

When Old Issues Call Forth a New People: A Constitutive Rhetorical Analysis of Black Liberation Manifestos

Abstract

While much rhetorical research has been dedicated to social movements, not as much scholarship has examined the manifesto texts that form the rhetorical basis for said movements. This essay analyzes whether related rhetorical forms exist across multiple manifesto discourses, specifically elements of constitutive rhetoric, through the study of the UNIA and Black Panther Party's manifestos. Although the scope of this particular inquiry is too narrow to provide a definitive conclusion, it appears constitutive elements recur enough across black liberation discourses to warrant further discussion on whether manifestos ought to be considered as a separate rhetorical genre.

Keywords: MANIFESTO, GENRE, CONSTITUTIVE RHETORIC, BLACK LIBERATION

While many are familiar with figures such as Marcus Garvey, Stokely Carmichael, or Huey P. Newton, fewer are as conversant with the Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World or the Black Panther Party Platform. Despite increased rhetorical scholarship in the study of social movements, there has been a seeming scarcity of research regarding manifestos themselves, particularly if they exhibit related rhetorical forms across multiple discourses. This might be because of changing notions of rhetorical research. In an era where McGee's notions of fragmentation have become the norm, studying a single social text might be deemed too limiting to understand the breadth of a group's rhetorical strategies. Nonetheless, due to the central role that manifestos play in the formation of social movements, it is important that scholars turn their attention to these texts. Moreover, it should be determined whether such discourses display enough similarity to justify the creation of a separate rhetorical genre to aid future criticism. Establishing a rhetorical genre would allow scholars to ascertain whether recurring patterns of form exist across multiple manifesto texts. In addition, utilizing genre analysis for studying manifestos allows for more than just mere classification; it reveals similar cultural patterns of oppression and resistance in the relationship between dominant and marginalized communities. To that end, this essay examines the manner in which manifestos call particular groups into being, whether that process is reflective of constitutive rhetoric, and if such elements can be found across multiple discourses. Using such a lens is appropriate, because while the specific policy proposals within manifestos are often limited by their temporality, the texts' constitutive elements can have much broader and lasting cultural impact, both within the social movement and in the larger hegemonic society. Though analyzing constitutive rhetorical elements on their own is not enough to establish manifestos as a rhetorical genre, such examination will provide the foundation for future scholarship and discussion on this matter. The texts employed for this inquiry will be the Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World and the Black Panther Party Platform. To conduct this analysis, first the rhetorical context surrounding the creation of these texts will be studied,

followed by the theoretical foundations of genre criticism and constitutive rhetorical theory. Next, a justification for the selection of these texts will be outlined followed by their examination. Then, some rhetorical implications regarding the possible establishment of manifesto as a rhetorical genre, the paradoxes in constituting an autonomous people, and the function of narrative in constructing a collective fantasy will be discussed.

Rhetorical Context: Divergences from Mainstream Civil Rights Movements

The Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World and Black Panther Party Platform were both the products of tumultuous eras in American and black civil rights history. The former was the brainchild of Marcus Garvey, a Caribbean-born radical black activist who advocated a bold vision of pan-Africanism (Martin 63, 68). He was best known for founding the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1917 in Jamaica (59). By 1920, the UNIA had set up operations in Harlem, and within a few years became the largest pan-African organization in the world, with over 1,000 branches in forty different countries. Garvey's establishment of the UNIA dovetailed with his larger rhetorical strategy. Namely, he believed that the path towards creating a vibrant black identity in the United States was to reclaim Africa as the "motherland" of all blacks. Up until that point, most blacks in the United States had, at best, little conceptualization of Africa or, at worst, strictly regarded it in a negative sense, a place oftentimes conjured up by whites to justify their racism (Grant 162). To combat these perceptions, Garvey quickly gained popularity in the United States by capitalizing on black disillusionment after the end of World War I. Despite significant sacrifices from black men who fought for the United States during the war, they came back home to find no recognition of their service from the U.S. government, and most importantly no material gains in equality (Grant 158). Garvey used this disenchantment to exhort blacks to break away from the accommodationist policies of Booker T. Washington and adopt a more militant stance, famously declaring, "The time for cowardice is past. The

