THE CULTURAL PRODUCTION OF MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

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The Cultural Production of Mumia Abu-Jamal

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Abstract

The recordings, writings, and public figure of Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Pennsylvania death-row prisoner since 1982, represent synecdochic manifestations of his body in space, his oeuvre in time, and his figure in code. This thesis traces both the cultural artifacts that he produces, and how he and Daniel Faulkner, whom he is convicted of killing, have been discursively produced as cultural figures. It suggests that Abu-Jamal represents more than a polarizing history, instead complicating the interconnectedness of audio, textual, and digital media. The thesis uses interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological interventions to examine media, prisons, and profanity in culture.
I owe many thanks.

My advisors kept me focused, honest, and ambitious from this project's conception to its presentation. My family supports, loves, and challenges me, even when they do not understand me. My colleagues and friends endured too many conversations on these topics, but they crystallized my thought. Those who participated in the research, both personally and through their public words, each provided rich information, sometimes even data. Finally, the family and friends of both Mumia Abu-Jamal and Daniel Faulkner, who kept this case close to their hearts, on their tongues, and thereby in the public view, made this thesis both possible and relevant.

I thank you all.

I dedicate the research and writing of this thesis to three: Mumia Abu-Jamal, with respect. Daniel Faulkner, in memory. Sophie Nusinov, my partner.
Then let us consider this question, not in relation to man only,
but in relation to animals generally, and to plants,
and to everything of which there is generation,
and the proof will be easier.

Socrates (quoted in Plato, *Phaedo*)
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* Video File Attached
* Hypertext File Attached
I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mumia Abu-Jamal's cultural production generates and reproduces much attention. It matters for studies of prison, media, and culture. It twists and remakes time, space, and code through unique vocal, textual, and digital techniques. Most importantly, it incorporates Abu-Jamal himself, as well as his relation to others, through mediated communication. This review of relevant literature includes a history of Abu-Jamal from his youth through the murder of Daniel Faulkner. It also addresses Abu-Jamal’s trial, conviction, incarceration, and subsequent appeals. Next, it summarizes his prolific media production from prison, and outlines theoretical issues raised by previous scholars, of media and of cultural studies, focusing on gaps in their research. The review concludes with a statement of my place in these discourses, a note on my research methods, and an outline of the thesis's chapters.

By defining cultural production and explaining who Abu-Jamal is, the study begins to suggest how it contributes to other scholarly discourses. Although many others have written about this case in terms of its political and legal implications, I focus on how it complicates studies of cultural production. The phrase "cultural production" implies both the mediation of thought (such as in books) and the establishment of a public figure (such as in discourse). Four lines of thought, raised by other thinkers, interact around that double meaning. Mass media and communications studies inform my framework for interpreting the structure of messages and organizations through which Abu-Jamal produces cultural artifacts. My understanding of how bodies interact in space builds on historical and cultural theory, including previous research on prisons. Critical theories from literary, linguistic, and political studies help to construct the genres that inform Abu-Jamal's body of work, as well as to trace its development over time. Finally,
a variety of work from visual culture, semiotics, and new media studies frames my discussion of the codes that make sense of Abu-Jamal's cultural figure. Overall, I study the multifaceted cultural production of Mumia Abu-Jamal in terms of how others have used it, and to what effect.

Throughout the study, but beginning in this chapter, I suggest that this research contributes to a new way of understanding three problems. First, neither Abu-Jamal's production of cultural artifacts nor his use of media have been rigorously and philosophically examined. This study suggests that he uses both media, and the systems in which he produces such media, in unique and complex ways. Second, the production of media from within prison, by prisoners, remains woefully under-researched, and this study seeks to contribute to that gap in the literature, by taking this microscopic, qualitative case study as an example. Third, the theoretical construct that I outline here, specifically, the combination of structuration theory with Foucauldian archaeology and genealogy, provides a powerful framework for designing research. In this case, it focuses on qualitative ways of listening, reading, and viewing, but it can also adapt to quantitative research techniques and macroscopic problems, especially focusing on the interconnectedness of media systems to one another, and to the world around them. Overall, this thesis represents the beginning of a much larger intellectual project, the study of cultural mediations of profanity. It begins, however, with the history and case of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

1. **Case History**

Born Wesley Cook on 24 April 1954, Mumia-Abu Jamal left high school to become a founding member of the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party.\(^1\) He served as the chap-

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1. This iteration of Abu-Jamal's background draws on many sources, including the *Encyclopedia Africana*, interviews with Abu-Jamal, court transcripts, and biographies in the back matter of his published works. However, I avoid relying either on Abu-Jamal's semi-autobiographical literary writings, or on unverified secondary sources.
ter's Minister of Information, creating their informational and propaganda materials, and working closely with the *Black Panther* newspaper. Already marked by the FBI as a "person to watch," he travelled the country to organize Black communities, relying on the writings and speeches of the revolutionary Malcom X, and on the Black Panther Party's principles as developed by Huey Newton. As the organization broke apart in the early 1970s, Abu-Jamal continued to focus on journalism. He attended classes at Goddard College in Vermont between 1978 and 1980, and worked for the campus radio station.\(^2\) Meanwhile, he continued to work in Philadelphia, as a journalist for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He wrote reports and hosted studio interviews at three stations in the city, including on a talk show that he hosted on WHUY. During that time, he served as the President of the National Association of Black Journalists.\(^3\) However, by the late 1970s, Abu-Jamal could not continue working for those stations, because of the controversial political opinions that he expressed in his reports.

During the late 1970s, the radical Black naturalist group MOVE, founded by John Africa, constantly clashed with the government and police of Philadelphia. Abu-Jamal's sympathetic coverage of the group's protracted 1978 standoff and eventual firefight with city police, which resulted in at least two deaths and a dozen arrests, led to his dismissal from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.\(^4\) By late 1981, he had taken a job as a taxi driver to support his family. After being robbed twice at gunpoint, he legally bought and registered a .38 caliber pistol to keep in his cab.

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2. James, ed. *Imprisoned Intellectuals*: 176 (hereafter, II)

3. *Encyclopedia Africana*: 14. WHUY is now WHYY.

On 9 December 1981, in the early hours of the morning, while parked in the cab near 13th and Locust Streets, he witnessed an altercation between a police officer and another man, whom he recognized as his brother. The details of what followed are widely contested, including among eyewitnesses, but this much is certain: Abu-Jamal joined the fracas; the police officer, Daniel Faulkner, was shot and killed; Abu-Jamal was shot and wounded. When other police officers arrived on the scene, they arrested Abu-Jamal and took him to the hospital. He was charged with murder in the first degree, convicted, and sentenced to death by Judge Albert Sabo in 1982. He remains on Death Row to this day, awaiting the outcome of appeals.

Abu-Jamal's imprisonment profoundly changed his production of cultural artifacts. Under the conditions of incarceration at the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institutes (SCI) at Huntingdon (1983-1995) and Greene (1995-present), Abu-Jamal and all other capital cases in Pennsylvania spend about twenty-three hours of each day in their cells; they are allowed a maximum of one hour each day in the exercise yard. Capital cases are permitted one non-contact visit each week, while "disciplinary custody" cases may receive up to one visit per month. Prison authorities monitor interpersonal communication, which they limit almost entirely to printed or written letters, and brief phone calls. Despite these conditions, Abu-Jamal has earned his GED, BA, MA, and an honorary doctorate of law while incarcerated. He has also continued to write, and to compose the brief audio commentaries for which he had become so well-known in Philadelphia. In 1994, his recordings gained the interest of mainstream media again.

Between February and March of that year, National Public Radio's premier news-magazine, *All Things Considered*, agreed to hire Abu-Jamal as a monthly commentator on the program. Noelle Hanrahan, a reporter for NPR and the director of the Prison Radio Project, had been recording Abu-Jamal since 1992. She secured a contract for Abu-Jamal with Ellen Weiss, executive producer of *All Things Considered*. Weiss, along with an assistant editor, selected at least nine of Abu-Jamal's commentaries from the many presented by Hanrahan. NPR agreed to pay Abu-Jamal one hundred fifty dollars for each broadcast essay. Hanrahan produced the recordings of Abu-Jamal at SCI Huntingdon in April 1994. Over the next month, NPR promoted the segment on the air, including by broadcasting self-identifications and excerpted clips from the recordings.

In May, just before the recordings were scheduled to be broadcast and syndicated, NPR's managing editor and vice president for news decided not to air them. Because NPR had broken their contract with Abu-Jamal, they paid him a "kill fee" of seventy-five dollars for the first unaired essay. That payment led the prison to punish Abu-Jamal with disciplinary custody, for "conducting the business or profession of journalism" while on Death Row. In turn, Abu-Jamal sued the prison for violation of his constitutional rights. Although Abu-Jamal successfully argued that he had been unconstitutionally singled out by the prison authorities, the state's Department of Corrections (PADC) later issued a directive prohibiting all recording of inmates, espe-

cially by news media or journalists, which remained in effect until 2002.\(^9\) The tapes from April 1994 remain in NPR's vault, unheard.

Those events transformed Abu-Jamal's writing. Before the NPR sessions, he had only published short essays and book chapters, in forums like the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, and the *Yale Law Journal*. After NPR's cancellation of his broadcast, Abu-Jamal authored his first book, *Live from Death Row*.\(^10\) The commercial success of that collection of essays led to two more in the next five years: *Death Blossoms*, and *All Things Censored*.\(^11\) He followed these with: *We Want Freedom*, a history of the Black Panther Party adapted from his Master's thesis; *Faith of our Fathers*, an examination of African-American religious traditions; and most recently, *Jailhouse Lawyers*, a study of prisoners who serve as legal proxies for other prisoners.\(^12\) The longer Abu-Jamal has remained on Death Row, the longer and more complex his writings have become.

In addition to pursuing more in-depth literary projects, Abu-Jamal began recording regular commentaries again, around 2002. Produced by the same reporter from 1994, Noelle Hanrahan, who had left NPR after their decision to cancel Abu-Jamal's broadcasts, the recordings appear on Prison Radio and Pacifica stations about twice a week, and are available as a podcast online. Other online communication, such as websites to advocate and raise funds for both Abu-Jamal and Daniel Faulkner, emerged around 1999. They became increasingly important to the case around 2004. The rise of social media websites, like Facebook and YouTube, further transformed how the case attracts international attention, even without Abu-Jamal's or Faulkner's own

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11. Abu-Jamal, *Death Blossoms; All Things Censored*.


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participation in online discourse about themselves. Because this study of Abu-Jamal's case focuses on the media surrounding and constituting its importance, the next section examines previous studies of mass media, and how this project complicates and builds upon them.

2. Media Matters

The media that transmit and constitute Abu-Jamal's cultural production include radio, print, and digital channels. Cultural practices of communication that involve or relate to him include organizational and interpersonal relationships, because of the complications inherent in producing media content from prison. Patterns of use, of particular technologies in practice, have particular structural effects, on the contexts in which those technologies are used. Wanda Orlikowski calls this productive practice "structuration." She constructs this theory in response to disagreements over whether social constructs or communication technologies had more influence on media use and choice. I suggest that Orlikowski's notion, applied to the mediated communication produced by Abu-Jamal, helps explain how that communication affects the systems of media and prison that interact around him. Her theory revises the earlier concept of "adaptive structuration" by studying how adaptive uses of technology restructure the rules and resources that constituted them in the first place, like a feedback loop. Orlikowski adopts part of that model, which shows how patterns of use develop, and adds the critical element of the effect of use patterns, namely, that such patterns help to constitute structure in organizations.

13. Orlikowski, "Using technology and constituting structures."
15. Poole and Desanetis, "Theory of Adaptive Structuration."
In this respect, Orlikowski appropriates Anthony Giddens's argument that agency in institutions must be analyzed across both space and time. She also draws on organizational studies, such as those conducted by Bruno Latour, who shows how non-human actors in a social or organizational network can wield agency as well as human actors. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's argument, that "fields of production," such as media, must be analyzed from the standpoint of practices that take place within and across them, appears in Orlikowski's focus on patterns of use. Structuration informs my approach to media as objects of analysis because it shows how social norms and organizational protocols, such as prison regulations or conditions of radio sponsorship, can themselves change over time based on the patterns of use that they govern.

Structuration takes institutional, organizational, and interpersonal relationships into account, reconsidering other theories of mass media and interpersonal communication. It frames the production of Abu-Jamal's recordings, and the effects that they have on the material and social relationships of cultural production. I consider the 1994 NPR recording session a critical incident exemplifying media use. Structuration helps explain how the structures and norms of the prison, radio and publishing institutions interact with his use of media, like recordings and books, to transform the rules governing both prison and mass media.

Studying the 1994 NPR session begs questions of censorship. For example, NPR's "non-participation" in the broadcast and syndication of Abu-Jamal's recordings can be described, borrowing a phrase from political science, as "self-censorship." W.P. Davison's "third person effect

18. Bourdieu, Field of Cultural Production.
hypothesis" provides one explanation of NPR's behavior. His hypothesis contends that consumers of mass media will feel more strongly about the perceived effect of a message on others than they will about that same effect on themselves.\(^{20}\) It further argues that, if consumers perceive a danger from the effect of that message on the third person involved, they will take action, such as censorship, to prevent the danger. While the perceptual component of this hypothesis enjoys strong support based on controlled experiments, its behavioral component has never been statistically validated.\(^{21}\) Although this study does not take up that challenge of validation through experimental design, it suggests a qualitative approach to the same problem, based on historical, legal, and textual sources -- and by reframing the problem to include organizations.

Davison's hypothesis tends to refer to individuals' perceptions, as opposed to organizational decisions. For example, Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo once responded to a question from Abu-Jamal at a press conference, by claiming that Abu-Jamal's reporting was dangerous to the city, and that it had to stop. While Rizzo implied that he did not believe Abu-Jamal's versions of the news, others might, and since Rizzo considered Abu-Jamal dangerous to those others (his constituents), he supported taking action against Abu-Jamal or his words. Rizzo supported, but did not necessarily take action. That distinction mirrors the disconnect between Davison's hypothesis's perceptual and behavioral components.\(^{22}\)

To address this problem, this study departs from established communication theory, to consider Davison's hypothesis as one example of a "media dependency" relationship.\(^{23}\) Media de-

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20. Davison, "Third-Person Effect."
23. Ball-Rokeach and Defleur, "Media dependency theory."
dependency argues that individuals make choices about their media consumption based on their structural position in a network of relations, rather than on their personal preferences. Like the third person effect, this theory focuses on individual media consumers, not organizations or producers. Even when it has been applied in studies of prison settings, media dependency tends to focus on consumption rather than production. The combination of these two ideas frame my examination of the reception of Abu-Jamal's recordings. In that capacity, they help explain how NPR's (non-)use of the 1994 recordings changed relationships throughout the prison and media systems. However, to address Abu-Jamal's relations of production, especially relations between the bodies and spaces involved, we must turn to other thinkers.

3. BODY MATTERS

I take an "archeological" approach to the study of Abu-Jamal. That is, I consider him a bodily subject, producing material cultural artifacts, from within a carefully controlled space. I base this approach on four thinkers' readings of the work of Michel Foucault, especially of his books *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality*. The related Foucauldian notion of "genealogy" provides my framework for thinking through the relationship between media and prisons at large, not least because Foucault seems to have formulated it while working with the Prison Information Group in France, and after having come into contact with at least some writings by U.S. Black Panthers. Similarly, the relationship between media and prisons appears in previous literature from many fields, including the communications studies noted above, as well

24. Vandebosch, 2000; Sun, 2008; Knight, 2005.
26. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish; History of Sexuality*.
27. Heiner, "Foucault and the Black Panthers."
as production studies, institutional critique, sociology, history, critical race studies, and literary theory. However, each of these scholarly approaches leaves research gaps. This study addresses those gaps through Foucauldian analysis.

Scholars in communication studies that have looked at media use in prisons, including those who study dependency relationships, have consistently tended to focus on media consumption rather than production. The emerging field of "production studies" does take up the study of those who make media objects, with attention to the issues of mediation and communication that literary studies often overlook. However, production studies tend to concentrate on mass media, and the entertainment industries, with a macroscopic focus. No extant research situates production studies within a prison context. Also, since few production studies take a microscopic approach, no others consider Abu-Jamal's media production in particular. This study takes up a microscopic focus on Abu-Jamal's media production from prison in answer to those gaps.

Conversely, studies that have focused exclusively on the political and institutional aspects of prison consistently rely on techniques such as statistical analyses of prison populations, when examining similar phenomena. On the rare occasions that sociological or institutional studies have taken media use directly into account, they have used macroscopic, quantitative approaches to data analysis, rather than searching out microscopic data such as the actual lived experiences of prisoners. Historical studies, on the other hand, particularly from the perspective of critical race studies, have often taken up a microscopic approach to research of prisoners' experiences.

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28. Vandebosch, 2000; Sun, 2008; Knight, 2005.
30. Ward, "Friendly Fascism?"
31. Davis, "Political Prisoners."
However, these studies focus on instances of resistance against dominant conditions, rather than on the production of discourses and artifacts like those with which this study is concerned.

Studies of prison literature and sociolinguistics do combine a microscopic perspective with a focus on how prisoners produce particular media and discourses, for example, in studies of Black prison manifestos, or of letter-writing practices of prisoners.\textsuperscript{32} However, both literary and sociolinguistic studies focus very closely on the content of these particular media - books and letters - without paying attention to the material, institutional, or systemic relations within which those media are produced.\textsuperscript{33} In other words, they ignore the "politics of location."\textsuperscript{34} To balance these tendencies, and to introduce a theoretical basis for the analysis of discourse as a constitutive force, I turn to Foucault's work.

A Foucauldian approach to the study of Abu-Jamal as a body in space can take into account both micro- and macroscopic approaches, focus when necessary on individuals, interpersonal relationships, and institutional structures, and combine the study of discourse and artifacts. Foucault's work makes such a variegated research practice possible by tracing the "policy of coercions that act upon the body" and produce what he calls the "docile body," or a subject divorced from power relations.\textsuperscript{35} This provides a compelling framework by which to understand both disciplinary (coercive, enforced) and regulatory (practiced, expected) power.

\textsuperscript{32} Corrigan, "Reimagining Black Power."
\textsuperscript{33} Allan and Burridge, \textit{Forbidden Words}.
\textsuperscript{34} Wallace, \textit{Dark Designs}.
\textsuperscript{35} Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}: 138
Foucault's analysis of Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon" presents more than a description of a draconian prison. It implicates an entire system of visibility and access, a system that also permeates relations of media production. More significantly, he argues that power must be understood as always present, in all social relations, rather than embedded in a social position. He builds this argument through an analysis of the statements and expressive activities that constitute their own objects. This "archaeological" approach, which seeks to determine how objects of discourse arise through the conditions that structure a particular historical period's discursive relations, helps us understand that the figures of "Mumia Abu-Jamal" and "Daniel Faulkner" do not represent the same stable bodies for whom they are named, but rather an entire constellation of associations and relationships in which they are enmeshed, and through which they are created.

