19 (subsequently cited in the text).
9. Christian, “Literature since 1970,” 2016.
10. Salaam, “Black Arts Movement,” 74.
11. Gladwell, *Tipping Point*, 38.