old-time Negro is gone – buried with Uncle Tom” (Grant 159). The “old-time Negro,” which at the time was the mainstream stance of the black civil rights movement, advocated that blacks work within the white-dominated systems of government and business in order to advance black causes. This position, subsequently, was noted for avoiding direct confrontation with white dominance and instead accommodating to black subjugation (Grant 160). Hence, the Declaration of Rights was the culmination of two notable rhetorical shifts in black civil rights rhetoric: reclaiming Africa in order to make it the locus of a new pan-African identity, and a move towards confrontation with white domination.

While the latter text, the Black Panther Party Platform, was released more than forty five years after Garvey’s Declaration of Rights, it too was at the crosscurrents of a shift in black civil rights rhetoric. During the mid-1960s, race-related riots occurred in almost three hundred cities across the United States, epitomizing black frustration with continuing inequality as well as white police brutality (Jeffries 7). In 1966, Huey P. Newton, along with fellow black activist Bobby Seale, founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) in Oakland, California after being dissatisfied with what they perceived as a lack of radicalism from other local black groups and racial exclusion from white radicals (5). In the same year, Stokely Carmichael became the head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which marked a change in the organization’s strategy from non-violence and working within the political system to achieve equality to Black Nationalism and self-defense as a justifiable means for violence. Thus, the BPP was able to ride a wave of nascent black militarism to prominence, and used this as an opportunity to reemphasize black masculinity as means for achieving separation, rather than integration, from the white race (Hughey 30-1). The BPP Platform epitomized these trends.

Review of Literature: Genre, Constitutive Rhetoric, and the Paradoxes of Autonomy and Narrative

If constitutive rhetorical theory can be reflected within multiple manifesto discourses, it would illustrate a recurring form and subsequently provide a basis to determine whether such texts constitute

their own rhetorical genre. First, however, the key tenets and purposes of generic criticism must be established. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson are often credited with formulating our current conceptualization of this method. They argue that generic rhetorical criticism helps discern a recurrent form, and then uses that form as a lens to compare one rhetorical text to other similar texts (446). The purpose of generic criticism is not to merely classify, for Campbell and Jamieson state, “The justification for a generic claim is the understanding it produces rather than the ordered world it creates” (451). What this method provides critics is insight into how a particular exigency induces and constrains particular responses, how prior rhetoric shapes current discourses, and how the relationship between audience and rhetor operates in specific situations (450). Generic criticism is founded on the belief that rhetorical forms do not work in isolation but rather in coordination across particular forms of discourse. In addition, generic criticism can be used for more contemporary cultural analysis. Joshua Gunn argues that the method should be employed in order to help gain an, “understanding of reception and invention as a largely unconscious process” (18). Thus, revealing this process gains insight into broader social systems. Gunn continues, “The function of the generic critic is to bring social forms into conscious awareness by restoring them to their verbal character – by describing them, in language, as iterations of a recurring social form.” Therefore, generic criticism gives insight into both rhetorical and social forms.

Next, the theoretical foundations of constitutive rhetoric must be discussed. At its core, constitutive rhetoric challenges basic notions of what establishes an audience for a text. Traditionally, audiences were conceived of in a positivist fashion. That is, for any particular rhetorical situation there was a defined group of rational individuals for whom the text intended to address. Recently however, scholars have challenged such beliefs in favor of the view that audiences are constructed through the text itself. Edwin Black argues that rhetorical texts contain a Second Persona, or an “ideal auditor” that is projected in the discourse of what the rhetor wishes the audience to be (334-335). Rather than merely