The four readings of Foucault that I mentioned earlier situate my own approach to archaeology and genealogy. Gilles Deleuze, Judith Butler, William Haver, and Giorgio Agamben each provide an interpretation of Foucault's ideas, as well as their own contribution to the study of bodies in space. Deleuze's reading of Foucault accentuates "that every form is a compound of relations between forces." While Abu-Jamal's subjective relations mark his body as imprisoned, he can move beyond the confines of the docile body, as an ontological nomad. Indeed, as Foucault commands of the would-be anti-facist in his preface to Anti-Oedipus, the first volume of Deleuze and Felix Guattari's massive Capitalism and Schizophrenia, "Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic." Nomadic wandering becomes important to my own interpretation of Abu-Jamal's expression across media forms. Later in that book, Deleuze and

36. Foucault, History of Sexuality.
37. Deleuze, Foucault: 124
38. Foucault, preface to Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus: xiii
Guattari describe the production of what they call the "body without organs." This irreducible, singular materiality, the manifestation of a cultural production that calls upon and falls back upon its conditions of production in its very existence, embodies the agency to extend relations between temporal and spatial relationships. The body without organs becomes my guiding metaphor for the body of work, especially in relation to Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's absences from the discourses about them online.

Judith Butler's reading of Foucault centers on the instability of assumed identities, adopting his conception of power to her own analysis of gender and sexuality, because it "exposes the postulation of identity as a culturally restricted principle of order and hierarchy, a regulatory fiction." Butler writes that categories of identity are not given, but adopted. She explains the importance of "performativity," the quality of acting and presenting oneself as a particular kind of person, for example, a man, woman, or revolutionary. She contrasts this with the equally important quality of "citationality," or a calling between subjects that makes sense of repeated performances of identity. Her revelation that bodies and identities do not coextend in space complicates the study of Abu-Jamal as a subject, because it makes a reduction of his existence to his imprisoned body untenable. Butler's performativity/citationality complex and Orlikowski's organizational model of structuration also relate. Both writers emphasize that patterns of activity constitute social structures, not the characteristics of material or technological resources like

40. Butler, *Gender Trouble*: 33
bodies. In this way, Butler's work begins to reveal the connections between genealogy and structuration as ways of thinking about Abu-Jamal's body and media production.

Another, less well-known reader of Foucault, William Haver, suggests that one aspect of Foucault's argument, desire, has been consistently overlooked by others. He questions the possibility of thinking through Foucault on Foucault's own terms, and suggests that such a reading would produce a more radical figure of Foucault than appears in others' work - "a queer Foucault." Insofar as that figure reveals the "impossible grounds of that impossible project, the political," it frames my rationale for thinking through Abu-Jamal's body, as productive of media and resistant to docility. Haver, writing in the context of AIDS and atomic-bomb focused literatures, refers to at least one other figure in his title, The Body of This Death. I take up that term to indicate the corporeal and existential stakes for Abu-Jamal, that is to say, the constant threat of execution, as having a discursively constitutive agency in its own right.

The notion that the threat itself of death has agency follows what the Italian thinker Giorgio Agamben has emphasized as the units of measurement in archaeology and genealogy: constitutive statements, or enunciations. As a reader of Foucault, Agamben examines philosophical archaeology as a method of doing research, as well as an exercise in reflexive critique: "the arche of archaeology is what will take place ... only when archaeological inquiry has completed its operation." Agamben's attention to the interplay between statements that constitute their object, and the constitutive statements of the study of those other statements, contributes to my understanding of how Abu-Jamal's body and voice impact the apparently neutral space of prison

42. Haver, Body of This Death: 179.
43. Agamben, The Signature of All Things: 105
around them. It also allows this study to observe the movement of statements between media forms. Agamben also extends his theory of "signatures," arguing that the very fact of existence marks (or signs) "functions of existence," like the enunciations that are so important to archaeology. I find that the "signature" elegantly connects the work of manuscript-writing and of audio recording undertaken by Abu-Jamal at a physical, not only an intellectual or political, level: his voice, and his hand, directly mark the media of recording in both these cases.

My own readings of Discipline and Punish, and of The History of Sexuality, apply Foucault's "archeological" research method to the study of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Foucault insists that institutions, such as prisons, rely on relationships of visibility as much as on economic or psychological interventions. To that end, I consider both the organizational and the material structures of the prison and media systems with/in which Abu-Jamal produces cultural artifacts, like recordings and books, as a bodily subject, within a carefully controlled space. I suggest a juxta-position of an understanding of structuring relationships, based on Foucault's conceptualization of how docile bodies are produced through regulatory deployments of power, against an understanding of how the use of technologies can constitute organizational structure, based on Orlikowski's structuration theory. Such an approach begins by analyzing both bodies and communication in terms of material, spatial relationships. Then, this "Foucauldian structuration" interrogate statements, such as the "death sentence," that serve as structuring "arches" of the organizations and relations of forces in which Abu-Jamal produces a body of work.

4. **Oeuvre Matters**

Abu-Jamal expands his explicitly intertextual body of work, or *oeuvre*, which includes six books and scores of essays published to date, in addition to his regular radio commentaries, while he awaits the outcome of appeals to his death sentence. His *oeuvre* incorporates at least
three genres: journalism, Black Power political manifesto, and prison literature. Because that body of work changes over time, I consider it a unified entity, such as what Deleuze and Guattari called a "body without organs," set in time rather than space. In other words, his oeuvre embodies a temporal praxis. He writes more, and faster, producing longer works the longer he remains imprisoned. I suggest that, as he draws closer to the "death sentence," his body of work expands, as his experience of time compresses. In this way, I argue that the "death sentence" constitutes the generative and structuring "arche" of that oeuvre.

I would suggest a converse explanation of Maureen Faulkner's book, Murdered by Mumia. Faulkner, the widow of Daniel Faulkner, the officer that Abu-Jamal is convicted of killing, co-wrote this book with Michael Smirconish, a radio talk show host in Philadelphia. The book details the night of the murder of her husband, and argues for Abu-Jamal’s guilt and execution. Although this thesis focuses more closely on Abu-Jamal's prolific media production than on Faulkner's, the contrast between their publications bears this note. In terms of a body of work experienced in time, Faulkner's book stands alone as her sole authorial credit. While it remains discrete in time, she endures an interminable wait for closure and the service of Abu-Jamal's sentence. In this way, while time compresses for Abu-Jamal, and his oeuvre expands, time extends for Faulkner, and her oeuvre contracts, as time moves on since her book's publication. In terms of the content of their respective books, Pennsylvania law prohibits either party from profiting on the crime committed 9 December 1981. To that end, Faulkner and Smerconish donate all the proceeds of their work to charity. However, they are free to write about the murder night and trial itself, while Abu-Jamal is constrained from writing or speaking about those topics, because he still

44. Faulkner and Smerconish, Murdered by Mumia.
has appeals on his conviction pending. Because of this, his topics range from life in prison to United States foreign policy and many others, but never include his own legal arguments.

Journalistic tradition grounds Abu-Jamal's work. Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel offer a concise and provocative definition of "journalism." They argue that the practice of journalism includes the key "elements" of obligation to truth and conscience, loyalty to citizens, and maintaining independence both from "those" that journalists cover as well as from "power" that they monitor.45 Abu-Jamal has spoken to his own "elements of journalism" both implicitly and explicitly. Implicitly, his essays' formal, brief, opinion-editorial style stands against investigative or wire-based reporting. Abu-Jamal's background as a hyper-local reporter in Philadelphia before his imprisonment starkly contrasts with his lack of access, since then, to syndication, though it bolsters his rejection of wire-based reports. Explicitly, he has called himself a "revolutionary journalist" during interviews, opposing himself to "mainstream" media while affirming his loyalty to "the people." 46 In this way, he complicates the relationship of journalism to prison.

Describing a genre that encompasses literature produced in prison implicates many interesting points of comparison for a reading of Abu-Jamal's writings. I have chosen those that can be supported by specific stylistic and textual cues. For example, the form of Abu-Jamal's collections of short essays recall earlier works by other writers in prison, both well-known and obscure. They also contain an extended polemic against the structure and practices of the prison system, of its racist, capitalist, nationalist justifications. But since contents do not necessarily describe their container, the establishment of a category of writing called prison literature needs

45. Kovach and Rosenstiel, Elements of Journalism: 1
more examination. By so doing, I argue that Abu-Jamal's oeuvre makes a productive contribution towards the establishment of such a genre.

Antonio Gramsci shares with Abu-Jamal the characteristics of being an imprisoned intellectual, one who practiced journalism before being incarcerated. Gramsci was a prolific writer, filling dozens of notebooks while in prison, as is Abu-Jamal. Both writers have focused on larger scholarly and intellectual projects only after they were imprisoned, whereas their common profession of journalism had kept both of them writing short essays on tight deadlines before their respective imprisonments. For each writer, his focus turns from tactics of resistance to strategies for revolution of an oppressed people against a hegemonic power. Both display partisan-Left political leanings in their writing, Gramsci aligning with the Italian Communist party, and Abu-Jamal with the Black Power movement. Finally, in a biographical parallel not to be ignored, each man dropped out of school when he was still young, to become a political activist.47

Although Gramsci and Abu-Jamal differ in their historical eras, ethnicities, political affiliations, languages, educations, and writing styles, they share many features and sentiments. Indeed, in some ways, Abu-Jamal embodies Gramsci's notion of an "organic intellectual," whose thought rises from his concrete surroundings and not from abstract ideas such as Justice or Truth.48 The issue of publication finally distinguishes these writers from one another. Gramsci, although he took copious notes on a wide range of subjects, refused to publish that material, and his writings from prison (both letters and notes) were only published posthumously. Abu-Jamal,

47. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks: introduction to I.
on the other hand, has six books published to date, as well as many essays in scholarly and radical journals -- these even include some of his correspondence.\textsuperscript{49}

Another imprisoned correspondent's words resonate with uncounted readers, including Abu-Jamal. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" responds to King's critics, and articulates his philosophy of urgent, non-violent direct action for civil rights.\textsuperscript{50} In the letter, King quotes widely, from Scripture and other sources, as diverse as Greek philosophy, the American founders, and modern poetry, in support of his argument that nonviolent action can force a "creative tension" that leads to productive changes in society. King's deeply Christian approach to nonviolent civil rights activism diverges from the militant, nationalist perspective of the Black Power movement, exemplified by Elijah Muhammad. Muhammad's Muslim approach informs the seminal Black Power leader Malcom X. X's \textit{Autobiography}, with its call for freedom "by any means necessary," forms the basis of Huey Newton's later \textit{Revolutionary Suicide}, and of Newton's formation of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.\textsuperscript{51} Abu-Jamal's continual references to those writings, both implicit and explicit, ground their connection to his body of work.

The generative connections and disagreements between writers from prison become intertwined with the writings of the Black Power movement, in which Abu-Jamal eventually finds his own position. Within that movement, styles and philosophies diverge. For example, Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam often competed with Malcom X's Black Panther Party for follow-

\textsuperscript{49} Abu-Jamal, "Black Prison Writing."
\textsuperscript{50} King, \textit{Why We Can't Wait}.
\textsuperscript{51} Muhammad, \textit{Message to the Blackman; Autobiography of Malcom X}; Newton, \textit{Revolutionary Suicide}.
ers, especially after their falling-out in the early 1960s. Even among the Black Panther Party's writers, Newton's historical, academic style and approach contrasts with Eldridge Cleaver's in *Soul on Ice*, which blends politics and memoir in short essays.\(^{52}\) Cleaver's writing, largely composed in the Folsom and San Quentin prisons in California, where he was repeatedly incarcerated, has clear stylistic and thematic impacts on Abu-Jamal's own earlier, shorter essay collections. Cleaver's work with the Black Panther Party's East Coast organization and the national newspaper, before his exile to Algeria, connects him even more directly to Abu-Jamal's body of work.

Still, Abu-Jamal's writing goes beyond continuation or quotation of others' styles and words. A critique of hegemonic historiography appears, especially in his later, longer works, as Abu-Jamal re-writes histories of political, religious, and social institutions. Elements of Abu-Jamal's writings also appear in the work of other thinkers. He continues to exchange ideas with Angela Davis, Dhoruba Bin Wahad, and the exiled Assata Shakur. Another interesting connection grew out of the French poet Jean Genet's visit to the U.S. Black Panther Party in the late 1960s. Genet's call for revolutionary solidarity worldwide impacted Foucault's work with the Prison Information Group and after, as well as the writings of Jacques Derrida, who dedicated a speech to Abu-Jamal's case.\(^{53}\) Thus, a continuing tradition of revolutionary, ideological manifesto writing also grounds Abu-Jamal's work.

In this way, his writing enters into the well-established discourse of critical race theory. An important early work in this genre, W.E.B. DuBois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, puts forth the idea that Black people in the United States embody a "double consciousness." This profound di-

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52. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*.

chotomy of experience informs being both Black and American, and dealing with often conflicting and painful manifestations of racism. Aime Cesaire's *Discourse on Colonialism* follows this tradition, as a radical polemic against racism, fascism, and especially colonialism. All of these, Cesaire argues, are made possible on the same grounds as liberal humanism itself. He delivers an invocation to Black people, to unite along global lines of both class struggle (thus taking up the mantle of Marxist critique of capitalist hegemony), and racial struggle (thus inverting the traditional Marxist claim that the most important factor in global social struggles is in fact class, since class is here subsumed into race). Frantz Fanon, whose *Wretched of the Earth* underscores both the institutional and individual effects of the psychology of racism, takes up that call. So does Paul Gilroy's *Double Consciousness and the Black Atlantic* brings this sociological and psychological focus into an historical framework that encompasses the movement of Black peoples, from the Middle Passage through the twentieth century. C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins* turns its focus more closely to the Haitian Revolution, describing the ideological and organizational development of that remarkable event two hundred years ago. Abu-Jamal's writings reference each of these thinkers, especially his three most recent books. His body of work draws on their analyses of Black experiences, and it takes up their philosophical models as well.

In short, Abu-Jamal's body of work relates to three broad categories. As journalism, his writings and recordings represent commentaries on life in prison, American politics, and global

54. Dubois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 1903
55. Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, 1955
56. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 1966
57. Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 19xx
58. James, *The Black Jacobins*, 19xx
current events. As prison literature, his writings contribute to a loosely defined genre that includes correspondence, notes, essays, and larger philosophical projects. As Black Power philosophy, his *oeuvre* updates the earlier writings of social theorists while influencing later and contemporary writings. It expands while his temporal experience compresses, it grows as a distinct and discrete body without organs, rather than an accumulation of artifacts, and it constantly references its own conditions of production. In terms of his figure, however, Abu-Jamal's contribution to and control over its production demands a different analytical approach.

**5. FIGURE MATTERS**

Instead of paying attention to the movement of ideas through time, Abu-Jamal's figure (and to a lesser degree, that of Daniel Faulkner) requires attention to the way that such a figure operates in codes. I use the term "codes" to indicate both the metaphors used to describe cultural phenomena, and literal encoding used to write computer programs - because of this ambiguity, the writing attempts to specify when each sense is in play, and when both are used simultaneously. My approach to Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's cultural figures, as objects of analysis, draws on theories of visual culture, cultural semiotics, and new media studies. These theories help explain the radical division between the two men's bodies, and their figures online. They help describe how remediations of Abu-Jamal's body and *oeuvre* become encoded into digital forms, and how those diverge in profound ways from the material, spatial, and temporal experiences of their analog predecessors. They also help to show how discourse encodes his digital figure into a mimesis of an avatar.

In Walter Benjamin's famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," he argues that the "aura" of an original object (in this case, an object of art) is lost during mass reproduction. This loss both diminishes the scarcity-value of a given reproduction,
especially of an art object, and allows the potential for the radical redistribution of social power around that object, since access to the reproduction can allow a far wider audience to access the work. The arguments laid out by Benjamin have been debated by many other theorists of technology and representation, moving from the realm of aesthetics in particular to representation in general. This thesis enters the discussion over seventy years after that writing, connecting the questions of authenticity and value raised by Benjamin to an intellectual field known loosely as visual culture studies.

W.J.T. Mitchell's essay on interpreting images in their cultural context, "What do pictures want?", stands as a landmark in this field. So does the work of Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, Olu Oguibe, and Irit Rogoff. These scholars all share the common view that the theoretical interventions of art history or literature are inadequate to describe how images operate in media and society. Two particularly pertinent recent works that draw on the techniques of visual culture studies to analyze contemporary racial politics are Michele Wallace's Dark Designs and Visual Culture, and Lisa Nakamura's Digitizing Race. Wallace's conception of the "Politics of Location" helps unpack the issues at stake by outlining a methodology of looking at, or from, a raced social position or subjectivity. Nakamura analyzes the subtle but profound visual cues that race the Web and other digital media environments. Their intuitive and yet methodologically rigorous

59. Benjamin, "Mechanical Reproduction."
60. Mitchell, "What do pictures want?"; Stam and Shohat, Oguibe, and Rogoff, all in Adams, Visual Culture Reader.
research techniques provide a model for this analysis of the online representations and remixes of Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's figures.

Closely related to visual culture studies, but choosing different objects of analysis, the work of media historians such as Regis Debray, Henry Jenkins, and Lisa Gitelman also informs my conception of how new media change our common cultural codes, especially of representation and production. Debray's *Media Manifestos* implements the field of study that he calls "mediology," in an attempt to conceptualize a complex network of relationships between existing and emergent technologies.\(^{63}\) Debray argues that the appearance of a new medium of representation displaces every other existing medium in a "mediasphere." As new technological media gain acceptance and become the dominant modes of communication, older forms must find a niche market if they are to survive in the newly restructured mediasphere. In this way, Debray returns to some of the ideas put forth by Benjamin sixty years earlier, but with a closer focus on the visual and spatial metaphor of a relational network, and less on the economic or political dimensions of aesthetic production. His approach to media systems at large scales down well, to look at how the particular conversations about Abu-Jamal and Faulkner take place online.

Jenkins is one of the most prominent scholars of media studies. In *Convergence Culture*, he traces an ongoing process of media convergence across existing technologies and protocols.\(^{64}\) Jenkins outlines the relationships between cultural producers, fans, and the mediated re-writing of already-produced texts through his concept of "collective intelligence". His writings on "participatory culture" helps explain how cultural objects are not only digitally remediated, that is, dig-

\(^{63}\) Debray, *Media Manifestos*.

\(^{64}\) Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*. 

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itized from an analog form, but can also be discursively constructed in and through virtual collaboration. Gitelman's *Always Already New* traces how recording technologies affect both the objects that they convey, and also the societies in which they arise.\(^6^5\) Her approach to the interplay between social and technical forces in constructing media forms brings this theoretical construct full circle, because of the implicit relation in her approach to the study of media history with Orlikowski's model of structuration. All three of these media historians give me the tools to analyze how conversations about Mumia Abu-Jamal and Daniel Faulkner discursively construct their figures online.

Neither visual culture study nor media theory, Lev Manovich's book *The Language of New Media* connects digital and web-based media to cinematic and literary analyses, using a unique, critical theory.\(^6^6\) Manovich distinguishes between the "narratives" told by analog media such as books or films, and the complementary "database" or "archive" forms of digital media. He argues that the user or viewer of digital objects must construct their own narrative, by tracing and recording their movement through this database. Manovich's work allows this analysis to include an examination of the structure of relationships between the many online objects and conversations relating to Abu-Jamal.

From Manovich's argument that new media have their own language, one needs to make only a short conceptual leap to discuss elements of cultural semiotics. Semiotic analysis describes the visual and linguistic codes used to construct discrete statements, such as videos and remixes. It also draws on linguistics to describe active dialogues, such as the conversations that

\(^6^5\) Gitelman, *Always Already New*.

\(^6^6\) Manovich, *Language of New Media*.
take place around those statements online. Two seminal works in cultural semiotics, Emil Benveniste's *Problems in General Linguistics* and Ferdinand de Saussure's (1978) *Course in General Linguistics*, each address how language, and particularly the sign as the relation between language and ideal concept, constitute social subjectivity. Their recognition of the mutually constitutive relationship between thought and speech, and between speech and action, led to Yurij Lotman's (1989) conception of a cultural "semiosphere," similar to Debray's "mediasphere," in which all cultural communication takes place, and beyond which there is no signification, literally non-sense. I use semiotics to describe how Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's figures are encoded and decoded online.

