

## **CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **Surpassing Survival: Black Bodies on the Frontlines of Anti-Racism**

Editors: Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman - Associate Professor of Sociology, University of South Florida, USA

Mariela Noles Cotito - Professor of Discrimination and Public Policy, Universidad del Pacifico, Peru

Omotayo Jolaosho - Faculty, School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies, University of South Florida

“... we were never meant to survive” – Audre Lorde (1978)

A much-cited line in Audre Lorde’s *Litany of Survival*, “we were never meant to survive,” encapsulates how the crushing weight of white supremacy, heteronormativity, patriarchy, along with other systems of oppressions were designed with our destruction, the demise of the marginalized, in mind. Impregnated with meaning and imbued with power because of its elegant simplicity, most people do not know that the full stanza reads, “So it is better to speak remembering we were never meant to survive.” Without this context, Lorde seems resigned to her subaltern status, when in actuality, what she is doing is imploring us to reject passivity and silence. It is precisely because we were never meant to survive that we must commit the most personal parts of ourselves: our bodies, emotions, and voice to the project of liberation.

#### **Rationale**

This project emerges at a moment when recent uprisings against anti-Black racism in the U.S. have energized the grassroots efforts for which Black leaders and activists across the Americas, and on the African continent had already previously laid a foundation. The shroud of collective trauma that fell over Black people around the world was palpable. Irrespective of where we were, we all identified with George Floyd. Across the world, images of those excruciating, yet painfully familiar, 8 minutes and 46 seconds were played on an endless loop, and while the world was transfixed, Black people were retraumatized, yet again.

For those looking from outside the US, it was not lost upon them that most people could mourn George Floyd’s death as tragic while nonchalantly accepting and abetting state-sanctioned violence against Black bodies locally. Among countless others, we mourn include João Pedro Mattos Pinto and Marielle Franco in Brazil, Anderson Arboleda, Janner Garcia and Cristina Martinez Asprilla in Colombia, Evans Taylor Williams in Nicaragua, Ricardo Alonso Lozano in Mexico, and Javier Antonio Ambler, a Panama national, in Texas, US, Nathaniel Julius and Collins Khosa in South Africa, Yasin Hussein Moyo in Kenya, Margret Nanyunja in Uganda. Black feminist perspectives would also highlight how the global response to Floyd’s death is markedly different from the media and social discourse that surrounds the deaths of Breonna Taylor, Uyinene Mrwetyana, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, Tina Ezekwe, Margret Nanyunja, Evelyn Namulondo, Tazne van Wyk and others whose lives we have lost due to femicide. And, despite the staggering levels of violence and murders committed against trans women (significantly higher than it is for either cis-men and cis-women), their deaths are nearly rendered invisible within this same discourse. For this reason, this moment engenders a sense of hope and

ambivalence and also calls for researchers and activists to engage with multiple critical approaches such as: critical race theory, Black feminist thought, intersectionality, decoloniality, queer theory, and necropolitics.

The world calls on Black bodies, Black emotions, and Black voices to explain what has already been explained, to research what has already been researched, to speak what has already been spoken about. We are, on one hand, optimistic that our longstanding situated research on racism and systems of oppression might be acknowledged. But, at the same time, we are cautious of being used as a spectacle of a different kind: symbolically displayed and superficially engaged.

Since the world seems to be listening many of us have chosen to use this moment to reiterate the case for our humanity. However, how much is this labor costing us? What is its price in our own lives, our psyche, our health and all that we deem personal? Further, since we lend not only our intellect but also our bodies to the movement, does the personal even exist at all?

### **Call for Contributions**

We are pleased to invite Afro-descendant advocates, artists, activists, scholars and researchers to contribute to an edited collection that explores the bridge between the personal and the political and how we navigate this fine line in the global movement for Black lives. Appearing in print with some contributions featured online, the edited collection will provide more nuanced and multi-vocal perspectives of Black experiences across the African continent and the African Diaspora to reveal a more critical look into the dilemmas, contradictions, difficulties and overall vicissitudes that emerge from our personal, yet political experiences as Black peoples in the world. Our intention is for this to be a multilingual collection and we invite contributions written in English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, isiZulu, isiXhosa, seSotho, Yoruba, kiSwahili, and other languages that connect the Black diaspora.

In addition to formal book chapters, we welcome a wide range of submissions, including photographs, poems, short stories, graphic art pieces, sculpture, and songs, among other cultural expressions. Our goal is to create a collection that speaks to the resilience and complexity of our anti-racism efforts and illustrates the value of forging transnational, national, and local ties while also centering what happens to Black people's emotions, bodies, and lives in these negotiations. By highlighting these experiences, we gain theoretical and substantive insights about the intimate ways that interlocking systems of oppression impact Black people, across all identity spectrums and diasporas, and the strategies that we use to defy them.

We are seeking contributions that address any of the following or related issues:

### **The Politics behind public anti-racist activism**

- The politics of writing from personal wounds
- Academic Activism
- Invisible labor and social media engagement
- Code switching and other personal silencing strategies
- Bringing anti-racist activism into classrooms and communities
- Costs of derailment strategies on activists' efforts

### **Emotions, Marginalization, and Personal Relationships**

- Loneliness, burn out, dark nights of the soul, vulnerability, ambivalence and other weighted emotional experiences (guilt, regret, shame, etc.)
- Black Joy (inspiration, gratitude, pride, liberation, happiness, optimism for the future, etc.)
- The impact of anti-racist activism on personal, familial, and romantic relationships

### **Politics of Transnational Solidarity**

- Transnational Black Solidarity (The global movement of #BlackLivesMatter)
- Geopolitical hierarchies of blackness
- Using privilege to amplify Black voices

### **Embodiment Politics**

- Politics of respectability (Personal Aesthetics and cultural assimilation)
- Dissident Bodies
- Black Queerness
- Gender and Sexual resistance
- Policing and surveillance of black bodies through mainstream cultural markers
- Coexistence of Black cultural appreciation or appropriation and black disposability
- Multiple significance of Black breath

### **Representation, Privilege and Protest**

- Distinctions among allyship, accompaniment, and accomplice-ing
- Symbolic and performative anti-racism
- Tokenism and “representing the race”
- Movement co-optation and appropriation

### **Miscellaneous**

- Other issues related to navigating the bridge between the personal and the political

### **Submission Details:**

We welcome the submission of abstracts, brief descriptions of artistic work, and full submissions of original, previously unpublished, material. To submit any of these materials, please complete the following link: <http://bit.ly/surpassing-survival> by **February 15, 2021**. If accepted, complete submissions (Drafts) will be requested by **June 1, 2021**.

All academic submissions should be between 10-20 pages, typed and double-spaced in APA format. Although submissions in English are encouraged, the editors are prepared to work with all contributors who submit their work in other languages. Similarly, we especially encourage submissions from womxn (we use this term to be inclusive of cis-women and foreground trans- and nonbinary experiences).

If you have any question, comment or initial inquiries kindly email us at [surpassingsurvival@gmail.com](mailto:surpassingsurvival@gmail.com) with your name, and contact information (including whatsapp, if possible).