targeting a particular physical audience to believe in a certain ideology, the text actually goes a step further and attempts to convince its recipients to identify with a particular type of person that is reflective of an ideology. Michael Calvin McGee also elucidates on this principle, declaring that the concept of “people” is too often taken as a given by rhetorical critics when analyzing messages (341). Instead, he proffers that “the people” in a rhetorical text are, “a fiction dreamed by an advocate and infused with an artificial, rhetorical reality by the agreement of an audience to participate in a collective fantasy” (343). Due to this, an audience shouldn’t be merely viewed as an immutable presence, but rather a rhetorical creation with “both a social and objective reality.” This interplay between the objective realities that face an audience and the social realities or “collective fantasies” that an audience buys into is critical, as the latter synthesizes the realities of the former in order to form a cohesive unit. Maurice Charland examines this interplay and the rhetorical creation of “the people” even further, using the Althusserian notion of interpellation to contend that rhetoric is used to pull the audience to not only identify with the “ideal auditor” as explained by Black, but to actually become it and thus place themselves within the discourse (137-138). Moreover, he states that the participation in a “collective fantasy” as explained by McGee is accomplished through narrative (143). This not only places the audience in a social reality constructed by the rhetor, but leaves them in a position to enact the “closure” of said narrative. As such, Charland concludes, constitutive rhetoric is inherently ideological in the Marxian sense as it establishes how its subjects identify themselves which subsequently shapes how they view the larger world (142-143). In short, constitutive rhetoric seeks to explain how texts create collective fantasies for an audience to participate in so that they can share a common ideology.

Despite this, a rhetor can still “fail” in their employment of constitutive rhetoric. Kenneth Zagacki contends that constitutive rhetoric lends itself to a paradox, as such rhetoric attempts to call an autonomous people into being. Yet, that people are inherently tied to the rhetor who constitutes their identity, as he explains, “the emergence of a reconstituted and seemingly autonomous identity is rooted

in paradox—becoming a subject is intricately bound up with being subjected to power” (273-4). In order to address this, he argues that rhetors must “turn [these paradoxes] into founding opportunities or resources for the establishment of a political telos. They must understand that many audiences exist between and among competing narratives” (288-9). Without this acknowledgment however, a rhetor will fail in successfully creating a reconstituted people as outlined by Charland. Moreover, Helen Tate explains that if a text’s constitutive rhetoric employs a narrative that fails to accommodate the material concerns of the majority of its constructed people, it will be unsuccessful in maintaining identity (26-7). Even worse, it may give opponents the rhetorical space to appropriate their constituted people. Given this, constitutive rhetoric must balance both creating a narrative that creates autonomy yet is mindful of the material reality it seeks to address.

Textual Analysis: Calling Forth a New “People” to Combat Old Problems

The Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World and the Black Panther Party Platform were selected because while there has been much written about black civil rights discourse, not as much attention has been paid to studying their manifestos as stand-alone texts. This analysis will seek to add to the scholarship in that field, and subsequently offer new perspective on each of these social movements. Moreover, although both texts ostensibly strove for similar goals – greater equality and agency for blacks in the United States – they did so in different eras and in different ways. Thus, to help determine if manifestos do represent the “undercurrents of history” as articulated by Campbell and Jamieson, the two texts will be examined to see how they employ constitutive rhetoric respective to their unique rhetorical exigencies. This theoretical lens will be applied to the two texts separately, followed by some rhetorical implications.

Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World

The Declaration was adopted at the UNIA Convention in New York City in August of 1920 (Martin 68). Although the document was ostensibly drafted by an international coalition of delegates, the entire process was presided over by Garvey. Moreover, at the conclusion of this convention Garvey was elected as “Provisional President of Africa,” clearly demonstrating the influence he held over the convention process. The text is organized into three areas: a short preamble, a twelve-point list of complaints, and a fifty-four point Declaration of Rights. Notably, the title of the document bears striking similarity to the Declaration of Rights of the Man and the Citizen, the central manifesto of the French Revolution. Such radical overtones can be found throughout the text. Constitutive rhetoric will be used to examine the Declaration in two central areas: its use of narrative, and its ideological function.