Cultural semiotics found their most ardent and famous expression with Roland Barthes. Barthes, especially in his book *Image/Music/Text*, extends semiotics beyond language, especially bringing the realm of pictorial analysis into its reach. In this way, his work as a theorist bridges the conceptual divides between semiotic analysis and visual culture studies, subjecting both media objects and their contexts to one system of interpretation. Barthes's understanding of the relationship between an image and text, which he based on his examination of advertisements, remains applicable to other cultural media objects. His claim that "text constitutes a parasitic message, designed to connote the image," concealing some of the viewer's agency in determining


68. Lotman, *Cultural Mechanism of Semiosphere*.

69. Because sense ends at the limits of the semiosphere, just as mediation ends at the limits of the mediasphere, if we are to think of the conditions of possibility for unmediated or unsignified experience and expression, that is to say, something like "the real," we must necessarily think that those conditions are themselves beyond communication, beyond language, and unintelligible to us as sensing subjects. However, because semiotics recognizes that all communication is mediated, it becomes a powerful theory by which to explain common codes of representation and difference in all virtual worlds. These theories therefore explain how a conversation about Abu-Jamal online both mimics and differs from such a conversation in speech.
that image's meaning, can also be applied to the relationship between a video and its soundtrack, or between a remix and the objects that it remixes. In this way, Barthes's intervention allows us to see the relationship between the texts, images, sounds, and videos of Abu-Jamal online as parts of a common construction of his cultural figure.

This constellation of theories from studies of new media, visual culture, and cultural semiotics all converge on my examination of Abu-Jamal's (and Faulkner's) cultural figures, as others produce it (them) discursively and visually online. The theories provide analytical frameworks to this research, and indicate gaps that the study can attempt to fill. For example, none of these theories in particular accounts for prison-generated media, but each of them provides an interpretation of how Abu-Jamal's imprisonment, and consequent divide from digital media, forces the production of his figure to rely on others. In other words, the constitutive and structuring alterity that grounds digital iterations of Abu-Jamal's figure require the connections between each of these theories in order to make sense. Finally, each of the theorists noted above provides a methodological model for conducting this study. In the next section, I explain how I use these, and other, approaches to the cultural production of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

6. Research Methods

Cultural studies like this rely on a research methodology often conflated with theory. While theoretical interventions deeply ground my research practices, I distinguish how each interacts with the objects of analysis. Theory, in other words, helps to understand the content and contexts of those objects, which include recordings, books, and conversations online. This study brings those objects into visibility, and into relation with one another. Because qualitative inter-

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views with human subjects became impossible given the constraints of time, this thesis relies mainly on practices of listening, reading, and viewing.

I follow each cultural artifact through its particular "mediascape." This heuristic, "objective" approach traces books and recordings through its distribution (or lack thereof) by mass media organizations, and into its reception by audience members. To analyze the content of the 1994 NPR recordings, which remain unheard, the study combines reading transcripts with listening to similar recordings. Previously published interviews and writings show the interpersonal relationships that engendered Abu-Jamal's recordings and publications. The institutional and organizational systems that control, structure, and mediate the artifacts appear through secondary sources such as legal briefs, news stories, and historical publications. In short, this method reveals how the audibility of each 1994 tape relies on its complex environment, rather than remaining an inherent characteristic of the technology of their recording.

Abu-Jamal's body of work includes those recordings as well as his published books. In order to adopt a more rigorous and demonstrable methodology than an intuitive interpretation of arbitrary texts, this thesis reads Abu-Jamal's literary oeuvre, represented by three excerpts, through five distinct practices. First, stylistic and tonal analysis identifies the genre of each excerpt. Then, sociolinguistic pragmatics identifies elements such as narrative and argumentation through a close reading of the texts. Next, the study takes the specific characteristics of each excerpt, as parts of printed media, into account. Then, the study analyzes the field of relations

71. Appadurai, Modernity at Large.
72. Lash and Lury, Global Culture Industry.
73. Allan and Burridge, Forbidden Words.
74. Ong, Writing Restructures Consciousness; McGann, Radiant Textuality; Hayles, Electronic Literature.
around each excerpt, or their "extratextual" characteristics, especially by using secondary sources. Finally, legal, historical, and literary interventions examine the effects of each excerpt on the body of work as a whole, and then the effects of his body of work on the social structures through which it circulates. In this way, the study recalls the first question of genre, while it transitions from archaeological analysis to genealogical critique.

Shifting from observation of these audio and textual cultural artifacts to digital objects helps explain how Abu-Jamal has been produced as a cultural figure. Because we "read" digital texts so differently from written or printed texts, and because of the multiplicity of authors of such texts, the study follows digital objects using specific techniques. First, it looks at "remediations" of Abu-Jamal's oeuvre, as iterations of a "body without organs" in time, rather than faithful copies of ontologically stable analog original works. Abu-Jamal's essays, books, interviews, and recordings are all available to view as digital objects. So are the thousands of news stories on his case that have been published since 1982. To what extent these remediations can or should be assumed to remain faithful to a material reality, in the same sense that a photograph is assumed to be a faithful representation of that which it photographs, calls on the most important cultural structuring expression in remediation - that of realism. To interrogate realistic conditions of access for followers of Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's figures online, the study maintains a focus on the importance of the user's interface, to which Abu-Jamal and Faulkner have no access.

Then, images complicate the distinction between remediation and representation, because they include originally digital media such as videos. News stories that trace the figures of

75. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*. 
"Mumia Abu-Jamal" and/or "Daniel Faulkner" mark the emergence of a database of references to the case, history, and remediations of these figures. Elements of that database, reinscribed across various websites, each advocate a particular position (in some cases, neutrality) in the discourse on these figures. I consider those sites complex incorporations of the functions of remediation, representation, and reference. However, reference takes on a different sense, that of "citation" and "signing", when considered in the context of the panoply of remixes that use both remediated and originally digital objects to construct new media objects around the figures in question. I suggest that remixes, more than any other type of digital media object, ascribe structure to the vast database of references available to the end user. Within this context, remixes of and involving "Abu-Jamal" or "Faulkner" give us some of the richest objects and sites by which to follow the discourse surrounding those figures. The study concentrates on the content of each of these types of objects.

The context of online objects also helps construct their meaning. Likewise, search functions help users make sense of the database, and of the narrative(s) that it contains. These narratives animate iterations of the figures of "Abu-Jamal" and "Faulkner", but obscure the material bodies and the digital at stake in their narration. The study intervenes across the schisms between body, *oeuvre*, and figure, by questioning to what extent a digital object expresses or names the content of analog thought. In other words, the results of a search help to understand what expressions are privileged online, and what are hidden, by taking Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's names as case studies. In this case, the invisible links between sites serve as the

76. Manovich, *Language of New Media*.
77. Butler, *Bodies that Matter*; Agamben, *Signature of All Things*. 

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most important piece of evidence to investigate.

Reference sources such as Wikipedia allow code-literate users to control the dominant narratives through editing; news stories offer access to their readers in the form of discussions about the story. Social networking sites allow users to continue those conversations in a richer way, including more links, pictures, and so on. Advocacy sites provide a stable representative point of access to users, where their interactions are often limited to contacting organizers, donating time and money, or buying merchandise that supports that side of their cause. Each type of online interaction provides unique conditions of access to the construction of Abu-Jamal's figure. The study looks closely at the source code for each of these types of sites, as well as on the links mentioned above, while incorporating an analysis of the discourse that takes place among commentators and editors of these sites.

Representations and remixes of the figures, however, deserve special attention. As creators and viewers, especially of videos involving the figures of "Abu-Jamal" and "Faulkner," users can construct and interpret persuasive messages without investing much time or capital. More importantly, they can generate a discourse that includes, but extends beyond, linguistic messages. Combining textual, video, taxonomic, and ratings-based interventions, these discourses make access to the construction of their object-figures even easier. No cinematographic or coding skills are necessary to join the textual commentary threads here, as with social networks; the sites also include search, tagging, and other simple yet powerful digital tools. In this way, YouTube represents one example of perhaps the most complex and accessible kind of sites in this analysis. In terms of users' access to the cultural production of Abu-Jamal and Faulkner, all of these types of digital objects forge a close connection between alterity and anonymity. In short, the study here traces how users can hide behind their own conditions of
access.

While it follows different media objects using different tools, the study combines medium-specific, content, and cultural analytical methods throughout its procedure. The qualitative methods employed herein would be richest in combination with detailed interviews of important subjects. These could include Abu-Jamal himself, as well as other writers, radio journalists and executives, book publishers, activists, and online commentators. Likewise, the study could not account for quantitative analyses such as statistical relationships between Abu-Jamal's media production and online commentary, or social network analysis of his relationships to the people and institutions around him. Nevertheless, the combination of methodologies and theoretical approaches in this study constitute a powerful set of tools for uncovering both relationships and meanings.

7. **Chapter Summaries**

I divide the three substantive, analytical chapters of this thesis according to both the media that they interrogate, and the overarching themes that connect each of the parts. The first chapter engages with Abu-Jamal's 1994 recordings for NPR, and the effects of those events. The study connects these audio recordings, originally intended for radio broadcast, to the relationships around his material body in space. The second chapter deals with Abu-Jamal's printed works, including his six books. It reads three excerpts of his writing in five different ways each. This helps to trace his body of work as it moves through time. The third chapter shifts from examining the cultural artifacts that Abu-Jamal produces, to examining how he has been produced as a cultural figure, especially through online discourse. It traces digital objects across a recursive database, to show how they generate and encode the synecdochic iterations of Abu-
Jamal's and Daniel Faulkner's figures. Finally, I offer some conclusions from my research, along with its significance, and some suggestions for future study.
II. NATIONAL/PUBLIC REGULATION

This chapter focuses on audio recordings of Abu-Jamal’s voice, especially those produced by Noelle Hanrahan, in April 1994, on behalf of National Public Radio. It also traces the institutional, organizational, and interpersonal relationships that each affect media production. NPR's explanation of their last-minute decision not to air the recordings contradicts the causes indicated by Hanrahan and Abu-Jamal. The chapter examines that decision in detail. NPR positions itself as a neutral, singular actor in these events, and Abu-Jamal changes his dominant mode of expression from radio to print because of their decision. In this way, the chapter argues that the 1994 recordings represent a critical incident, which restructures Abu-Jamal's interaction with the media and prison systems.

1. INTRODUCTION

Material, embodied relations, between bodies in carefully controlled spaces, most closely inform my sense of "cultural production" here. In other words, I am most concerned with the movement of material, cultural artifacts, such as the tapes of the recordings through space. The chapter archaeologically describes themes of prison life and revolutionary political arguments that appear throughout the content of Abu-Jamal's recordings. The effects of the recording session on his mediation and imprisonment appear as networks of power relations. Orlikowski's structuration theory also applies to the events and practices of recording, distribution, and cancellation, because they represent an example of technology use that helps to constitute structure among those power relations. Conversely, the recordings both reveal and presuppose discipli-

78. Foucault, Discipline and Punish.
nary and regulatory manifestations of power. These manifestations inform the content of these recordings. They also appear as visible and material structures and agencies around these events. I hope to show connections between Abu-Jamal's body, the recordings of his voice, and the systems in which the two appear, as all of these move through, or try to control, physical and metaphorical spaces.

Rethinking prison media involves fewer questions of deviance from a set of particular political, institutional, or social norms, and more questions about how previous theories have left gaps and unexplored relationships. While communications and other fields of study have so often approached prison environments and mass media in terms of how individuals consume messages, this incident provides an opportunity to research how messages are produced and distributed in such contexts. Abu-Jamal's production of recordings in the prison system for a nationally consumed and regulated radio media system positions the third-person effect as one example of a media dependency relationship. Again, structuration theory helps to tie this reconsideration of communication theory to a productive practice of media use from a structural perspective, while Foucauldian archaeology informs my methodology for thinking through published interviews, books, legal statements, news articles, and historical secondary sources that contribute to the narrative of this case.

2. CONTEXT

As Charles Kissinger writes, "Mumia Abu-Jamal is both the exception and the rule." Kissinger argues that Abu-Jamal stands, synecdochically, for the confluence of race and prison in the United States, while having been "singled out for his political journalism." While Kissinger

80. Kissinger, "Afterword," All Things Censored: 328
refers to Abu-Jamal's murder conviction, his statement could also describe Abu-Jamal's media production. In other words, although Abu-Jamal remains, as a prisoner, deeply and characteristically dependent on just a few media sources for information, he produces a remarkable amount of politically charged commentary based on those sources. Kissinger's statement appears in *All Things Censored*, a collection edited by Noelle Hanrahan, that includes the text of Abu-Jamal's NPR essays. A CD sold along with the book contains other recordings.\(^81\) That a CD accompanies Abu-Jamal's third book underscores the importance of audio media in generating and sustaining his publishing career.

As Abu-Jamal explains in a 1989 interview at SCI Huntingdon, "my career as a journalist began with the Black Panther newspaper ... This is where I learned to write from a revolutionary perspective."\(^82\) However, he goes on to say, "I am a print journalist, but ... literacy is dying."\(^83\) Because of this, he turned to radio journalism after leaving the Black Panther Party. At Goddard College between 1978 and 1980, he worked for the campus radio station.\(^84\) In Philadelphia, at the same time, he worked for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting at three different stations, and hosted a talk show on WHUY.\(^85\) During that time, he served as president of the National Association of Black Journalists. Throughout this career, Abu-Jamal focused on stories that often incensed his editors, and even then-Mayor Frank Rizzo, such as in his coverage of the radical

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82. Abu-Jamal, quoted in *Still Black, Still Strong*: 121.


85. *Encyclopedia Africana*: 14. WHUY is now WHYY.
Philadelphia group MOVE. In another interview, at SCI Greene, Abu-Jamal acknowledges that his politically charged reporting might be construed as propaganda, but argues that the production of propaganda with a positive message is revolutionary. "Journalism is a tool to change people's consciousness," he says, adding that it can also provide "insight" and "affirmation." Thus, Abu-Jamal recognizes his messages' potential to reach a wide audience as transmitted broadcasts, and to persuade them as part of a mediated dialogue.

In the 1989 interview, during which Abu-Jamal was under disciplinary custody, for having refused an order to cut his dreadlocks, he describes that experience as "quite hard for journalists," adding that in the Pennsylvania prison system, "radical papers, revolutionary papers, progressive papers ... are also censored. Not from a disciplinary position, but they don't want revolutionary material circulating in prisons." Given this lack of reading material, and his legal imperative to avoid discussing the still-pending appeals to his conviction and sentence, both the content and the production of Abu-Jamal's recordings for NPR bear close attention. Studying content and production together reveals both the topics about which he speaks, and how he mediates that speech.

3. Research Questions

To begin this analysis, I ask several specific questions that address production, and embodied affect. Beginning with the technical issues that surround the production of the 1994


87. Abu-Jamal, quoted in Still Black, Still Strong: 152. Compare this "affirmation," of one's "inherent worth", with Kovach and Rosenstiel's conceptualization of cable TV news, as a "Journalism of Affirmation," that is, an affirmation of one's political or social values, what they call "a kind of propaganda," in Elements of Journalism: 128.

recordings, I ask what factors affect the production of those recordings, and examine the material conditions of their production. I also take the movement of the tapes, from prison to studio to NPR's vault, into account. Pulling back, from the content and location of the physical tapes to the interpersonal relationships surrounding Abu-Jamal's recordings, the study examines how various actors in different parts of Abu-Jamal's media system, such as Abu-Jamal, reporter Noelle Hanrahan, All Things Considered producer Ellen Weiss, and SCI Huntingdon superintendent James Price, interact with one another and with the tapes.

The recordings' audience also constitutes an important group of actors, of whom the Fraternal Order of Police organization represents one particularly active part. Members of the FOP continue to protest against broadcasters and performers who act on behalf of Abu-Jamal, for example, maintaining a list online of Abu-Jamal's supporters.89 Their relationship to NPR's decision of May 1994 remains formally unexamined, although the DC Superior Court found that its effect did not constitute legal coercion of the radio system.90 By studying audience reactions, I hope to determine what feedback those reactions might provide to the conditions of production and distribution of such recordings. In short, I question the movements of both bodies and artifacts through space, by investigating the interpersonal, organizational, and institutional relationships within which they operate.

This analysis includes organizations and institutions as actors along with individual humans. It interrogates how NPR's decision not to air the recordings affects both their own media system, and the process of producing other recordings from prison. To do so, it applies a com-

bination of theories from communication studies. It applies Davison's third-person-effect hypothesis, which seeks to predict individuals' decision-making and behavior with respect to controversial media messages, to NPR's organizational decision-making. This application comes in the context of media dependency relationships, focusing on those between the producers and organizations involved, instead of on a sample of individual consumers. It uses a framework of archaeological structuration to explain the events. The chapter attempts to maintain a focus on what makes Abu-Jamal and his recordings controversial, as well as on the significance of this study.

4. Analysis

The technical conditions of the 1994 recordings from SCI Huntingdon begin as a challenge in their production, but become an asset to the distribution of Abu-Jamal's messages. Closely examining NPR's decision reveals how they position themselves as an organization somewhere between state actors and interpersonal relationships. The reactions of a given audience to these recordings cannot be determined on the basis of statements made by listeners, since the recordings were never aired. However, an analysis of the recordings' contents, and the stated rationales for NPR's decision to cancel them, suggests some likely reactions. Observing the organizational and institutional interactions around the incident shows how the decision restructured those relationships. Davison's third person effect hypothesis, within the context of media dependency, can be applied to groups and organizations once these are recognized as actors with structural and political agency. Archaeological structuration highlights how repeated concepts, like "standards," or "censorship," gain structural agency in their own right.

In her introduction to All Things Censored, reporter Noelle Hanrahan describes the technical "challenges" to recording Abu-Jamal at Huntingdon. She "had to rig up a wireless headset,"
in order to circumvent the bulletproof glass separating her from her interviewee. She writes that although he was "severely hampered by his handcuffs, Mumia repositioned the microphone repeatedly," causing delays and sometimes forcing re-recordings. Because Abu-Jamal "was not allowed to bring any paper to the interview," she had to transcribe his essays in advance, and to hold each one up against the bulletproof glass separating them. They "had to record multiple takes when prison noises intruded," Hanrahan continues, adding that "at any moment the recording could be 'terminated'" by guards or officers in the prison. She notes that "postproduction and editing presented formidable challenges as well ... Each essay required hours of editing and over a hundred edits" to bring the one- to three-minute recordings up to the same quality as studio productions.91 Even with that investment of labor, time, and resources, the essays never made it onto the air.

