

CONSTRUCTING REVOLUTIONARY BLACK FEMINISMS:

What Angela Davis: An Autobiography can still teach Us About Community, Education, & Liberation



A critical reading of Angela Davis's 1974 autobiography as a foundational feminist text & political manifesto: as a firm rejection of all logics of carcerality & capitalism. Through the narration of her own incarceration, and the conditions which led to her commitment to a global struggle, Davis names **policized education & Beloved Community** as meaningful technologies for collective liberation. Her historical & contemporary work is **explicitly pro-Black, pro-Indigenous, pro-Migrant, pro-Queer, Marxist, anti-imperialist, & abolitionist** — constructing new feminisms that have allowed racialized, disabled women, MaGes, and other oppressed peoples to proudly identify as feminists, today!

“I was criticized very heavily [for doing “a man’s job.”] Women should not play leadership roles, they insisted. A woman was supposed to “inspire” her man and educate his children. The irony of their complaint was that much of what I was doing had fallen to me by default. [...] It was also ironical that precisely those who criticized me most did the least to ensure the success of the rally.”

Part Four: Flames, 139



TODAY'S PIG IS TOMORROW'S BACON

liberation is a shared responsibility, and one, that through collective power, has always been within our reach. simply put, we need each other to get free ♥

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY & EDUCATION FOR COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

INTRODUCTION

Angela Davis is one of the most beloved & renowned feminist leaders of our times — from her political organizing, education & activist work, to her commitment to communism, anti-racism, abolition, and anti-capitalist politic — Davis's contributions to socialist feminist theory and thought have revolutionized the methods and technologies of popular and feminist resistance.

OUT OF MANY, ONE

Part One: Nets begins in the days leading up to Davis's 1970 arrest and covers her incarceration in NY through her extradition to California's Marin County Jail. She names prison as the start of her identification with feminism — deeply informed by the relationships & modalities of care she saw between other women, across multiple lines of difference, within the prison. In this time we

see Davis continue to organize: most often through politicized education in community.



“Family, lawyers, friends, comrades, Committee workers, and most of the jurors — we all sat in the sun on the grass in the backyard. I sank deep into the moment, husbanding this delight, hoarding it. For I knew it would be short-lived. Work. Struggle. Confrontation lay before us like a rock-strewn road. We would walk it... but first the grass, the sun... and the people.”



When someone asks me about violence, I just find it incredible, because what it means is that *the person who is asking that question has absolutely no idea what Black people have gone through*, what Black people have experienced in this country since the time the first Black person was kidnapped from the shores of Africa.

ROOTS OF A REVOLUTIONARY

Davis revisits her childhood in 1940s Alabama, on “Bombingham”, sharing a deep awareness of racism, as well as intra-community issues like colorism & texturism, from her lived experience & formalized schooling. In university, she deepens both her theory & praxis of liberation: through cross-issue Solidarity & Beloved Community.



CONCLUSION

Davis contextualizes her work as “situated on a continuum of courageous struggles against racist police violence, the deeply embedded racism of the carceral system, and racial capitalism”, warning against the ease of individualizing a collective movement. She reminds us, time and time again, that her own freedom was a result of the “tremendous power of united, organized people to transform their will into reality”; that community is power, and that “we — you and I — are [our] only hope for life and freedom.”

An excerpt from Angela Davis's 1972 interview from Marin County Jail. This was the same year as her acquittal on all charges, perhaps a sign that the tide was shifting to recognize the violence of segregation, and that resistance to white supremacy was not only non-violent, but necessary.

DAVIS & FEMINIST CANON

Through the construction of Davis's Revolutionary Black Feminisms, she remains committed to the interconnected nature of our Global Struggle, informed by an analysis of class, race, gender, and imperialism. Davis recognizes the personal as political — but never individual. She offers the methodologies of peer to peer technologies: ones that are community-led & serving. Her decades long body of work repeatedly names & demonstrates accessible, politicized education, as a path to Collective Liberation.

POLITICIZING THE PERSONAL

Davis's autobiography contextualizes her “overwhelming sense of belonging to a community of humans—a community of struggle against poverty and racism.” Her autobiography, often understood as a political manifesto, seeks to highlight the people and experiences that propelled her to liberatory praxis and noting her own responsibility to “preserve & build upon the movement.”



BLACK POWER



WE SHALL OVERCOME

SCAN ME



READ THE ESSAY