First, the Declaration employs a narrative that addresses the material concerns of its audience. In doing so, it constructs a collective fantasy in which they can become participants. While the Declaration is structured more like a series of lists and does not employ narrative in the traditional chronological sense, the complaints section cites common travails experienced by blacks around the world to create a pan-African audience no longer demarcated by nationality, but rather by the African Diaspora. Charland explains that narratives work through a representational effect; that is, they provide a locus of understanding a particular series of events (139). The Declaration’s opening complaint sets the foundation for this focal point, as it asserts, “That nowhere in the world, with few exceptions, are black men accorded equal treatment with white men” (259). Hence, the text contends that the audience should no longer interpret their discrimination as merely localized occurrences, but rather as being indicative of a global, systemic subjugation that requires a transnational response. It continues in that first complaint by stating, “We are not willingly accepted as guests in the public hotels and inns of the world for no other reason than our race and color” (260). By explaining that they are excluded from

“public” hotels and inns, the text lays out a narrative of blacks being a permanent counterpublic in every corner of the globe. Throughout the rest of the Declaration, the phrase “of the world” is liberally used to remind its audience of injustices occurring everywhere.

Additionally, the list of complaints organizes specific instances so as to be focused on any one particular group. Injustices listed as occurring, “In the southern portion of the United States of America,” are couched between other points decrying how the Europeans have colonized Africa to the extent where, “the natives are compelled to surrender their lands to aliens and are treated in most instances like slaves,” and how, “nearly everywhere [blacks] are paid smaller wages than white men” (260). Altogether, these complaints paint a picture of black marginalization being a universal problem, allowing blacks to reconstitute their identity to being one based on race and not on national origin. In doing so, they participate in a collective fantasy where an injustice committed against blacks anywhere is felt everywhere by the African Diaspora. This sentiment is summed up in the final section declaring their rights when the text argues, “The Negro is entitled to even-handed justice before all courts...when this is denied him on account of his race and color such denial is an insult to the race as a whole” (261). This creates an inventional foundation for the Declaration’s solutions; the only logical reaction to such a broad problem is a solution that can match its scope.

Likewise, the narrative allows for the audience to participate in its closure, thereby reflecting one of constitutive rhetoric’s key tenets. The final section of the text opens by saying, “In order to encourage our race all over the world and to stimulate it to a higher and grander destiny, we demand and insist on the following Declaration of Rights” (261). By doing this, the Declaration is not merely stating its positions; it is inviting its audience to take ownership and fight for these rights around the world. As Charland explicates, “While classical narratives have an ending, constitutive rhetorics leave the task of narrative closure to their constituted subject,” thereby empowering the audience to participate

in the collective fantasy (143). Each of the complaints is addressed with multiple declarations of rights, with the audience playing a crucial role in seeing them fulfilled. For example, in answering the complaint of being unable to find lodging while traveling due to discrimination, the Declaration affirms, "The right for the Negro to travel unmolested throughout the world be not abridged by any person or persons, and all Negroes are called upon to give aid to a fellow Negro when thus molested" (261). Through the use of narrative, the text creates a collective fantasy, thereby turning shared declarations of "we" into individualized directives for each participant. This allows participation in the fantasy, thus reconstituting the black identity from being localized to pan-African.