On 14 May, the day before Abu-Jamal's first commentary was scheduled to begin broadcast and syndication, NPR's managing editor and vice president of news decided together to cancel the broadcast. Bruce Drake, the managing editor, said at the time that the network was concerned "about the appropriateness of using as a commentator a convicted murderer seeking a new trial."92 Hanrahan affirms that NPR used clips of these recordings to promote All Things Considered in the month between their recording and the decision to cancel them, indicating that the radio corporation changed their mind due to external influences.93 She also identifies then-

91. Hanrahan, "Introduction," All Things Censored: 24-5
92. Carter, Kevin. "Inmate's broadcasts canceled."
93. Hanrahan, telephone conversation with the author, 3 April 2010. One clip that may fit her description appears on the Internet Archive, and in the digital video file attached to this thesis. However, in the clip, Abu-Jamal describes himself as having lived on Pennsylvania's Death Row for "over fifteen years," dating that recording to 1997 at the earliest. NPR declines to comment on Hanrahan's assertion.
Senator Robert Dole (R-Kan), and the Fraternal Order of Police, as "directly responsible" for pressuring NPR. In his speech to the Senate, Dole frequently refers to "taxpayer-funded Corporation for Public Broadcasting," and remarks, "I'm glad that the program was canceled." While Dole neither attributes nor claims credit for NPR's cancellation of the broadcasts, he notes his consternation that NPR was "even thinking about" using Abu-Jamal's voice in a program. Claiming that NPR acted in response to governmental coercion when it canceled his contract, Abu-Jamal filed suit against NPR in the D.C. Superior Court. The court found that the actions of the Fraternal Order of Police and the statements made by Dole and others could not have forced NPR's actions. Responding to news coverage of the case, NPR News vice president Bill Buzenberg described Abu-Jamal as "the focal point of a polarized, politicized controversy." In this way, the radio station officially distinguished between what Abu-Jamal said, and who he is. It speaks to their position that NPR continues to report on Abu-Jamal's case, as recently as January 2010, without ever having aired his commentaries.

In her introduction to a later book by Abu-Jamal, Kathleen Cleaver succinctly argues: "before ... 1982, Mumia Abu-Jamal was a working journalist." The brevity of this quote belies its eloquence, since once he was convicted of the Faulkner murder and imprisoned, Abu-Jamal could no longer legally work, neither as a journalist nor in any other profession. When Abu-Jamal made the recordings with Hanrahan for NPR, he was paid a "kill fee" of seventy-five dollars

96. Greenberg, "Death Row Inmate Sues NPR for Two Million Dollars."
97. "Prolonged case of Mumia Abu-Jamal takes another turn."
98. Cleaver, "Introduction," We Want Freedom: xiv
for the first commentary, which was scheduled but never aired. Because of this payment, SCI Huntingdon officials reclassified Abu-Jamal under "disciplinary custody," which included a month of solitary confinement.

To understand the controversy that the recordings engender, the study next examines their content, and their movement through the radio system. Since the audio content of the April 1994 recordings are unavailable, other recordings also produced by Hanrahan, help give us an idea of what the NPR essays might sound like. Based on other essays recorded around the same time at Huntingdon, and some recorded later at SCI Greene, consistent aural patterns appear, that we can safely assume also arise in the April recordings.99 Abu-Jamal speaks with the same educated, polemic vocabulary, the same argumentative style, the same careful pronunciation with a tendency toward sibilance and a faint Philadelphia accent, the same measured cadence, and the same distinctive baritone on those other recordings. In short, despite never having heard the NPR tapes, a listener can get a good idea of what they might sound like by hearing Abu-Jamal's voice elsewhere, and then by reading their contents in print.

The topics of his commentary vary, but as the printed versions of the NPR essays show, he most frequently and prominently discusses life in prison and United States politics. Abu-Jamal knows the norms and protocols of radio broadcasting well. His commentaries are brief, rarely lasting longer than three minutes. His active vocabulary rarely includes profanity; "hell" may appear as a metaphor for prison, and occasionally colloquialisms like "damn" or "no shit," or epithets like "nigger" arise, though always in dialogue.100 The extent of Abu-Jamal's use of

100. Abu-Jamal, All Things Censored: 55, 103.
profanity remains well within established precedents for constitutionally protected speech, including the somewhat more conservative standards of public radio broadcast and even by Pennsylvania State and PADC rules governing prisoners' expressions. In response to the decision, Noelle Hanrahan wonders, "What is the danger of words spoken?" Here again, NPR's decision to cancel Abu-Jamal's syndication cannot thus be thought to have grounds in the sound of his voice, or even in the words that he speaks - rather, on the basis of their own statements, the decision centered on who Abu-Jamal is, and what he represents.

Still, strong themes of death, violence, and all manner of crime permeate the commentaries - this stands to reason, as Abu-Jamal focuses on life in prison. Perhaps these types of content can explain NPR's claim that the essays failed to meet editorial standards. Based on the text of the NPR essays that appears in All Things Censored, Abu-Jamal approaches those themes from a variety of rhetorical techniques. In the first section, a piece of dialogue between Abu-Jamal and another inmate begins a recollection of a mischaracterized (and ultimately exonerated) former prisoner. The second essay takes the form of an elegy for another fellow inmate, who died from untreated cancer. The third, "Yard In," relies on dialogue between prisoners and guards to describe a tense moment of absurdity punctuating a daily routine. The next essay describes another inmate's mental breakdown during his incarceration. "Life here oscillates between the banal and the bizzare," says Abu-Jamal of Death Row in the fifth section, which also describes how inmates use mass media. The other essays concentrate on U.S. laws governing

conviction, incarceration, and the death penalty. In these, Abu-Jamal combines historical and news sources with anecdotes and metaphor. All of the essays contain some diatribe against the "manmade hell" in which he remains confined.105

The fifth essay, subtitled "Control," deserves closer consideration for its explicit description of media use in prison. Composed in late 1990, part of its text appeared in the *Yale Law Journal* three years before Abu-Jamal and Hanrahan made the NPR recording. In the essay, Abu-Jamal describes Death Row at Huntingdon as "Pennsylvania's largest," and "one of America's most restrictive." He argues that because he and the other capital cases have "extinction," and not "freedom ... at the end of the tunnel ... for many here there is no hope." Describing "rule and regulation" on Death Row, he argues that "there is resistance, but far less than one might expect ... death row prisoners are the best behaved ... however, we have little opportunity to be otherwise." He compares Pennsylvania's "regime" with others nationwide, concluding, "Here one has little or no psychological life." Instead, he argues, inmates "escape death's omnipresent specter" by consuming mass media, especially television. This comment is consistent with Heidi Vandeboesch's 2008 study of prison media consumption, in which she found that young males vastly favored television to any other medium, including radio and interpersonal communication such as letters. Abu-Jamal remarks earlier in this essay that because he has been on disciplinary custody, he has "been denied family phone calls," illustrating the degree of control that the prison maintains over inmate communication.

Inmates can consume a great deal of mass media, but they cannot produce much at all. "TVs are allowed, but not typewriters," says Abu-Jamal, because the latter are "deemed a securi-

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ty risk." He provides an anecdote that illustrates one inmate's argument against that risk. "Well, what do y'all consider a thirteen-inch piece of glass?" the prisoner asked, 'ain't that a security risk?", referring to his television set. Nonetheless, "request for the typewriter denied," reports Abu-Jamal. He goes on to argue that television "is a psychic club used to threaten those who resist," and that "many inmates use TV as an umbilical cord ... to the world they have lost," in part because of "months or years of noncontact visits, few phone calls, and ever decreasing communication with one's family and others." Abu-Jamal concludes that the "loss of TV is too high a price to pay for any show of resistance," because the inmates "depend on it." In an earlier interview, Abu-Jamal comments, "something is not real unless it's on TV," accentuating the same dependency of prisoners (and others) on the media they consume.

However, media dependency also relates to production in this case. NPR's canceling Abu-Jamal's broadcasts meant that another two years would elapse before this essay appeared again. That time, it was still not audible, but printed, in the 1996 collection Live from Death Row. So, if we consider Abu-Jamal a "content provider," we can begin to understand his dependency relationships to others in the NPR radio system. These relationships occur between recordings, persons, and even organizations. As the content provider, Abu-Jamal depends upon reporter Noelle Hanrahan to record, produce, and edit the recordings. He also depends upon the recordings to mediate his message to an audience far beyond his particular location. Without recorded sound, his voice would literally remain unheard by those outside the prison. In this way, Abu-Ja-

mal also depends upon National Public Radio to distribute and syndicate the recordings. Hanrahan, NPR, and the audience all depend upon Abu-Jamal to provide unique content.

Hanrahan, as the reporter, edits the recordings to reflect the production values and "feel" of other audio media that NPR broadcasts (according to NPR, she was ultimately unsuccessful here). By putting the recordings into a particular order and aesthetic, she serves as an "agenda-setter." Hanrahan relies on All Things Considered producer Ellen Weiss, who "selects" and "frames" the content and agenda of the recordings in the context of All Things Considered's other programming. Although Abu-Jamal argues that capitalism consolidates control of media messages, saying in an interview, "it's like the media is the message, and ... the message is determined by who pays the bills," he also argues that "the all-powerful element ... [is] the editor who determines how a certain story is slanted and how it gets cut down and used." 108 Weiss can be thought of as the most central actor in this radio drama, because she acted on the recordings and on their cancellation.

As organizations, NPR and SCI Huntingdon each play unique roles in the system. NPR distributes the recordings as broadcasts. It remains dependent on Abu-Jamal for content, on reporter Hanrahan for an agenda, and on All Things Considered producer Ellen Weiss, for selection and framing. NPR also depends on its audience for attention (ratings), feedback, and support, including funding. Meanwhile, SCI Huntingdon must carefully balance its ability to control Abu-Jamal's behavior with its relationship to laws such as the First Amendment. Both Huntingdon and NPR depend upon the United States and Pennsylvania state governments for funding, and for official recognition and validation of their authorities.

Audience members and their agency, though, still remain to be accounted for. Media consumers depend on NPR for information, and for programming like Abu-Jamal's commentaries. In turn, they depend on Weiss's direction, to select and frame that information for them in the context of a familiar, formulaic program. They depend on Hanrahan's production to give the messages auditory clarity and other trappings of professional radio journalism. Again, the audience cannot hear Abu-Jamal's voice unless he provides the content. However, the audience is active. They engage with the messages that NPR broadcasts, constructing meaning based on those messages and developing their opinions based on that meaning. They provide the feedback and funding noted above to the radio stations. As taxpayers, members of the audience also support state and federal prisons. Finally, if audience members wish, they are free to contact any part of the media system they wish, from Abu-Jamal and Huntingdon to Hanrahan, Weiss, and NPR, to the government of the country and state in which they live.

Hanrahan describes Weiss's reaction early in the events to a sample of another Abu-Jamal essay as "visibly moved," and writes that Weiss supported syndicating Abu-Jamal's commentaries. Hanrahan affirms that Weiss selected the content of Abu-Jamal's eight commentaries, from a collection of hundreds of essays. According to Hanrahan, Weiss said at the time that she was "just shocked that this was censored ... I don't to [Capitol] Hill when I program." Hanrahan accuses Senator Bob Dole and the Fraternal Order of Police as those "directly responsible for this censorship," quoting Dole's speech on 16 May to the Senate, the next day, when he had warned that Abu-Jamal's "commentaries would have sent the wrong message." Meanwhile, Abu-

Jamal's book *We Want Freedom* argues, "NPR, caving in to political pressure, refused to air the programs." As noted above, NPR's official position has remained, from that time until now, that the essays simply did not meet "editorial standards," and that political pressure was not involved. Indeed, the District of Columbia court found during Abu-Jamal's lawsuit against the organization that NPR was not a "state actor." However, in light of Dole's speech and of NPR's dependence on the US Congress for at least partial funding, such a statement seems contradictory. In other words, although NPR and the government are not one and the same entity, if the federal legislature provides the organization with both legitimacy and capital, then how could NPR's "editorial standards" fail to account for political pressure?

Even if such a contradiction about the cause of NPR's decision remains unresolved, the effects of that decision on the essays are clear. The seventh essay in the series was re-recorded for broadcast on Pacifica Radio in 1995, though it was read by William Kunstler, not Abu-Jamal. Hanrahan explains that because the "unique and irreplaceable" tapes of the 15 April session remain in NPR's vaults, the essay collection *All Things Censored* was "born in response to this censorship." Similarly, she adds: "Following the suppression of the *All Things Considered* tapes, [Hanrahan, writer Terry Bisson, and literary agent Frances Goldin] ... secured a contract for Mumia's first book, *Live from Death Row.*" According to Hanrahan's descriptions, then, NPR's decision not to use the recordings led to a restructuring of the message for other media. The content of the NPR series, entitled "From an Echo in Darkness, a Step into Light," appears

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in print throughout Abu-Jamal's first three books and in some of his published articles. The tapes of all eight recordings remain, unaired to this day, locked in NPR's vault.

5. Conclusion

If communications theories such as the third-person effect hypothesis, media dependency, and structuration theory can refer not simply to interpersonal relationships, but to institutions and organizations as well, then we can consider NPR an actor, in the same way we would think of Abu-Jamal. This definition then quickly extends to include the Fraternal Order of Police, and SCI Huntingdon, as actors in this network. It seems reasonable to object that organizations are, ontologically speaking, not persons. First, though, the third-person effect's behavioral component has no empirical support in explaining interpersonal interactions in controlled experiments. Evidence from historical events involving organizational actors cannot invalidate invalid results. Second, within the context of both media dependency and structuration theories, because both agree with Bruno Latour's actor-network theory, non-human elements of organizational structures have agency within those structures, including the agency to constitute structure itself.

If we accept the political and structural agency of organizational actors, then the interaction between NPR, the Pennsylvania prison system, the United States government, the producers, and the audience in these events exhibits many of the characteristics of Davison's third-person effect. NPR was preparing to deliver a particular message to its audience, mediated by Abu-Jamal's recordings. However, in so doing, they hired Abu-Jamal himself, a controversial indi-


117. However, perhaps this approach merely capitulates to the US Supreme Court's recent and unprecedented redefinition of personhood to include corporations, for the purposes of financing political campaigns, in the Citizens United decision.
vidual, to provide the content of those recordings. Representatives for NPR in the news use the passive voice to describe the decision as one made by an organization, based on impersonal criteria, such as editorial standards. Such descriptions imply that the decision-making agency in this incident rested somewhere outside of any individual's control, concentrated not with the editors who are named in court as personally making a decision, but rather in their standards. Official statements on behalf of NPR position the news organization as a single entity, with concrete, if vaguely defined, standards and political positions.

NPR positions itself as neutral in the midst of a heated political conversation among individuals. However, the incident reveals the organization's political agency to affect individuals as well as other institutions or organizations. Hanrahan, for example, left her job with NPR over the incident, and helped Abu-Jamal take advantage of the situation by beginning the process of publishing books. She lauds Abu-Jamal's "refusal to censor his own reporting," and continues to produce Abu-Jamal's radio essays, now broadcast by Pacifica Radio and online at Prison Radio.118 In other words, the two persons most likely to have had their careers as cultural producers damaged by NPR's decision, Abu-Jamal and Hanrahan, turn that incident into an opportunity. The recordings and writings produced by Abu-Jamal and Hanrahan after NPR's decision transform prison from a structural challenge into a structural asset, lending their project the cultural capital of the "outsider," that comes from a "disavowal" of or by established systems. They took advantage of a disruption in one media system, radio, and used it to re-frame Abu-Jamal's commentaries as "censored" when produced for another system, book publishing.

This interpretation of events suggests that the behaviors hypothesized in Davison's third-person effect go beyond a censorship that takes the form of occlusion, hiding, banning, and so on. Rather, such behaviors can include productive activities, like transcription, euphemism, and even remixing. The NPR recordings also reveal a space of interaction between established organizations. The movement of Abu-Jamal's material recordings to NPR's vault and the change in Abu-Jamal's dominant mode of mediated expression for the next decade from radio to books both indicate the use-value of that space. It closely resembles what the semiotician Yurij Lotman describes as the "extrasystemic," a space of creativity, uncertainty, and complexity. What began as vibrations of sound waves from a human's body to magnetic tapes, in the confined space of a prison, become vibrations of literal and metaphorical messages between media systems. In that way, studying Abu-Jamal's body of work helps to connect the radical divide between his body and his cultural figure. After NPR's decision, that body of work was dominated by textual expression. So, the next chapter examines Abu-Jamal's printed oeuvre as it moves through time.

119. Lotman, "Semiotic Mechanism of Culture."
III. PRINT, PRISON, IPSEITY

This chapter examines three excerpts from Abu-Jamal’s prolific writings, which include six books and scores of essays. His body of work relates to genres like prison literature, political journalism, and radical history. Abu-Jamal writes more, and faster, while he remains on death row. Because his oeuvre grows and engages other bodies of work over time, this chapter describes it as a temporal praxis, a "body without organs", rather than an economic process or an aesthetic experience. I suggest that the "death sentence" constitutes the structuring and generative "arche" of that praxis.

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to transition from audio to printed media, this chapter of the study draws on many concepts from literary and textual theory. Whereas studies of mass and interpersonal communication provide cogent explanations of how Abu-Jamal's voice relays a mediated message through radio, literary studies explain the metaphor of "the speaker" of a text, and Abu-Jamal's characterization as a unique and exemplary "voice" for others. However, this chapter argues for more than a general framework of writing in prison as such. To that end, I retain Foucault's distinction between regulatory and disciplinary power, for an analysis of the conditions of possibility of Abu-Jamal's writing, by questioning how his intertextual body of work conceives of agency in bodies, temporality, and consciousness. The excerpts examined here come from one early journal article, an essay in his first book, and a chapter in his fourth book, that together represent the development of his overall oeuvre.120

120. "Revolutionary Literature = Contraband"; "Philly Daze: An Impressionistic Memoir," in Live from Death Row;
To analyze how that body of work develops over time, I adopt Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a "body without organs."\textsuperscript{121} This irreducible, singular materiality, the manifestation of a cultural production that calls upon and falls back upon its conditions of production in its very existence, embodies the agency to extend between temporal and spatial relationships. In other words, the body without organs becomes my guiding metaphor for Abu-Jamal's oeuvre, because its existence in both time and space bridges his body and his figure. Since it also bridges poetic and political production, the body of work therefore represents a "praxis." Finally, I argue that Abu-Jamal's oeuvre shifts, in genre and scope, at the fourth of his six published books. At this point, his work begins to incorporate longer, more cohesive philosophical projects than the collections of essays represented in his first three published volumes. His conditions of incarceration link this shift in his writing to similar works by other imprisoned authors.

Moreover, I argue that the "death sentence" constitutes the structuring and generative "arche" of that shift, in an appropriation of Foucault's early "archaeological" mode of inquiry. That mode, here, involves reading each excerpt at various levels, and looking for patterns of meaningful or even banal repetition across those levels. The repetition of statements, which Agamben distinguishes from words, phrases, or sentences, allows a reader to construct a text's meaning slowly, and with attention to its historical and social contexts. Further, archaeological inquiry combines each of these levels of reading with attention to what the texts do, not just what they mean. Focusing on the effects of Abu-Jamal's body of work over time shows that he blends the production of cultural artifacts with his own self-presentation as a cultural figure. While it re-

\textsuperscript{121} Deleuze and Guattari, \textit{Anti-Oedipus}: 9
mains unsaid, the death sentence undergirds each of the statements made by Abu-Jamal, and thus emerges as a structuring and generative point of experience, a pre-history, an "arche." Because of the revelation of this arche, the study as a whole uses this chapter to shift from archaeological analysis of statements to genealogical critique of figurative iterations, in the next chapter.

As suggested above, my practice of reading Abu-Jamal's body of work encompasses five general levels. First, I place his writing in its institutional and historical contexts, alongside other imprisoned writers, and in the genres of political journalism and Black Power manifestos. Then, I turn to a close reading of three important excerpts from Abu-Jamal's writing. Throughout this reading, I ask what agency the materiality of political subjects holds in Abu-Jamal's thought. In other words, I first ask what Abu-Jamal says that bodies can do. Second, I question his conception of the temporality of political agency, especially in expressive activity like writing. For example, I ask how writing affects his time in prison. Finally, I examine Abu-Jamal's understanding of human consciousness. By reading the content of his oeuvre for its epistemological claims, I aim to trace the development of his politics and ethics in relation to those more general genres. My close reading of the pragmatic linguistics and literary content of Abu-Jamal's writing relies on direct quotes from his published texts. However, this chapter analyzes other parts of his body of work besides its genre and its content.

Paying attention to the the "parataxis" or “bibliographic code,” that surrounds and mediates Abu-Jamal's writings shows how he has developed as an author. To that end, I draw on a medium-specific analysis for each excerpt. In other words, I trace the unique characteristics of
printed media like books, to ask how they help structure the meaning of their contents.\footnote{122} For example, Abu-Jamal's early essay appears in a journal whose stated goals and issue themes help interpret that essay's comments. Likewise, comparing editions of Abu-Jamal's first published book reveals a more direct address of the intended audiences, as well as a change in the introduction of the book's contents. Observing the covers, indexes, back matter, and publication information of the books analyzed here provides more rich information through which to frame the texts that they contain. Paratext helps explain the text, but it does not complete this analysis.

I call the next level of reading "extratextual." This reading practice takes account of carceral and publishing institutions, within which Abu-Jamal produces his books and other material artifacts of writing. Such an understanding does not rely on the corporeal metaphor between bodies and books, as does the bibliographic code. Instead, it relies on secondary sources such as court transcripts, book reviews, websites, and scholarly articles related to Abu-Jamal's writings, in order to explain the media system at large within which he writes. For example, the peer-review system through which his early essay gains academic credibility, the corporate publishing editorial system of his first book, and the non-profit press through which he adapted his master's thesis into his fourth book all contribute to how the reader of those texts frames their meanings. I also argue that his body of work can only enter a dialogue with other writings extratextually. Analysis of the extratextual level of Abu-Jamal's body of work provides the most direct connection to the audience and the effects of that oeuvre.

Finally, I analyze how each text changes Abu-Jamal's oeuvre. This level of analysis uses conclusions from each of the preceding levels of reading as evidence, while it introduces the in-

\footnote{122} McGann, \textit{The Textual Condition}.  

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terpretive framework of Deleuze and Guattari's "body without organs" as a lens through which to interpret that evidence. As each excerpt joins a complete and growing body of work, over time, they help constitute the very genres into which they can be categorized. They also represent a development, from discrete essays to collections and then to book-length arguments. In this way, each contributes to Abu-Jamal's oeuvre as a "body without organs." No one, including Abu-Jamal, can remove a work from that body, without destroying the whole as such. Likewise, no work can be added from without, since the oeuvre develops from within itself. Describing his body of work as an irreducible object grounds the argument that the oeuvre as a whole can have recognizable effects on others.

This leads to an observation of some of the effects of Abu-Jamal's oeuvre over time. Specifically, I critique how Abu-Jamal's shift to print media restructures the the media dependency relationships referenced in the previous chapter, on his radio recordings. That critique of structure raises the question of his oeuvre's interaction with Foucault's movement from archaeology to genealogy, and with Derrida's appropriation of genealogy in deconstruction. I ground this interaction in Abu-Jamal's resemblance to Gramsci's "organic intellectual." Describing that blurring, of the lines between Abu-Jamal's specific, unique existence and history, with his representation and exemplification of broader social issues, marks my own shift from archaeological inquiry to genealogical critique, which the thesis take up with more rigor when it analyzes the discourses about Abu-Jamal's figure online, in the next chapter.

So, this chapter proceeds in five parts. Each of these corresponds to a level of analysis as described above, within which each of the three excerpts receives that level of reading. I first describe the genre and historical context of each excerpt. Next, each excerpt submits to a close reading of its contents. Then, I trace each excerpt's paratextual context, followed by their extra-
textual relationships. My analysis of the effects of each excerpt on Abu-Jamal's oeuvre completes this cycle. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of my findings, a note on the questions left unanswered, and a connection to the following genealogy of Abu-Jamal's digital figure.

2. Genre and Historical Context

Abu-Jamal's body of work transverses the genres of Black Power manifesto, political journalism, and the nebulous category of prison literature. These genres stand out among many possible characterizations, because each of them draws on Abu-Jamal's unique history. Black Power manifestos draw on his time as a Black Panther. His work for the Party newspaper trained him as a political journalist, a career that he continued in Philadelphia before his arrest. Now, he writes as both a public intellectual and a prisoner, producing literature from and about that context. Each of the excerpts traced throughout this chapter contributes to the multiplicity of genres that inform Abu-Jamal's total oeuvre.

First, however, the conditions of his writing in prison deserve special attention. Abu-Jamal writes in an environment in which prison authorities can open, read, copy, and redistribute his correspondence, including legal mail. He must write without control over what books he can read, how much paper he can keep in his cell, or what technologies he can access, including pens and pencils. Correctional officers or prison officials can rescind his privileges to visit the library and use its typewriter. They can confiscate paper, pens and pencils from him, or surreptitiously misplace the copies of manuscripts that he sends out. Thus, when Abu-Jamal composes journal articles, book chapters, essays, his graduate thesis, and the manuscripts of his books, he must write everything in longhand, twice over. In this way, imprisonment exercises a regulatory pow-
er, engendered by the production of docile bodies.\textsuperscript{123} Abu-Jamal exercises a counter-force to that regulation, a constitutive power, by continuing to write.

"Revolutionary Literature = Contraband" appears in the \textit{Journal of Prisoners on Prisons} in 1989, his first published article in a peer-reviewed academic journal. In that sense, the brief essay marks Abu-Jamal's entrance into the genre of scholarly discourse. The article focuses on the circulation and censorship of "revolutionary" publications in prison, specifically arguing that leftist, progressive, and Black Power literatures face systemic censorship. Thus, the piece also belongs to the category of prison literary studies. Because the essay describes what happens to revolutionary literature, while calling for revolutionary action on behalf of literary producers such as publishers, it reflexively calls attention to the ironic possibility that it might fall subject to the very censorship that it studies. This reflexivity and self-consciousness marks the essay as a work of Black Power political philosophy. Finally, its succinct, polemic form exemplifies Abu-Jamal's compositional style.

Abu-Jamal publishes his first collection of essays, \textit{Live from Death Row}, in 1995, one year after National Public Radio cancelled his radio commentaries. The collection focuses largely on life in prison. By describing prisoners' daily routines along with the state of the prison industrial complex in the United States, this collection rapidly gained popularity as prison literature. Abu-Jamal's focus on current events, especially in law, politics, crime, and punishment, marks his essays as opinion/editorial style political journalism. The collection also turns to the personal experiences of its author. The essay analyzed in this chapter, "Philly Daze: an Impres-

\textsuperscript{123} Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}.  

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sionistic memoir," displays characteristics of memoir, while complicating its political use-value. *Live from Death Row* remains Abu-Jamal's seminal and best-selling publication.

With the publication of his fourth book, in 2004, Abu-Jamal embraces a different authorial project. A cultural history of the Black Panther Party, *We Want Freedom* incorporates the interdisciplinary scholarship of Abu-Jamal's adapted master's thesis along with his personal recollections and experiences. The chapter that I analyze here, "A Woman's Party," demonstrates a unique contribution to the study of gender and the Black Panthers. Drawing on primary sources from history and literature, ethnography, and personal correspondence with the women of the Party, Abu-Jamal argues from a Black Power philosophy for a more nuanced and complex understanding of the interaction between women and the Party than any advanced by previous writers. *We Want Freedom* marks the shift in Abu-Jamal's writing from his early collections of essays to more lengthy, detailed, and topical books.

The development of Abu-Jamal's body of writing, from very short essays to collections of such essays and then to longer scholastic books, complements the accumulation of genres over time. As I argue in the literature review, the historical context of prison places his *oeuvre* into the default category of prison literature, while structuring the growth of the *oeuvre* oeuvre over time to incorporate scholarship, memoir, and manifesto alongside journalism. In addition, each of the works that he produces, as represented by the three excerpts in this chapter, contribute to the same accumulation of genres into which the whole body of work can be categorized. With that in mind, I turn now to a close reading of the three excerpts of his overall *oeuvre*.

3. **Content**

In this section, I read each of the three excerpts very closely. Staying close to the content of the texts requires a rigorous methodology for this reading. To that end, I draw on the linguistic
field known as pragmatics, which observes how word choice and grammar work to construct the meaning of communication. Because pragmatics often center on speech as such, my reading also searches for literary devices and structures such as narrative, allusion, and persuasion. In this way, my reading looks for themes about bodies, time, and consciousness in Abu-Jamal's writings. I argue that each of the excerpts combines at least two of these themes in its textual content.

In "Revolutionary Literature = Contraband," Abu-Jamal discusses the case of *Revolutionary Worker* and its censorship by Pennsylvania prisons. He describes the weekly paper, published in Chicago by a "Marxist-Leninist-Maoist" communist group, as a "tabloid ... entertaining, as much for its offbeat writing as its creative, provocative graphics," such as political cartoons. Abu-Jamal then describes the paper as "verboten," or forbidden, by SCI Huntingdon. He argues that the paper's coverage of an attack on the radical Philadelphia group MOVE, their subsequent taking of an editorial position on the violence, and their provision of that writing to "indigent prisoners" for reduced or no cost, caused the prison censors to curtail the "radical" paper. Significantly, Abu-Jamal refers to Pennsylvania's "prison censorship bodies" in the first paragraph, comparing these to other states' "prison media bodies," as those who make the decisions about what prisoners may or may not read.

Analyzing these censors' decision to block the *Revolutionary Worker* from 1985 on, Abu-Jamal connects their lack of an explicitly stated rationale to their similar censoring of other "revolutionary" publications, such as the *Spear*. He notes their appropriation of Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Directive 814, prohibiting literature that promotes a "clear and present danger" in the prisons. Ironically, Abu-Jamal points out, this directive's "stated purpose... is ... to satisfy the educational, cultural, informational, religious, legal, and philosophical needs of prisoners." However, this regulation "impinge[s] upon the First Amendment rights of publishers
of alternative and radical publications," he continues, noting the class and racial disparities within which white prisoners may subscribe to "fascist-oriented" publications "without comparative censorship." He also recounts his personal experience in challenging the censors' decision, which was met with silence until he was joined by a non-profit legal fund.

Towards the end of the essay, Abu-Jamal enjoins publishers of revolutionary literature to "join in the struggle with prisoner-subscribers," indicating that both political and legal consciousness rely on a collective intelligence.124 His reflexive attention to the genres and institutional conditions surrounding the production, distribution, reception, and censorship of revolutionary literature marks Abu-Jamal's own literary movement from reporting to political manifesto and prison literature. Meanwhile, his attention to the physical movement of printed publications, and to the racial disparity inherent in the prison's censorship of Revolutionary Worker, shows his concern with the material conditions of possibility for his own writing, which falls into the same category of revolutionary literature. In this way, he connects his own material body with the movement of his body of work, and simultaneously links both of them inextricably to his political consciousness as an imprisoned revolutionary.

To show another combination of these themes, consider the last chapter of Abu-Jamal's first published book, the essay "Philly daze: an impressionistic memoir." 125 Here, bodies no longer refers to a metaphorical construct, as in Abu-Jamal's 1989 essay. Instead, he pays close attention to the interactions between physical bodies, and places them in an unusual temporal construct. To that end, Abu-Jamal constructs visual alterity throughout the essay. Within the first

124. Abu-Jamal, "Revolutionary Literature = Contraband": 1-3
125. Abu-Jamal, Live From Death Row: 149-151
sentence of the text, the dysphemism *honky* appears, in reference to presidential candidate George Wallace. The speaker of the essay describes himself as part of a group of "four black North Philly teens," gathered in "protest" against Wallace’s candidacy, on their way to "the citadel of urban white racist sentiment," that is, the "stadium." With the phrase, “Four afros amid a sea of blonds, brunettes, and redheads,” the speaker feminizes the "sea" of others at the rally by referring to all of them by hair colors alone, and races them as white through the same description of their hair colors. The racial aspects of this visual alterity emphasize the speaker's minority in the immense crowd implied by a "sea." The essay does not, however, rest on narration and description alone.

In the second paragraph, an important dialogue occurs between the speaker’s group and the stadium crowd. "We must’ve been insane," notes the speaker, re-emphasizing his marginalized position in terms of psychosis, since he can only make sense of the exchange through nonsense, or insanity.

We shouted, 'Black power, Ungowa, black power!' They shouted, 'Wallace for president! White power!' and 'Send those niggers back to Africa!' We shouted, 'Black power, Ungowa!' (Don’t ask what 'Ungowa' means. We didn’t know. All we knew was that it had a helluva ring to it.) 'Black power!' They hissed and booed.

None of this vocal exchange constitutes a conversation. From the first moment of interpersonal discourse, words are "shouted," and this continues as the mode of exchange until language fails, when "they hissed and booed." The use of slogans, as opposed to arguments *about* Wallace as a presidential candidate, also indicate that while the literary device of dialogue represents this exchange, it cannot be construed as a conversation.

The fractally recursive structure of the dialogue features a call and response, both within and between phrases. Internally, "black-POW-er, un-GOW-a, black-POW-er" features rhyming
construction in abbreviated terza rima, a convenient structure for extended, rhythmic chanting. As a whole phrase, the slogan elicits a complementary response from the crowd to whom it is presumably addressed ("they"): "Wallace for President! White power!" This response follows an alliterative, binary structure, perhaps intended to provide closure to the exchange. However, because a white (group of) speaker(s) then shouts the dysphemism *niggers* in addition to their slogan, it the exchange continues. I suggest that the narrative as it is textually presented in the essay conflicts with the temporal events that they recount. Before the black youths return to their original chant, they would probably have responded to the call of *nigger* with that of *honky*, although the latter dysphemism appears instead at the very beginning of the narrative. That interpretation calls attention to the non-linearity of time in Abu-Jamal's narrative construction of his memory.

The dysphemistic exchange, if takes place at all, could explain why the white crowd then leaves semantic language behind, instead turning to hissing and booing, and then to physical action: "We stood up in our seats and proudly gave the black power salute. In answer, we received … spittle … [the crowd] hurled bare sticks at us." After this, Wallace, who can hear and see this exchange from his stage, threatens exportation to the "Sov-ee-yet Union," as well as vehicular homicide, against "these dirty, unwashed radicals." Then, the four black youth are "escorted out (perhaps a little relieved)" from the rally, by "helmeted cops." They, along with other young black and white youths who were also "thrown out of the rally, ... gathered at the bus station." Here, they are "attacked by several white men," one of whom is armed. This violence overwhelms the four, who "were no match for eight to ten grown men." While being held down and beaten by two of these men, the speaker sees "the two-toned, gold-trimmed pant leg of a Philly cop," and calls for help. Then, instead of helping him, "The cop ... kicked me in the face." The
speaker concludes, "I have been thankful to that faceless cop ever since, for he kicked me straight into the Black Panther Party."

The sudden attention to faciality at the end of this narrative marks both humanity and agency. Neither the movement between "cop" and "police," nor the visual parallels between the speaker’s seeing and the police officer’s seeing, can be described as understanding. However, the violence directed by a "faceless cop" against the "face" of the speaker as he lies "on the ground," a silent but visceral response to a voiced request for help, transfers humanity on the basis of that violence itself from the police officer, an agent of society and institutional power to the speaker, an agent of individual identity and protest. In other words, this violence against the speaker’s face and voice grounds his narrative and performative agency. The exchange of power through violence gives Abu-Jamal and his speaker the agency to narrate a "memoir." Thus, Abu-Jamal uses this narrative to link his conception of bodies, as both political subjects and racial objects, with their movements through time and memory, towards his naming of a racial, political, and historical consciousness. The "face" of that consciousness is the Black Panther Party.

*We Want Freedom*, Abu-Jamal's fourth book, studies the Black Panther Party in great depth. Here, Abu-Jamal investigates the Party's historical and theoretical foundations, its complex existence, and some of its social effects. The seventh chapter of this book, "A Woman's Party," traces a litany of "tough, committed women" from the Party's ranks and leadership. To do so, he quotes at length from their own narratives. Combining ethnographic and historical research with personal correspondence and literary analysis, Abu-Jamal draws these narratives into a cohesive and nuanced argument.

126. Abu-Jamal, *We Want Freedom*: 159-184
To begin the chapter, Abu-Jamal reviews previous arguments for women's agency in civil rights struggles. He prominently cites arguments made by women who were themselves actively involved in such struggles, such as Mary McLeod Bethune and Ella Baker. Then, he critiques Hugh Pearson's claim about "flagrant" and "routine" mistreatment of women in the Party, primarily because of Pearson's interaction with only "three BPP insiders," each of whom differed ideologically and socially from the Party's leadership and mission. "It is not surprising that he comes to flawed conclusions based on these limited and biased sources," Abu-Jamal argues. He goes to write that while sexism did exist in the Party, it stemmed from negative social influences that contradicted the revolutionary ideals of the Black Power movement. Indeed, Abu-Jamal writes, "for ideological reasons and for reasons of sheer survival," the Black Panther Party gave the women involved "far more opportunities to lead and to influence the organization than any of its contemporaries, in white or Black radical formations."127 He quotes Kathleen Cleaver to support this claim, because she cites the Party's formal call, in 1970, to support the movements for women's liberation and gay liberation. In this way, he implicitly aligns his argument with Black Power feminism, although he does not explicitly state his position as such.

Abu-Jamal puts forward ten case studies in the chapter, and concludes by recounting one of his own memorable experiences with sexual and gender politics in the Party. Abu-Jamal's case studies of Afeni Shakur and of Safiya A. Bukhari bear particular attention, because Abu-Jamal develops them each in great detail, and because he uses the same twisting of time in each of them to construct a particular narrative argument about Black consciousness. He describes Shakur as

127. In terms of pragmatic analysis, Abu-Jamal's use of a capital B for the word Black makes it a proper noun. This denotes more than a racial or visual classification, because it includes both cultural and political identifications. Thus, Abu-Jamal makes that identity consciousness clear by using the capitalized B, especially when he juxtaposes the term with his spelling of 'white' without capitalization.
"an angry, alienated, desperately poor girl" when she encountered the Black Panther Party, having been moved by Chairman Bobby Seale's "roaring street corner soapbox speech." Because of that speech, Abu-Jamal argues, Shakur "attended a Political Education class, and promptly joined." In her autobiography, Shakur writes of her experience, "it was the first time in my life that I had ever met men who didn't abuse women." Abu-Jamal quotes her to support his critique of Pearson. He emphasizes Shakur's importance to others in and around the Party by noting that she "numbered among the famous Panther 21, leading Party members who were targeted by the State" That group was eventually acquitted of the false charges against them. However, the incident led to the "loss of some of [the BPP's] best and brightest members' organizing efforts and social presence." By noting that "loss," Abu-Jamal alludes to the expulsion of the Panther 21 from the Party despite their innocence.

Earlier in the chapter, Abu-Jamal foreshadows this case study by noting parenthetically that Shakur is "known to millions as the mother of the late rapper Tupac Shakur." In the same sentence, he writes that she was "appointed to a position of responsibility in the Harlem By framing Shakur's leadership before delving into her background, Abu-Jamal makes a temporal shift like the one in "Philly Daze." This time, the shift highlights his argument that the progressive social philosophy of the Black Panthers valued achievement over gender.