Next, the Declaration operates ideologically, which is another critical component of constitutive rhetoric. As Charland explains, constitutive rhetoric becomes ideological when it shapes how the individual view themselves in the larger world through a collective identity (137, 143). It does this most notably in the Declaration of Rights section. First, the text declares, "We deprecate the use of the term 'nigger' as applied to Negroes, and demand that the word 'Negro' be written with a capital 'N'" (261). This form of identification can be understood in a Burkean sense, as the text seeks to gain power through cleansing and naming. By casting out the term "nigger" and demanding to be referred to as "Negro," the text transforms the black identity into a Negro one. But it is more than just a mere title, as the text's identification lays out ways that the Negro is defined both explicitly and implicitly. Overtly, the text declares, in adjacent points, "That the colors Red, Black and Green, be the colors of the Negro race...That the anthem 'Ethiopia, Thou Land of Our Fathers,' etc., shall be the anthem of the Negro race" (263). This lays the new form of identity beyond any one nationality, but a newly formed one that is inherently rooted in Africa. The continent's centrality to the new identity is emphasized when the Declaration proclaims, "We believe in the freedom of Africa for the Negro people of the world...we also demand Africa for the Africans at home and abroad" (262). Thus, black identity goes from being disunited and local to a transnational Negro with its own flag, anthem, and place.

There are also implicit definitions within this new Negro identity. Specifically, Christian elements are found throughout the text, such as when it posits, "With the help of Almighty God, we declare ourselves the sworn protector of the honor and virtue of our women and children" (261). Moreover, the text opens and closes by referring to the date as "in the year of our Lord" (259, 264). This identification runs into the paradox as identified by Zagacki; while the text seeks to constitute an autonomous people, the new identity is inexorably reliant on the dominant power from which it seeks to break itself away. The reconstituted identity is intended to be pan-African, but one of its implicit characteristics inherently reaffirms the Christianizing effect the West has had on Africa. Despite attempting to create a new Negro, the Declaration reflects an internalized colonization by confirming one of the very influences that has subjugated blacks and erased its cultural heritage throughout history.

Another area the text operates ideologically is by telling its members to function as a citizen based on race and not on nationality. It states that laws should be interpreted on the premise that "our race should in no way tolerate any insults that may be interpreted to mean disrespect to our color" (261). Several consecutive points argue that they should not obey certain laws, pay taxes, or respect local government institutions if they fail to serve the interests of the Negro (261). This is indicative of the Althusserian aspect of interpellation. Charland explains that the subject is transcendent in constitutive rhetoric; thus, in order to become a constructed "people" as McGee argues, a process of interpellation or "recruitment" must occur (137-138). By telling its audience to ignore local government in favor of serving a transnational people, the text interpellates its audience and makes them an integral part of the discourse. This illustrates the epistemological shift of constitutive rhetoric, as the subjects make sense of their disconnected experiences of discrimination into a new identity that places race above nationality or local rule of law.

The Black Panther Party Platform and Program

Upon its adoption in October 1966, the Black Panther Party Platform became the foundational text for the BPP. While the text is short, it attempts to both create a new black identity while establishing the core foundational practices of the BPP. To do this, the text is divided into four sections: a ten-point manifesto titled “What We Want, What We Believe,” a twenty six-point outline “Rules of the Party,” an “8 Points of Attention,” and lastly a “3 Main Rules of Attention.” Like the Declaration of Rights, the text will be analyzed using constitutive rhetoric through its narrative and how it operates ideologically.

Similar to the UNIA’s text, the Platform does not utilize a standard chronological format to construct its narrative. Its first section, however, does construct a collective fantasy that addresses its audience’s material concerns in order for its adherents to become participate in it. In doing so, it provides a lens through which its audience can understand all other events. The Platform does this by repeatedly referring to the United States federal government as a “racist government” that actively works against the interests of all blacks (469-70). Its main focuses are on the justice system and economics. First, it portrays the American justice system as inherently unable to serve the needs of blacks, arguing, “We have been, and are being tried by all-white juries that have no understanding of the ‘average reasoning man’ of the black community” (470). The text argues that despite assurances from the Fourteenth Amendment, blacks are continually denied the right to a jury of their peers. This is reinforced when it also demands that “We believe that all black people should be released from the many jails and prisons because they have not received a fair and impartial trial.” Thus, the narrative constructs a problem that is systematic; although perhaps hyperbolic, by arguing that all blacks have not received due process to a fair trial the Platform makes the case that the justice system is inherently broken for blacks. Moreover, this notion of the government not living up to its promises is repeated

throughout the text. On the issue of economics, the Platform asserts, “We believe that this racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules”

(469). Again, the text provides a central theme of government breaking its promises to blacks.

Buttressing this argument, the Platform notes that the German government was in negotiations for paying reparations to the Jewish people for the Holocaust, yet, “The Germans murdered six million Jews.

The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million black people.” The narrative places black suffering in a category that makes even the Holocaust pale in comparison, yet still have received nothing. Additionally, every black’s death was projected onto “the American racist,” which is ostensibly the U.S. government. This further entrenches the central collective fantasy of a racist government that has, is, and will forever be Impossible to work with. This reconstitutes the black identity away from being tied in any way to the United States government or its institutions.

Furthermore, the text demonstrates an open end to the narrative for which the audience can play a role. Specifically, the Platform’s last point in the first section demands, “We want land, bread, housing, education, clothing, justice and peace. And, as our major political objective, a United Nations-supervised plebiscite to be held throughout the black colony in which only black colonial subjects will be allowed to participate, for the purpose of determining the will of black people as to their national destiny” (470). Following this point is the opening section of the U.S. Declaration of Independence without any further adornment. Besides implicitly arguing that the United States has failed to uphold the very values it espouses in one of its most sacred documents, the Platform gives its reconstituted audience the ability to participate in the closure of the narrative. The last line of the section reads, “But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security” (471). The Platform argues that if the U.S. government fails to fulfill its most central demand, then blacks have the right to break away as they

have the moral authority due to past grievances. The narrative in this text creates a clear collective fantasy – a racist government that has continuously oppressed and reneged on promises to its black citizens, who thus have the right to their own form of self-governance under a document that the government itself holds to be sacrosanct. The issue, however, is that such rhetoric runs the risk of reifying the very federal government that it seeks to reconstitute its audience away from by affirming the exalted status of one of its most important texts. This may illustrate the dangers as outlined by Zagacki, where such paradoxes can lead to a failed constitutive rhetoric.

Next, the BPP Platform operates ideologically. Namely, it creates a transformed black identity that is centered on militarism. Much of this can be found in the latter sections. While many of the points deal with mundane day-to-day operations, it has strict instructions for how Black Panthers ought to conduct themselves. Point 16 in the “Rules” section, for example, demands that “All Panthers must learn to operate and service weapons correctly” (472). Moreover, in the final sections that “If we ever have to take captives we do not ill-treat them,” and that “Turn in everything captured from the attacking enemy.” In addition, the text contains several rules that mandate good behavior, such as not using drugs, not resorting to physical violence, not swearing, and not taking advantage of women. Although it does not reflect Burke’s notions of cleansing as in the UNIA text, the Platform does successfully create identification through naming – in this case creating what exactly it means to be a Black Panther – by laying out their specific actions. Moreover, it employs Burke’s negation as it clearly marks the Black Panthers away from what it is not, which is associated in any way with the federal government. The text specifically states, “No party member can join any other army force other than the BLACK LIBERATION ARMY,” and that “When arrested BLACK PANTHER MEMBERS will only give name, address, and sign nothing. Legal first aid must be understood by each Party member” (471). To be a Black Panther is to not abide by the edicts of the U.S. government, even if it meant breaking the law; at the time of its founding, the U.S. military was still drafting young men for war, which meant that Black

Panthers had to defy the military itself if needed. Hence, this identification has an inherently ideological function as it tells members how to interact with the larger world, thereby demonstrating Charland's ideal of interpellation. Notably, this interpellation allows the reconstituted audience to insert themselves in the discourse based on previous conceptions of how a military unit operates. Given this, the "recruitment" of the text occurs both on a rhetorical as well as a material level.