Safiya Bukhari, whose case Abu-Jamal mentions in the same paragraph with Shakur's leadership, echoes this philosophy in her unpublished manuscript, when she writes, "a revolutionary has no gender." Abu-Jamal quotes from her manuscript throughout this chapter, for example, reproducing her opinion of Shakur. "This is a Black woman worthy of respect," she writes, adding, "Afeni Shakur exemplified the strength and dignity amid chaos that I needed to see" during her early days in the Party. Abu-Jamal explains, first, that Bukhari "held various posts in the
Party and later commanded units of the Black Liberation Army." Here again, he foregoes chronology in favor of argumentation to organize the case study. Only later in the chapter does he relate her unique narrative. "Bukhari did not enter the Party as a wild-eyed youth," Abu-Jamal explains, instead characterizing her early "apolitical stance" as "essential conservatism." He implicitly compares the young Bukhari to Mary McLeod Bethune, with whose words he opened the chapter. He had characterized Bethune as "a major force in the Black women's club movement in the 1920s and 30s," drawing connections across not only the flow of time within one life, narrative, or argument, but a century.

Abu-Jamal devotes a full subsection of this chapter ("Personal Engagement") to Bukhari's narrative. He traces her political movement from towards a radical feminism as well as a radical Black nationalism, to "State" intervention. As a volunteer for the free breakfast program, he writes, Bukhari considered her involvement "charity rather than political support." Then, as "attendance began to diminish and she couldn't understand why," she learned from "the community and parents ... that many of them were told by police" that the Panthers were "'feeding them poisoned food.'" Abu-Jamal argues that this incident attracted Bukhari "to the ideology and politics" of the Party. When this was followed by her illegal and abusive arrest shortly thereafter, he continues, "the Party gained a hard-working, tough-minded, intelligent, and committed young woman as a comrade because of petty lies and attempts at harassment by the police." Then, after recounting the accomplishments that mark her "commitment and determination of a revolutionary," Abu-Jamal reads Bukhari's "insights into the problem of sexism" in the Party, for example, quoting her descriptions of "unprincipled behavior" that undermined what he calls the "theoretical construct of ideals" towards which, he argues, the Party strove in its gender relations. He
connects Bukhari's conclusions to those of historian Nikhil Pal Singh, again moving in a non-linear way through time further his scholarly argument.

In the next section, "The Hard Life of Panther Women," Abu-Jamal turns to lesser-known narratives. He contrasts the privileges enjoyed by high-ranking and well-connected women in the Party, such as Barbara Easley Cox, and one-time national chair Elaine Brown, with the struggles faced by thousands of low-ranking and often anonymous women. These include Naima Major, whose struggle, Abu-Jamal writes, is "representative of the life of a Black Panther woman," because she "experienced many things, but a privileged life wasn't one of them," and whose "story is actually closer to the norm of a woman's life the the party," because it includes "Hard work. Hard study. Jailed lovers. Survival. Striving. Times of promise. Times of terror. Resistance to male chauvinism. / And hope." Cox, who had access to opportunities for luxury and world travel, describes her "years after the Party as a continuance of a journey" to "help [even] one young person to forge forward," concluding, "I live to do the job." On the other hand, Major "continues to aspire to the revolutionary, humanistic ideal," and "is still an organizer." Likewise, Abu-Jamal characterizes the narratives of Rosemari Mealy, Tarika Lewis, and Regina Jennings as representing "the very best of the Black Panther Party." Through these chronologically non-linear case studies, he argues that the history of women in the Party deserves a more granular and nuanced treatment than the versions presented by previous scholars.

Abu-Jamal concludes the chapter, like others in the book, with a section subtitled "Memories." Moving into a first-person voice, and adopting a less formal vocabulary and tone, he recounts the interaction between men and women in his own experience as a Black Panther, to add persuasive anecdotal evidence to his argument. First, he frames the stories by confessing an urge to "chuckle" at "charges of sexism" leveled against the Black Panther Party. This laughter serves
as a confession that Abu-Jamal's historical consciousness exceeds temporal linearity. He then describes "women in the Party" as "able, determined, and powerful revolutionaries ... like lionesses," metaphorically representing embodied political consciousness while textually referencing naturalist, African, and Black Nationalist mythological schemes. No matter where in the country he served as a teenager, he continues, "I was under the authority of a female Panther who ran a tight and efficient operation," going on to describe the leadership of Sister Love in Philadelphia, Sister Bernice in New York, and Judi Douglas in Berkeley. "We knew, and could recite, the names of our sisters who were political prisoners ... and their names were like a mantra of resistance," writes Abu-Jamal. Then, his memory turns to a specific encounter with a sister Panther.

Propositioned one night in his room by "Sheila," Abu-Jamal "almost stuttered. But deeper than my desire was a burning guilt," because another male Panther, Mojo, had been "dressed down" earlier that day "for going to a whorehouse." Abu-Jamal recalls, "I thought of Mojo as Sheila stood there." She asks him again, "Well, do you want to relate to me?" When Abu-Jamal tries to explain his conflicted feelings, Sheila insists that her offer has nothing to do with that: "This is my pussy! I give it, or I don't, when I want to, hear me? ... Do you want this pussy, or not?" In response, Abu-Jamal remembers thinking, "I wanted it so bad I could taste it. But it would have tasted like betrayal ... A true revolutionary would choose loyalty over desire," and so he answers "not." "'Fuck you, then,' she raged," leaving Abu-Jamal for the "darkness of history."

Abu-Jamal retells this story, neither to titillate the reader, nor to distract them from the more straightforward scholarly narrative that precedes it, but to address the questions of sex that accompany those of gender in this part of his study, through the evidence best available to him -

128. His laughter carries shades of Foucault's reaction to Borges's fictional Chinese encyclopedia, a reaction that Battaille characterizes as the signature of absolute excess.
his own memory. He ties the memoir back to his chapter's argument, by asserting after its conclusion that, in "the Black Panther Party, women were far more than mere appendages of male ego and power," and that instead they represented individuals who transcended gender by becoming genderless revolutionaries. My reading of this chapter suggests that Abu-Jamal connects women's bodies to their political and sexual agency, within the historical consciousness of the Black Panther Party.

This close reading has paid attention to how Abu-Jamal uses specific linguistic and rhetorical strategies in order to create arguments in his body of work. Three themes have emerged, interrelated through each excerpt. Abu-Jamal treats the material bodies of circulating and censored texts in his early essay, arguing for a systemically and historically informed consciousness that would bind the producers and consumers of those texts. His essay in Live from Death Row traces a memoir without a linear chronology to show how power moves from body to body through constitutive acts of violence. Finally, his chapter "A Woman's Party" reveals the complex connections between his conception of how women's bodies, and their control over their bodies, entered a relationship of mutual constitution with Black Panther political and historical consciousness, again by using a non-chronological argumentative structure, and by incorporating both scholarship and memoir. The next section traces each excerpt's paratextual information, to show how that also helps construct meaning in the text.

4. Parataxis

This level of my analysis relies on practices of looking as much as of reading. I examine the material context ("parataxis," or what Jerome McGann calls the "bibliographic code") of each of the same three excerpts from Abu-Jamal's body of work. To do so, I read around the text, observing how design, and related but separate content that surround each excerpt help to
constitute its meaning. This, in turn, helps explain how each piece contributes to Abu-Jamal's body of work at large. I call this method a "medium-specific archaeology," because it allows an inquiry into the unique characteristics of printed media, especially books. This inquiry shows how each excerpt contributes to the growth and change in Abu-Jamal's body of work over time.

As noted above, "Revolutionary Literature = Censorship," Abu-Jamal's first published journal article, appears in a 1989 issue of the "prisoner written, academically oriented and peer reviewed, non-profit" Journal of Prisoners on Prisons. As both a metaphorical "platform" for prisoners' ideas, and a material medium of transmission for those ideas, the journal contains paratextual information such as article abstracts, a table of contents, and its stated mission, including the self-definition quoted above. Reading the journal's information and mission statement reveals that it seeks to bring "knowledge produced by prison writers together with academic arguments," because "definitions of deviance and constructions of those participating in these defined acts are incompletely created by social scientists, media representatives, politicians and those in the legal community."129 Thus, Abu-Jamal's inclusion in this journal marks a first step towards his entering a discourse with other academics, intellectuals, and public figures.

Live from Death Row was published first as a hardcover book by Addison-Wesley in 1995, and not released as a paperback edition until the next year, by HarperPerennial. That the book's contract was bought from Addison-Wesley by Harper indicates its potential to sell in a general commercial market, not only among radical, Black, or academic readers. That the Harper publishers decided to release a paperback edition supports two arguments. First, the book sold

well enough to warrant a second print run. Second, the hardcover edition was too expensive for its intended or potential audience. Abu-Jamal's preface to the paperback testifies anecdotally to that fact, as does the relative pricing: the hardcover cost twenty-two dollars when released; the paperback only twelve-fifty. Incidentally, the preface also forms part of the paratextual information for the paperback. On that note, some other features of the paperback bear observation.

*Live from Death Row* features a picture of Abu-Jamal, a middle-aged black man with long dreadlocks and a beard, white-shirted, gazing into the camera and therefore directly at the viewer of the image. The straightforward image presents evidence of the stylistic realism evinced by the title of the collection, *Live from Death Row*. This evidence is supported by the sans serif typefaces used for the author’s name, introduction and preface bylines, review quotations on the front and back covers, and the bibliographical information found on the back, such as the ISBN number and genre (“social science”). The typeface for the title, meanwhile, mimics that of a typewriter, evoking the manual typewriters to which death row prisoners are limited for their own typing needs, when they can get to one, as well as the official and institutional neutrality evinced by memoranda and court orders distributed in carbon copy. In this way, the cover design supports the title's claim to a realistic account of life on death row. So, too, do the reviews and summary of the contents found on the back cover. These include accolades such as “eloquent, scholarly, urgent”; “articulate…worth reading”; “an incisive critic of American society”; “important…expert and well-reasoned”; “tough, true, timely”; “brilliant”; and “raw and courageous.” A panoply of intellectuals, artists, and national publications contribute these

praises, thus framing the work as both "critically acclaimed" and popular. Most importantly, nearly all of the paratextual elements of the paperback edition of *Live from Death Row* construct a concentrated emotional appeal to the would-be reader, a demand for their reaction to the work inside.

As an adaptation of Abu-Jamal's Master's thesis, *We Want Freedom* features paratextual information associated with academic presses. These include an index, a bibliography, and extended notes to the text. The non-profit South End Press does publish academic works, often of politically radical history or social theory. However, the book combines "his poetic voice and unsparing critical gaze," according to the publisher's description on the back cover. Thus, the paratextual information alone cannot classify this book as just academic or historical. As the previous discussion on genre and the close reading of a chapter from this book have suggested, it represents instead a turning point in Abu-Jamal's writing career, from the deeply personal opinion/editorial journalism and prison literature of his early works, to a more recent adoption of scholarly objectivity focused on more in-depth projects. One bibliographic feature that supports this argument comes from the final section of the chapter. Abu-Jamal's personal recollections are italicized. This signifies, both to the reader and for Abu-Jamal's body of work, a conscious attention to the division between categories of writing, within a single body of text.

Thus, observing the material context of these excerpts enriches the reader's understanding of how each changes Abu-Jamal's body of work in time. The early essay's appearance in a journal joins at least one other major publication before the NPR recordings, a 1991 essay in the *Yale Law Journal*. The publication of Abu-Jamal's first book, after those cancelled broadcasts, turned him from a politically marginalized journalist to a popular and successful author. Finally, with the publication of his fourth book, Abu-Jamal began to embrace the medium of books for
themselves, by working towards a body of printed works that incorporated more notes, typeface changes, and a publisher with whom he could feel politically aligned. In the next section, I examine the non-material context of each piece, to see how they affect relationships that are not immediately visible in or around the texts.

5. Context

This section analyzes what I call the "extratextual" level of each excerpt. While this general category of the non-material context of the work could include prison regulations and other conditions of writing, the literature review and the introduction to this chapter each treat those regulations and conditions in detail. Therefore, while this section does take up an inquiry into the production, distribution, consumption, and reaction of and to his writings, it focuses mainly on the audience for each work. It asks how they contribute to the meaning of each text, and to the development of Abu-Jamal's oeuvre over time.

Because Abu-Jamal does represent, for many, a controversial public figure, advocates for and against his cause form part of each work’s publication, distribution, and consumption. For "Revolutionary Literature = Censorship," the peer reviewers at the Journal of Prisoners on Prisons did not know who had written the article, and so they could not approve or reject its publication based on Abu-Jamal's identity. However, based on the paratextual information traced above, Abu-Jamal and the journal share the goal of publicly discussing carceral institutions from the perspective of those most affected by them. So, Abu-Jamal is an ideal author for the Journal to promote, and they do so by including his other works in their online bibliography of recommended readings.

For Abu-Jamal, conversely, the Journal is an ideal venue for the dissemination of his
writing, because it exposes his work to an audience that includes scholars of prisons, especially lawyers. At the time of the article's publication, Abu-Jamal had not yet met the legal team that would file his most recent, successful appeals. However, on the basis of the publicity that he found as an author, starting with this publication, the social networks of his supporters were able to raise the funds to eventually hire those lawyers. Without inferring causality too strongly, the publication of this work can certainly be thought to have driven Abu-Jamal's figure, and his case, into the public sphere far beyond Philadelphia.

*Live From Death Row* appears in a very different public context. Because the corporate publisher Harper owns the rights to the paperback, as opposed to the non-profit *Journal*, its editors maintain a great deal of control over the content of the text before it is printed, bound, and sold. Because I do not have access to compare the manuscripts and galleys of each edition, this analysis cannot analyze whether changes which have been made to those manuscripts reflect the author’s intent, or might indicate editorial practices of political censorship. However, *social* practices of censorship, such as the boycott by the Fraternal Order of Police against the purchase of this book, affect libraries, schools, and individual supporters of Abu-Jamal and his works. Indeed, the Order retains a list of Abu-Jamal's supporters on their website.  

131 The group continues to urge its own supporters to call for Abu-Jamal's execution, and to boycott his works, the products of corporations like Ben and Jerry's who support him, and the cultural works of his other individual supporters, such as Ed Asner, Maya Angelou, and Jacques Derrida. However, as a corporate publisher, Harper also insulates Abu-Jamal's works from that controversy, and markets his book in a general, commercial market. This allows him to flourish as an author, even

without the infrastructure for traditional journalism around him.

*We Want Freedom*'s publication thus presents South End Press with the conundrum of pursuing the same general, commercial book markets as Harper, nearly ten years later, or restricting their marketing efforts to the niche markets with whom they could reasonably characteristically succeed. As a non-profit publisher, their goals align with the potential markets for this transitional book, such as libraries, and bookstores who stock radical works. So, South End uses Abu-Jamal's cultural capital to ensure the book's popularity. Meanwhile, Abu-Jamal uses South End's network of relations to enter this work into a discourse with other works of history and memoir about the Black Panther Party in particular. In this way, Abu-Jamal uses the publication of this book to legitimize the shift in his body of work towards that of an imprisoned intellectual, as with the book chapters and peer-reviewed articles that he published around the same time. In this way, even if his audience shrinks in volume, it increases in interpretive agency.

This extratextual analysis, although it suggests the necessity of a social network analysis to more completely answer its own questions, reveals the many actors that affect the machinations of Abu-Jamal's publications. In the next section, I briefly review, in the context of this and all the other preceding sections, how each excerpt contributes to the development of Abu-Jamal's oeuvre at large.

6. OEUVRE EFFECTS

Before describing some of the effects of Abu-Jamal's oeuvre, as a single body of work, on the genres and disciplines with which it is in dialogue, let us first reconsider how each excerpt effects a major change on Abu-Jamal's oeuvre. "Revolutionary Literature = Censorship," as a
short, polemic, report based on journalistic research, represents the paradigmatic style of Abu-Jamal's early writings from prison. *Live from Death Row*, a collection of those very essays, some of which mirrored his cancelled broadcasts for NPR in 1994, shifts his dominant medium of expression from radio to print. Finally, *We Want Freedom* shows Abu-Jamal's recent shift towards focused, in-depth critiques of complex topics. Every new addition to the *oeuvre* contributes to its constellation of genres. Meanwhile, the whole body of work falls back upon its conditions of production, affecting the systems, such as prison, within which it is produced, every time it changes. In other words, it acts like a single entity, an irreducible "body without organs."

Because this single body of work changes over time, and because of Abu-Jamal's concentrated use of non-linear temporality in his writings, I describe his *oeuvre* as a temporal praxis. The term "praxis" here indicates an activity of the body (of work), informed by (its producer's) consciousness. In this way, the *oeuvre* cannot be quantified only as an economic process, nor can its readers experience it only aesthetically. Because Abu-Jamal's body of work expands in volume and content, while he draws closer to a potential execution, the "death sentence" constitutes the structuring and generative "arche" of his praxis. Any analysis of the critical, legal, and structural effects of his production of cultural artifacts must take that point of experience and potential dying into account. While the previous chapter on Abu-Jamal's audio recordings analyzes how his cultural production restructures the conditions of its own production, the effect of his writings on his legal case also bear examination.

Upon the publication of *Live from Death Row*, SCI Greene Superintendent Price and the prison authorities served Abu-Jamal with a major disciplinary infraction, for "conducting the business or profession ... of journalism," the same infraction for which Abu-Jamal had been sent to solitary confinement after NPR paid him for one unaired broadcast. Here, recall Foucault’s
terms of discipline and regulation: Abu-Jamal is regulated for having violated disciplinary rules. The prison at which Abu-Jamal wrote the book, and from which he published it, actually maintains a publishing infrastructure, through which another (white) capital case inmate had previously published his own book. The prison regulations prohibited Abu-Jamal from publishing his book despite this infrastructure, and when he managed to do so despite the prison's lack of assistance, and even resistance, he received disciplinary punishment - another month in solitary confinement - for having done so.  

Speaking of Foucault, as Brady Heiner argues, Michel Foucault read the writings of many Black Panthers in the United States, including their newspaper, The Black Panther. Abu-Jamal wrote for the paper during the period that Heiner describes, and so although he is only mentioned in the footnotes to Heiner's study, Abu-Jamal's early contribution to Foucault's development of genealogy bears examination.

Heiner contends that Foucault's interaction with racism and class struggle in America had a profound impact on his philosophical career. After reading the ideas of the Black Panthers, Heiner argues, Foucault shifted from pursuing an "archaeology of knowledge" to tracing "genealogy" instead. This shift, in practical, political terms, involved a far greater militancy, the development of an oppositional historiography, or "counter-history," and a more direct use of academic study for social change, such as Foucault’s involvement in the Prison Information Group. Despite the depth of this influence, Heiner argues that it remains invisible, continually elided, occluded, and unrecognized because of "epistemic injustice." I would suggest, instead, that Hein-


133. Heiner, "Foucault and the Black Panthers."
er underestimates the degree to which Foucault, along with Jean Genet and other French writers of the late twentieth century, were radicalized by their contact with the Black Panther Party.

In The Body of This Death, William Haver suggests that the question of "desire" in Foucault's thought represents a more radical, "queer Foucault," a figure that often goes unexamined. One French post-structuralist thinker who has explicitly interacted with the figure and work of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Jacques Derrida, echoes Clark Kissinger's description of Abu-Jamal as "the exception and the rule." Derrida calls Abu-Jamal both "unique" and "exemplary" in calling for his release. In this way, the cycle of mutually constitutive effects between contemporary critical theory and Abu-Jamal's body of work comes back to Abu-Jamal, and the study shifts from affectedly neutral "archaeology" to a more critical "genealogy" of his figure online.