Implications: Genre, Constructing an Autonomous People, and Materially-Rooted Narratives

After employing constitutive rhetorical theory to examine the "Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World" and the "Black Panther Party Platform and Program," three main implications arise: manifestos are a possible rhetorical genre; paradoxes that can arise in constituting an autonomous people; and narratives playing a central role in constructing rhetorical fantasy. First, as outlined by Campbell and Jamieson, genre criticism must be able to provide insight into rhetorical forms that recur across multiple discourses. While it would be impossible to unqualifiedly declare manifesto text as a genre for future criticism from this essay, the consistent presence of constitutive rhetoric may possibly lay the foundation for the creation of one. Although the texts were both the products of different places and times, both point to the possibility that a central function of manifesto is to call a group of people into being.

Moreover, the nature in which they reconstituted the identities of their audience were generated by their rhetorical situation, a key tenet in determining whether a genre exists. The Declaration of Rights came after the conclusion of a World War, thus recreating an identity rooted in internationalism and universally-held ideals of freedom for all blacks. The Party Platform, meanwhile, was formed in the midst of a war in Vietnam that disproportionately affected blacks in the United States, a maelstrom of diverging civil rights activism, and escalating police brutality and tension between black and white neighborhoods. As such, its identity was rooted in self-defense and appeals to military

order. Both, however, demonstrated similar patterns of resistance to prejudicial governments, namely in a pointed refusal to acknowledge or abide by laws deemed unjust. As such, both illustrate broader cultural currents that are indicative of black resistance to white hegemony in American society. Further generic analysis may help vocalize the unconscious social patterns as previously described by Gunn, and demonstrate the continuing utility of genre criticism in cultural studies. To be clear however, a true rhetorical genre operates as a series of forms working in concert across multiple discourses. The very nature of this study, by examining a broader rhetorical theory than individual elements, is unable to make such an evaluation. Additional rhetorical research is required to determine which rhetorical elements, as well as which internal dynamics holding them together, lead to manifestos calling a group of people into being. Only after that is further illuminated can a more final judgment be made on manifesto as a genre.

Next, both texts illustrate Zagacki's paradox in constitutive rhetoric. While both manage to create a "people" as explained by McGee, both tie the new identities to the very power structures that necessitated the reconstitution in the first place. For the Declaration of Rights it was creating a pan-African identity rooted in Christianity, reaffirming a religion of colonization; for the BPP Platform it was justifying a racially autonomous governmental body through a text that is held sacred by the United States government, reaffirming a civic religion of marginalization. Perhaps this may explain why, despite their lofty ambitions, the movements that both texts were affiliated with failed to create lasting new identities, as neither pan-Africanism nor militant Black Nationalism are considered part of modern mainstream black ideology. The key for the success of future constitutive rhetorics is to create a new identity that is truly separate from the power structure it seeks to break away from. Yet, how does a social movement accomplish this when the dominant social structure is their only frame of reference? Perhaps cross-cultural interpellation or adoption of new communication styles may be the answer for this.

Last, while both texts successfully employed narrative to construct collective fantasies, it is important to keep in mind Tate's work regarding narrative and material concerns. In the Declaration of Rights, the text runs the risk of being too broad. The creation of a pan-African identity necessitates that it incorporates a broad base of injustices; however, doing so could be too broad so as to engage the needs of the entire audience. It should be noted that only specific instances were brought up in regards to the American South. Despite attempting to reclaim "Africa" as its homeland, its issues were only addressed as a continent, not by specific countries or tribes. Ironically, the narrative used for the pan-African identity may have failed to deal with the material concerns of actual Africans. Likewise, the Platform's economic issues may have been too narrow for blacks that did not fall into lower socioeconomic classes. Such a narrow inventional base as a result of the narrative creates a collective fantasy that inherently leaves out some of the very people that the constitutive rhetoric is attempting to interpolate. Future examination of each specific text and the discourses surrounding their release may better clarify Tate's notions as to whether a failure in constituting a broad enough people led to each group's eventual marginalization and downfall. The issue with manifestos, it appears, is not so much the attempt in calling forth a people, but in ensuring that the response to that call be a lasting identity and not a hollow rejoinder.

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