7. Conclusion

Abu-Jamal's printed body of work demonstrates explicit intertextuality. Rather than moving from one distinct genre to another, it gradually accumulates a constellation of genres, especially embracing journalism, Black Power manifesto, and prison literature. The analysis above has shown that textual content, paratextual information, and extratextual relationships all work together to create meaning. Both individual works and the overall oeuvre generated by Abu-Jamal form an irreducible body without organs. As a material and metaphorical unit that changes over time, Abu-Jamal's body of work affects the systems in which it arises, by revealing NPR's non-neutrality, changing prison regulations, and generating a shift in the dominant medium of his own production. Because it affects political, poetic, and critical theory, it constitutes a praxis.

134. Haver, The Body of this Death.
136. Derrida, "For Mumia Abu-Jamal."
nally, because it grows while Abu-Jamal approaches the potential "death sentence," its temporal-ity as a praxis - its very existence - is both generated and structured by that "arche."

Having revealed the conditions and effects of Abu-Jamal's production of cultural arti-facts, both audio and printed, this analysis next shifts from archeological inquiry to genealogical critique. To trace the online discourses about the figure of Mumia Abu-Jamal in the next chapter, the study follows Foucault's transition to an ontologically nomadic critique of the revealed truths of narrative and database, in his genealogy. In other words, by turning to the Web, this analysis must critique and rewrite both the statements and conditions of digitally mediated production of Abu-Jamal's cultural figure, and the statements and conditions of its own possibility for the production of knowledge about that cultural figure.
IV. Genealogy of Hagiographies

This chapter examines how others produce Abu-Jamal and Daniel Faulkner as cultural figures. In so doing, the study crosses a digital divide that its subjects cannot, since one is dead, and the other imprisoned. The chapter traces the production, consumption, distribution, censorship, and reproduction of some seminal, and unusual, digital media objects. These traces ask whose life, and whose power, the online interactions of search, reference, remediation, and remix put at stake. Genealogy of online discourse reveals the synecdochic and heteronomous discursive constructions of that figure. Finally, I posit the conditions of possible relation between Abu-Jamal's body, body politic, and body digital.

1. Introduction

By approaching these specific problems, I attempt to think how we make sense of the vast quantities of information available online, through three guiding questions. First, in looking at remediations: do we sense digital media in the same way as analog media? Second, in considering reference sources: what access to the order of knowledge structures our conception of that order? And third, in evaluating remixes: how do we distinguish the representation of a digital media object from its construction?

To that end, I first reiterate the conditions of the production of Abu-Jamal's oeuvre as a "body without organs" of work in time, and of his material conditions of cultural production from prison, as a resistance to a "docile body" in space.137 For capital cases like Abu-Jamal's, prison authorities limit most communication to interpersonal media, such as writing, telephone, and

137. Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus; Foucault, Discipline and Punish.
occasionally typewriters. Computers are only rarely available, never inside a prisoner's cell, and the Internet remains off-limits. Complementarily, the very fact of Faulkner's bodily death makes any digital or analog iteration of his figure in memoriam, that is to say, explicitly figurative. In short, neither Abu-Jamal nor Faulkner has a digital avatar. Their digital iterations complement, but are not the same as, their material bodies.

However, those iterations construct a mimesis of an avatar. Any of Abu-Jamal's words, whether written or spoken, undergo multiple remediations when they appear online. Before they are even available as part of a digital discourse, other people must intervene, for example, by re-typing or scanning an essay composed by Abu-Jamal. Despite this radical divide, both Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's figures are constructed by and for a mediated public. Iterations of "Abu-Jamal" and "Daniel Faulkner" cite their stability as cultural references. They give protesters reasons to chant, sing, shout, or write these names. Neither material bodies, nor metaphorical bodies of work, but evocative figures, generate and structure the discourses around the intersections of these two lives and deaths.

Figures of "Abu-Jamal" and "Faulkner" circulate without reference to their bodies, or to the disjunction that makes their chaotic circulation possible. As an author, Abu-Jamal centers the system of media used to produce his audio and textual body of work, just as his physical body centers the figurative body of "Mumia Abu-Jamal." However, in terms of the remediation of his

138. For example, Abu-Jamal must have someone else print him out a website if he wants to read it. Hanrahan, telephone conversation with the author, 3 April 2010.

139. Gitelman, Always Already New; Jenkins, Convergence Culture.

140. "Execution Q&A", <cor.state.pa.us>.
corpus and figure, "Mumia Abu-Jamal" no longer functions as the author of that content. Rather, those who produce and reproduce the discourse on "Abu-Jamal" and "Faulkner" online fulfill that author-function.

2. **Remediated Texts and Images**

Taking closer looks at some particular media "texts" can problematize the sense of "reading" digital media that often passes unexamined. For example, articles written by Abu-Jamal for academic journals are available as PDF or HTML files. <Amazon.com> maintains an author's bibliography for Abu-Jamal, listing each of his six books, and including a digital image of the cover of each book. Similarly, <prisonradio.org> archives Abu-Jamal's recorded commentaries, digitized initially from magnetic cassette tapes or optical CDs. Digitized videos show Abu-Jamal speaking, and so reference the body and the voice that are instrumental to the production of creative or critical expression. All these digital versions of analog content required the intervention of others besides Abu-Jamal or Daniel Faulkner, in order to appear online.

Text may be digitized through scanning or retyping. Court transcripts, scanned photographs, and newspaper articles, once digitized, serve as referential sources for other digital objects. Returning to the question of a digital oeuvre, online book retailers show the user an image of pages in a physical book (a codex), through "previews." These pages appear in an HTML frame, embedded in one page for each book on each website. Because the images are

141. Chun, "On Software."


145. search results at <amazon.com> and <books.google.com>.
embedded in that site, the user can search through the text. Searchability (or dynamic indexing) results from modification of a codex into a codec. This modification moves or copies paratextual information that might have been printed on a book's covers, frontispieces, back leaves, and so on, to separate HTML frames. ASCII and other markup allows the end-user to search the (usually incomplete) text of such digitized books. The markup relies on either human intervention, or the website's own algorithmic "reading" of the scanned text. Again, because neither Faulkner nor Abu-Jamal has access to the markup that determines how their stories and arguments are classified, such remediation always implies an other author.

Optical input from a scanner stands in contrast to typed input from a keyboard. In the latter case, individual characters appear as images of letters, words, and so on to the reader through their screen, but not as images of a preexisting, material page. On sites like Prison Radio, wherein the text of an essay written by Abu-Jamal has been entered directly into the HTML- or CSS code, either from a keyboard or copied and pasted from a word processor, letters are intelligible not as the images of software coding that produced them, but as language and text themselves. Text-function subsumes image-function for these digital words, and the difference in searchability/indexing, between transcription and scanned pages, rests on the user's ability to use the browser's search function, rather than the website's, to search both the text and its context on the rest of the page for combinations of characters and words. In this remediation, no underlying ASCII or other markup intervenes to suggest the theme of the transcription. The end-user reads the text as they search, requiring them to interpret its meaning on their own. In the case of Abu-Jamal and Faulkner, different readers come up with myriad interpretations of the

146. Chun, "On Software," 1995; Kittler, "There is No Software"; <prisonradio.org>
same content. Still, the emphasis with these remediations remains on the user's or reader's conditions of access for their interpretive agency, rather than in authorial intent.

Links and other information, on pages that incorporate transcription, deal with topics besides the text/codec itself. <prisonradio.org>, for example, positions a hyperlink to the *mp3 audio version of each essay above its transcription on the page. Little to no visual content supplements the pages on which these audio files appear. Depending on the user's browser, the page may open in a new tab or window; depending upon the media player, the image of that player along with its digital "buttons" for commands such as play or pause appears in that new page. As with analog radio waves, the content is heard and not seen, but in this case another layer of opacity intervenes between producer, reproducer, and user. The auditor of Abu-Jamal's essays cannot "see" what they are listening to at the same time as they listen; in other words, they cannot read along with his voice. Although Prison Radio could choose to show a picture, for example, of Abu-Jamal, or still frames in a video, they rely on the visual representation of the audio player alone. This suggests their claim to technological neutrality, that they simply transmit a straightforward message, rather than their particular version(s) of that message, through a particular narrowcasting site. Again, the user's ability to access the content, even without presupposing their access to the conditions of its production, means that a given listener to Abu-Jamal's commentaries can form their opinions and share them online, without Abu-Jamal's taking part in the conversation.

Even in the most straightforward digitization of analog media, such as these audio files, Abu-Jamal no longer speaks -- the computer does. Compressed audio files like the ones


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Prison Radio exist as remediations of magnetic and digital tapes, CDs, and other online files. The user cannot search such files. The sites on which they appear do not use underlying markup, or algorithms, to audit their contents. In this way, the audio content remains opaque to the page in which it is embedded; it represents an unknowable, irreducible file that the user can open only with a separate set of software, a plug-in such as Quicktime. The title gives the web page little information towards the file's contents, other than (usually) an eponymous relationship with the corresponding textual essay. Likewise, the user cannot view source code for these files, since they consist only of the singular, punctual, irreducible, recorded statement - they can only download them as a whole unit of expression.

As physically inscribed CDs and digital tapes, the audio recordings require a hardware player. In this way, the disc/tape, and not the tracks, act as units of possession and distribution. Each essay, however, can be taken from its context by the player, and replayed one by one. This change, for digital audio files online, means that the user can distribute, consume, and reproduce (if only within the constraints of DRM licensing) the individual track as such; the unit of distribution shifts with the medium, from a collection to a set of recordings, further divorced from their recording surface and from their producing body.

The audio file stands in a relationship of complementarity, not similitude, to the text, both grounding and complication the normative assumption that text and audio remediate the "same" content. The remediation of individual tracks can be thought to obscure their conditions of production and recording. Through the use of unique URLs that locate each file online, and software players plugged in to the user's browser, the hardware of the user interface folds into all the functions of listening, as speakers or headphones return electrical currents and electronic signals to vibrations of sound waves. The user's point of access to the content calls attention to
itself as an interface, implicating the importance of the digital divide in structuring patterns of access and exclusion from the production of "Abu-Jamal's" or "Faulkner's" figures. In this way, focusing on access shows how digital media subsume and connect both audio and textual media.

Just as digital media subsume text and audio files, they also subsume and change images of Abu-Jamal's body. Such images may appear as scanned, born-analog photographs, or born-digital representations. Scanned prints dominate this database. As with audio files or textual transcriptions, ASCII markup cannot search a bit-mapped screen. However, users can contextualize the image with captions or tags, making its taxonomy paratactic. For example, the user might search for images online using textual input, but not by uploading another image with which to compare it. As remediations, images may gain or lose quality depending on the equipment used to scan them in, and they can be scaled and resized, compressed and replicated. All of these visual cues reveal patterns of the importance of a specific image to those who designed the site on which it appears - their representational criteria. Users must access the codes of representation, such as realism, in order to make sense of images here.

3. REPRESENTATIONAL OBJECTS

The most prominent function of digitized images is representational - that is, they often appear as "straight" remediations. As ostensibly unaltered, truth-telling photographs, they subscribe to codes of visual realism, in order to show us some thing, some reality. Even obviously altered photographs (in terms of both subjective content and objective qualities like size and color) make this kind of truth-claim. Just as digital images of characters represent text, digital images of images represent the figures appearing therein - this much remains straightforward, even banal. Consider, then, what both remediated and originally digital images of Daniel Faulkner and Abu-Jamal represent in terms of their figures.
Visual cues such as image quality, setting, clothing, and corporeal inscriptions reveal the most about these cultural figures to viewers of their representations. The user can access, for example, the racial and professional stakes of this case, by virtue of visible phenomena such as Abu-Jamal's skin color and hairstyle, or Faulkner's skin color and uniform. The prison settings in which Abu-Jamal is most often photographed also cue the viewer, without language, to the conditions of access and production within which Abu-Jamal acts as a cultural producer. Of course, static images have their representational limits. More dynamic, incorporating movement and sound, videos bring representation an order of magnitude beyond the creative possibilities of text, audio, or images alone. The most popular video-sharing community, YouTube, returns 49 videos for an internal search of "Daniel Faulkner" as an exact phrase, while about that many have been uploaded with the tag "Mumia Abu-Jamal" in the past month. Together, these names are tagged as exact phrases on nearly 900 videos, and far more use only part of their names to identify those contents. 148 This analysis suggests that videos, especially remixes, complicate and structure the online database of references about Abu-Jamal and Faulkner.

Many videos that represent these figures make some persuasive argument, usually through a combination of vocal and visual rhetoric. For example, a short clip of Maureen Faulkner's short talk at a signing of her recent book, Murdered by Mumia, has drawn over 600 views since it was posted. 149 In her talk, Faulkner makes a direct plea for the audience's support, in her campaign to have Abu-Jamal executed for the murder of her husband. Far more popular among videos posted by Faulkner's supporters, a remediation of Fox News commentator

Michelle Malkin delivering an opinion/editorial monologue on Daniel Faulkner and Abu-Jamal has drawn over 17,000 views. Interestingly, Malkin's monologue incorporates a clip of archival video footage of Abu-Jamal in her argument for his guilt and execution. The archival footage that Malkin references is also available online. That clip, one of a three-part video posted by a supporter of Abu-Jamal, has itself accumulated nearly 200,000 views. It is digitized from a 1989 interview with Abu-Jamal. In it, Abu-Jamal makes his own plea for public opinion. Each of these videos relies on YouTube's folksonomic (user-generated, tag-based) epistemological organization. That organization makes the site an ideal venue for the study of how discursive actions, such as tags, can structure knowledge.

The site also provides for extended discussion below each video. Commentators make passionate textual and hypertextual arguments in the hundreds of discussion threads associated with the videos noted above, as well as many others on the site. However, such discussions are not relegated to video hosting sites. Textual stories about the case, from mainstream sources alone, have engendered hundreds of users' comments. For example, a recent CNN story about Abu-Jamal's legal appeals has garnered over 200 comments from readers since its posting in December 2009. Because readers can promote others' comments, this commentary thread can be sorted by either date or popularity.

152. Still Black, Still Strong. Interestingly, the video "represents" at least four producers: Abu-Jamal dominates the frame; his interviewer, Sylvere Lotringer, appears in a reflection in the window between them; the camera is operated by a third individual; and valserx digitizes and reproduces the film. In this way, it makes an ideal case study for the alterity of authorship online.
153. Mathes, "Folksonomies."
Sorting by popularity generates an impromptu genealogy of this informal discourse. The ten most highly ranked comments on this particular story all express or support the opinion that Abu-Jamal is guilty of his crime, and ought to be executed. Of hundreds of comments, these ten had between twenty and forty-five votes from other readers. They repeat terms such as "death penalty," "cop killer," "racist/racism," "gun/shot," "trial," "evidence," and "guilty" throughout their statements, tying their arguments closely to the figurative stakes of the discussion as much as to the physical ones, with terms like "black man" and "fry". Expressions of sarcasm and exasperation, especially towards supporters of Abu-Jamal, appear as well, in forms like "you people," "please," and "come on." These dialogic markers point out that the discourse here takes place not only among supporters of Abu-Jamal's execution, but of his innocence as well -- and those in between. Tactics of argumentation and persuasion target the silent, undecided or ambivalent readers, implicating rather than explicating their presence in the forum.

4. Reference Sites

Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's case also generates more formal discourses, using what I loosely call "reference" objects. Representational media double as references when they are linked or copied into other digital objects. I use "reference" here more broadly, to indicate sites marked as stable repositories of information. However, the constant state of flux in which digital media always exist online immediately complicates this definition. In the context of journalism, as a part of a database of genre references, news articles like those discussed above always remain incomplete. Abu-Jamal positions himself, through stylistic and content choices throughout his oeuvre, as a member of a discursive community of journalism. He also problematizes that membership, through his shift in prison to the production of more complex artifacts. This calls into question the role of journalism in its social contexts; how does the
journalist function as an objective witness or observer of events, compared to roles such as the mediator, opinion leader, or celebrity?\textsuperscript{155}

By re-analyzing the CNN article in its social and institutional context, we can understand the sourcing, contributors, and word choices used in the article as instances of selection and framing of excerpts from a much larger cultural narrative.\textsuperscript{156} This narrative can be thought of as a particular trajectory of sense making across the always-accumulating database of information about this topic. The narrative of a journalistic truth, in this sense, invites commentary and updates to the story, as well as raw aggregation of other sources, in order to make sense through revision. Especially online, continual revision of a story is not only possible, but encouraged. It contributes to veracity, and grounds the discursive community of journalism through a common commitment to truth.

Revision of a single document, as opposed to an abstract document, leads to a sort of Wikipedia paradigm. Although the site represents a "stable" repository of information, it remains perpetually editable by its users; the stability in question depends upon the revisions made by large groups of contributors over time to arrive at a consensual archive of knowledge. However, the history of those revisions stay closely linked to the articles in question. That linkage grounds the most crucial sense of reference for these purposes. That is, Wikipedia positions its claims to stability and verifiable truth through the invocation of each article's historicity.

Separate Wikipedia articles exist for "Mumia Abu-Jamal" and "Daniel Faulkner," and each mentions and cross-references the other through hyperlinks. The relatively larger article on

\textsuperscript{155} Kovach and Rosenstiel, \textit{Elements of Journalism}.

\textsuperscript{156} "High court dismisses ruling."
Abu-Jamal calls attention to the extent to which the citations for each article overlap, and more importantly, how the same references are used in different ways on each page.157 About 100 footnotes to Abu-Jamal's page complement about 30 to Faulkner's page. Many of the latter link to <danielfaulkner.com>, and the repository there of court transcripts from the 1981-2 murder trial.158 Analog media that have been digitized form one important pool of information on both Wikipedia articles. Books, court transcripts, and analyses, published and scanned or retyped into other web pages, all serve as evidence for the information presented in Wikipedia articles. However, so do remediated digital objects, such as websites, news articles, and so on. Many "primary" sources on these sites are far from primary in that sense. Instead, they reveal that reference on Wikipedia often depends on access to analog media.

The coding that underlies Wikipedia explicitly allows for the rewritability of the information available to the general public, by the general public. More accessible than the PHP source coding of the site as such, an extra layer available for markup in its wiki frames forms a space in which users act as article editors. Controversies that take place among editors over the right facts to quote or paraphrase, or the right way to present those facts, can be corrected at the metaphoric and metonymic hands of "bots." These software programs move throughout the site and adjust the wiki markup, to reflect Wikipedia's standards of style and content, such as citations. The bots ease access to those without excellent coding skills.159 However, this analysis suggests that, although they make the vast majority of edits to each article (and although they

157. In terms of size, the article on Abu-Jamal takes up 256 kb of memory, compared to 176 kb for Faulkner.
159. Rosenzweig, "Can History be Open Source?"
have access to many aspects of the site that humans do not), bots are not the generative agents of this medium. For example, although bots did change code (extensively) throughout each article, human end users generate and source each article. They also discuss and comment upon the topics.

As a privileged and contested point of access to digital information for millions of users, even images and quotations that appear on Wikipedia can become definitive versions of those objects. In terms of access to the organization of knowledge online, each of these two Wikipedia articles traces a different narrative trajectory, while sharing sources and editors. The "Daniel Faulkner" article, for example, follows a narrative based on a set of mostly legal references, by prominently relying on the scanned court transcripts as evidence for claims made in the article. The "Mumia Abu-Jamal" article follows a contrasting narrative, based on a set of mostly social references, by prioritizing digital or digitized news articles for corresponding evidence about claims made in the article. Supporters of each figure have access to remediated texts, images, and other sources as evidence for their particular narrative arguments.

The greatest incentive to be an accurate editor on Wikipedia is to have lasting edits. The editors who contributed to each article, acting towards that goal, constitute a discursive community. The growing importance and reliability of Wikipedia as a reference resource online, indicated if by nothing else than by the relative popularity as a search engine result for each figure, implies that the version of the events that link "Daniel Faulkner" and "Mumia Abu-Jamal", and the characterization of the figures of two individuals who cannot contribute to the articles on themselves, each affirm a particular historicity.
5. Social Networks

Less interested in objective veracity of narrative historicity than in subjective affirmation of cultural values, social networking sites, particularly Facebook, contain profiles and groups in support of each figure. The "Daniel Faulkner Support Page" on Facebook has well over forty thousand members. "Mumia Abu-Jamal" exists as both a "personal" profile and as the focus of several groups on Facebook. On the profile, which as of this writing was linked within Facebook to almost five thousand "friends," the difference between visual and textual information can stagger a viewer. While the pictures and videos present remediated representations of the body and oeuvre of Abu-Jamal himself, the "information" section of the profile notes, "about me: *this page is run by Mumia's supporters.*" Interestingly, the "political views" of "Facebook - Mumia Abu-Jamal" indicate only "Other." These dissonances strike a strange tone between the apparent representation of an avatar for Abu-Jamal himself and the mediation of a virtual space for conversation, file-sharing, and social networking among users of the Internet (which, again, can apply neither to Abu-Jamal nor to Faulkner themselves). How does this site advocate for Abu-Jamal's cause, as "Mumia's supporters" define that cause?

The only advocacy that seems to be undertaken (or facilitated) beyond discursive acts within Facebook, are invitations to events such as protests, petitions, and other calls to political action. However, each Facebook page lists a "website". The "Faulkner" page discussed above  

162. Another "Mumia Abu-Jamal" profile, run by "Mumia's Legal Defense Team," exists expressly for the purpose of facilitating communication between Abu-Jamal and those who wish to contact him, noting his lack of access to a computer. Likewise, <twitter.com> reveals several conversational hashtags on the subject, as well as one avatar-like account: @MumiaAbuJamal has over 1400 followers. Source: <twitter.com/mumiaabujamal/>, accessed 22 March 2010.
directs members to <danielfaulkner.com>, while the "Abu-Jamal" profile directs friends to <freemumia.org>. Representations of the figure motivating these social networking profiles and advocacy websites do not simply take up a binary absence/presence opposition. Instead, they incorporate representational themes that include aural, visual and textual cues, as well as referential codes such as ethics, justice, and truth.

6. ADVOCACY SITES

Standardized social networking pages bear a brief comparison against the eclectic visual strategies of advocacy sites such as <freemumia.com> and <danielfaulkner.com>. The color schemes on each of those two sites recall the figures for whom they are named, and their relevant social interests. <Danielfaulkner.com> uses a white, blue and silver scheme on a black background. Along with the header graphics of a Philadelphia cityscape and a shield-shaped badge, this site thus invokes the figure of a fallen officer. By contrast, <freemumia.org> uses a red, black, and green color scheme, invoking the flags of Black and African nationalist movements. It provides a large graphic of Abu-Jamal in the center of the page, leaving little doubt who the title of the page figures. Advocacy sites also serve as archives of remediated texts such as court transcripts and editorials, sources of information and links to related sites, portals for communication among supporters and others in a community, and spaces of narrative construction. They provide a point of access to specific, more persuasive than referential, versions of cultural narratives.

7. Remixes

Perhaps the most persuasive type of digital media about "Abu-Jamal" or "Faulkner," many remixes exist side-by-side with "straight" representational objects. However, for remixes, references function as citations, or intertextual links, rather than codes of representation. This process of interpellation and juxtaposition contrasts with the process of straight remediation, which uses reference as a claim to stability, veracity, and historicity, rather than to originality. Because remixes complement, without mirroring, those references, they serve as the most generative and structuring objects in the database of digital discourse. This section traces remixes, and the patterns of access to and for users that they engender.

Consider, in this regard, badman621's revision of Abu-Jamal's recorded and published essay "Men of Cloth." In this case, the recorded voice of Abu-Jamal plays, while a transcribed text of his speech shows in the video screen. Because the "original" text in question is found in a book, with which the CD that contained the recording of Abu-Jamal's voice is packaged, and the YouTube video is thus based upon a sound file without visual content, badman621 transcribed the words from the recording back into text on the computer.

Three changes occur between the book and the recording. First, just under a minute into the recording, the narrative is interrupted by an automated, distinctly female voice: "she" informs the listener, "This call is coming from a correctional facility." As the reading resumes, a listener who also has the text available can notice how Abu-Jamal emphasizes several words that are not explicitly marked in the book. Later, Abu-Jamal, while reading the essay, replaces "incarcerated" with "incinerated." This last change, coming in the middle of the phrase "obliterated,

incarcerated/incinerated, and dismembered," in the middle of a long paragraph, late in the essay, might be an unconscious slip. However, it is more likely a revision made to the printed text by Abu-Jamal, either beforehand or as an ad-lib, since the pronunciation on nearly every other word in the essay is precise and calculated. Either way, it highlights the degree of control over the text that Abu-Jamal maintains throughout its first two mediations, but loses in its digital remediation and remixes.

In its print and audio forms, the title of the essay is "Men of Cloth." This is a necessarily ambiguous phrase, since the essay describes a conflict between spiritual professions and material possessions. In the YouTube video, however, a definite article finds its way into the title, transforming the play on words into a blunt critique of mainstream organized religion: "Men of the Cloth." Also, the title of the remix contains the name "Mumia Abu-Jamal," and badman621 has become the "author." Abu-Jamal has become both the voice and the content of this video, but that he is no longer its author. As with the digital text/audio remediations on sites like Prison Radio, the two forms still stand in a relation of complementarity, not similitude.

Other digital video remixes use juxtaposition, sound tracking, and other cinematographic techniques within the space of the video itself to remake the meaning of the constituent parts. For example, SalahuddinIrani's video remix of Abu-Jamal's essay, "Israel [is] the root of the problem," provides an extended montage of scenes from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while Abu-Jamal's voice reads about the incommensurability and intractable contradictions that foreclose on potential peace in the region, over a hip-hop beat. This video was moved from

165. emphasis added
YouTube to Google because, as the user writes in a pop-up annotation over a still image on the "censored" YouTube version, the video was "flagged... and it was removed by YouTube allegedly for having graphic images." It provides another example of the kinds of media objects that require a unique combination of visual, auditory, political, and technical language to analyze within their own representational space, let alone in the context of the site on which they are hosted, or of the web at large. Throughout the growing complexity of digital media like these, even simple text conceals myriad algorithms, electronic databases, and issues of infrastructure before it even begins to signify statements. This study therefore focuses not only on their content, but on patterns in the practices of production, distribution, and consumption.

These movements include discussions and commentary that begin as responses to a video in its context on sites like YouTube. Such statements complement the video itself, share its space online, and often begin with a reflection on the themes in the video. The extent to which the commentary constructs the video's meaning depends upon how much of the conversation cites other narrative trajectories across the digital database, of which these videos are an infinitesimal part. The movements of cultural artifacts, such as material texts and images, through remediation and remix, show how "Daniel Faulkner" or "Mumia Abu-Jamal" online are explicitly figurative constructions. on the basis of all the functions of remediation, representation, reference, and especially remix. As structuring and generative codes become more complex through video remixes, the absolute singularities of the lived experiences of Abu-Jamal and Faulkner diverge further from their figures.

167. This begs the question: what other kinds of images are there?
8. **Search Engines**

With every new digital object and technique of production, the database of figures expands. The user, in order to navigate and make sense of this database, needs a narrative trajectory. This analysis turns to the role search engines in the online organization of knowledge. The most popular (and arguably the most powerful) of these engines, Google, aggregates and ranks search results by their popularity (that is, in order of the number of links into a given site). Still, as in the Wikipedia paradigm, the search engine maintains the relative primacy of textual knowledge production. In other words, even while visual forms of communication marginalize textual forms, the user must (almost always) search based on text, even for images, videos, and so on.

A Google search for "Mumia Abu-Jamal" as an exact phrase returns about four hundred thousand results, while a search for "Daniel Faulkner" returns about thirty thousand. For a statistical content analysis to draw meaningful conclusions from this data about the relative online presence of each figure, the terms of representation and presence would have to be narrowly defined. If we took an image of each man as an indicator of their presence or representation, for example, then the analysis could proceed by searching for images on Google rather than over all visible sites on the web. (Incidentally, for Google images, "Mumia Abu-Jamal" returns about sixty thousand results, and "Daniel Faulkner" returns over seven thousand.) However, users must search for images using texts, not other images. Still, these

168. "PageRank Citation."
169. <google.com>, search results as of 21 March 2010.
170. ibid.
numbers do not indicate what kinds of representations are available on each of those millions of web pages. Also, since Google searches for the most popular sites that contain such a phrase in their title, content, source code, or underlying markup, the first few results are representative of the information that the vast majority of end users of the search engine will visit. Thus, these first few results indicate that the most popular and privileged sites, from which end-users are likely to consume information about "Abu-Jamal" and "Faulkner," are Wikipedia articles and advocacy sites. Thus, referential and representational sites form the primary points of access, for users, to the cultural narratives of these figures.

9. Conclusion

I have focused more on the ways in which users gain access to figures that are constructed, rather than on the figures themselves. Still, the process of production coextends through its own producing. In other words, this thesis is necessarily one of many acts of recursive cultural production, another iteration of the recursive digital production of these cultural figures. And yet, it stands in contrast to most other productions, precisely because it focuses on the access to the iterations of those figures, not on a particular truth that might hide behind any given iteration. The digital divide remains the most important, and most obviously obscured, condition of access to these figures. Coding skills have become less important to access, because of the variety of other types of discursive acts online, such as textual commentary. Still, a catalyst such as a conversational thread, news story, or video remix generates most discourse online. These each fall back on a content-provider or gatekeeper other than the figure whom they represent. Each type of online interaction grants or limits access differently; however, all rely on pseudonymity, anonymity, or group identity, as elements of their respective discourses. Video hosting sites emerge from the analysis as the most complex and
deeply structuring spaces of interaction. Remixes emerge as the most complex and deeply structuring modes of interaction and production of narratives. Patterns of access to such objects and sites in particular, and to online interaction in general, reveal that the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal represents more than a polarizing legal or social issue. Instead, it marks the stakes of access to the production of myriad cultural figures and narratives.

If there is a narrative in this recursive series of iterations, it is that of contradiction. One figure of a body dead, the other of a body imprisoned and threatened with a sentence to die. Whether Abu-Jamal killed Faulkner or not is almost beyond the point. Hold the conflation of their lives, this intersection grown beyond a moment of heated violence, in your mind. The plots, graphs, and court transcripts all exist (along with ballistics and photographs) as digital media. Hold in your mind the truth-value of such media, of such testimony to witnessing, of argumentation among followers of the case, when the media are digital, replicable, and fungible - indiscrete and discreet. They suggest a heterotopia of narratives, of figures, of claims and consequences, of prison-industrial complexes and juridical-criminal pathologizations, of accusations, of convictions, of the aggregated database of Web sites and pages, of a multiplicity of spaces of truth, of text and hypertext, of advocacy and reappropriation.

As evidence, what counts in court may not thus count in research. Starting with representation and reproduction, this analysis has sought evidence that invokes the Body. Moving to focus on remediation and reference, it has tried to show the recursion of works in a corpus, an oeuvre, a body without organs. Examining reviews and commentaries, considering their reception, taxonomy, institutions, and networks, it has begun to reconstruct the trajectories of figurative narrative. By tracing remixes, one sees the figure leave its body and oeuvre; one sees power leave the law, and faith, to diverge into multiplicities. The movements of this
narrative, inscribed over a database of artifacts and processes and praxis, searches searching, recursively calls back the algorithmic epistemological foundations of an aggregation of whatever abject objects of digital media. All these objects are subsumed in </bodies>, but not in bodies.
V. Conclusion

This thesis represents one small part of a much larger intellectual undertaking. At times, it has raised issues like censorship, deviance, controversy, and revolution. Each of these relates to the construction of profanity in cultural mediations. However, they become matters less of censorship than of standards; less of deviance than of control; less of controversy than of silence; less of revolution than of relationships. Concentrating on productive and generative connections, this conclusion offers the main results of my research, a reflection on the significance of this study, and some suggestions for future researchers.

The research shows three subjective positions from which artifacts and figures emerge. First, Abu-Jamal composes, writes, and speaks in order to record his cultural artifacts. Second, the non-human actors of technologies, relationships, institutions, and structures each affect the production of both artifacts and figures. Finally, in each medium, but especially digitally, the intervention of others makes possible the production, distribution, and discourse about Abu-Jamal and his body of work. These agents combine in discourse to generate Abu-Jamal's figure.

Generative discourses take different forms, depending upon the media and producers involved. The radio commentaries show patterns of structuration. Specifically, the audio tapes produced by Abu-Jamal in prison make sense as artifacts only within the context of his spatial relationships, and so the object of that production returns to his own body. The printed body of work shows a pattern of folding. Likewise, his oeuvre remains situated and intelligible in terms of time. Digital iteration and reiteration of the figures can only approach a mimesis of an avatar.
Complementarily, his figure always appears in code. Thus, each medium affects the other through abstractions.

Abu-Jamal produces cultural artifacts through a network of power relations. These relations take place among bodies in space. The carefully controlled spaces and relations of mediation in prison and on the radio point to Foucauldian regulation, with a goal of producing docile bodies. His recordings affect the media systems in which they appear, especially because of relationships of dependency. Considering persons, institutions, and technical conditions as actors, the 1994 recordings represent a critical event in Abu-Jamal's production of artifacts. They force changes in the structure of the power relationships mentioned above, through processes of structuration and subsumption.

Archaeological inquiry reveals that NPR's decision to cancel Abu-Jamal's recordings subsumes his artifacts within his figure, because it based its decision on abstract standards rather than particular behaviors. The prison seeks to subsume Abu-Jamal's body in solitary confinement, and to discipline his body through those conditions into docility. Abu-Jamal's shift to printed media subsumes his body into his production of artifacts. The research also connects his writings to the existing and emerging genres of Black Power manifestos, political journalism, and prison literature. Close reading of three texts show that content and context each contribute to their meaning and effects. Abu-Jamal's body of work operates as a body without organs, a temporal praxis. The shift from archaeology to genealogy shows how the artifacts that he produces from prison, and those produced by others, contribute to the production of his own cultural figure. Digital media subsume textual and audio media through remediation, reference, and remix. In other words, Abu-Jamal's oeuvre connects his body to his figure.
Genealogical critique suggests that digital discourses encode Abu-Jamal's figure in databases. Heterogeneous and often incommensurable hagiographies both reiterate and generate Abu-Jamal's figure. They fall back on users' conditions of access to create meaning. End-users who have online access, a group that necessarily excludes both Abu-Jamal and Daniel Faulkner, construct their own narratives about the figures by their movements through that database. Video remixes constitute the most complex and affective objects in this discourse, because they structure the database itself, through citation, hyperlinks, and taxonomy. Abu-Jamal's body digital, constructed in radical alterity to his body material, subsumes his body politic.

In terms of politics, while this is not a legal study, certain conclusions about Abu-Jamal's case require a comment here. For example, I cannot extend any recommendations about Abu-Jamal's legal case. However, while the question of his guilt and sentencing is a moot point for the purposes of this research, his legal status both affects and grounds the legitimacy of this argument. In other words, because Abu-Jamal remains incarcerated and threatened with execution, this project takes on the significance of a study of prison media. Therefore, without extending a call to action, this thesis takes up an affected neutrality on his legal issues. With that said, the research suggests that Abu-Jamal's complicated case include two separate matters: his ongoing legal appeals; and broader social disparities of race and class in the justice system. His cultural production calls attention to both of these matters.

The study shows how that call to attention operates. In so doing, it contributes to an understanding of the relationships between various elements of Abu-Jamal's cultural production: space, the self, and the body; time and the body of work; and code, the Other, and the body digital. Applying archaeology, genealogy, and structuration to multimedia objects of analysis provides a useful research model, and leads to an understanding of the interaction between the radio,
print, and digital media systems. The study also helps us understand the interaction between media and other systems, such as law and prison. Each of these can change the focus of future research.

Any future study should include more primary sources related to this case. Because of time and logistical constraints, I could not conduct in-depth interviews with Abu-Jamal and others. Such interviews would provide updates and insight into the case, and into his creative process. Discursive analysis, case study, and qualitative interviews reveal richer data about media production, especially in unusual situations like prison, than attention to audiences through wide-scale measures like surveys or statistical analyses can provide.

However, researchers interested in Abu-Jamal or prison media would do well to incorporate quantitative instruments. These could include surveys of audience members, a social network analysis of Abu-Jamal's power relations, or a comparative statistical analysis of the presence of Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's "avatars" online. In this way, they could also investigate how Abu-Jamal's and Faulkner's supporters relate to one another, especially online and outside Philadelphia. Most importantly, by moving from archaeological inquiry to genealogical critique as the objects of analysis moved from Abu-Jamal's artifacts to his figure, the research applied an "objectual" approach to a globalizing culture industry. This approach can be scaled beyond a case study, to incorporate theory and research techniques from disciplines across the humanities and social sciences.

Beyond this particular case study, scholars should continue to study how media produced by and about prisoners affects both carceral and media systems. This field provides an opportunity to combine both qualitative and quantitative instruments, and to apply some of the powerful
theoretical constructs outlined in this thesis. At a broader level, the ontological distinction between organizations, and individuals as actors, deserves more attention as well. In short, while this study shows the complex and often synecdochic manifestation of Abu-Jamal's cultural production, it constitutes only a small contribution to the production of knowledge on this and many other topics.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's production of cultural artifacts reflects his unique experience. His production as a cultural figure demonstrates the complex and synecdochic stakes of his fate. Both of these aspects provide rich material for research and creative interventions, each of which will continue to contribute to his production as a figure. Each contribution to that body of knowledge, including this thesis, underscores that the discourses into which it enters have stakes beyond either Faulkner's or Abu-Jamal's lives or deaths. They will continue to reproduce those stakes for generations.
VI. REFERENCES

1. PRIMARY SOURCES


2. Books


3. Articles and Book Chapters


### 4. Legal Cases


5. **Digital and Multimedia Sources**


6. ADDENDA

VIDEO MASHUP:

PREZI HYPERTEXT:
The Cultural Production of Mumia Abu-Jamal

the cultural production
of mumia abu-jamal
The Cultural Production of Mumia Abu-Jamal

Literature Review

Research Questions
How does he produce artifacts?
What effects do these artifacts have?
How has he been produced as a figure?
What is his relationship to production?
What do his figure and media stand for?

The Cultural Production of Mumia Abu-Jamal

Main Points
Archaeology of audio recordings shows
relationships between bodies in space
how the 1984 NMR decision moved his oeuvre from audio to textual dominance

Archaeology and genealogy of his writing shows
how textual body of work operates as a temporal practice
construction of argument and persuasion through non-linear temporality

Genealogy of online discourse shows
recursive iteration of his cultural figure
how his figure takes on larger social and cultural values
how Others encode meaning

And So...
1. media interconnectedness
2. study of prison media
3. objective study of Abu-Jamal’s media
4. introduction of theoretical combination

Future Researchers:
1. Let the work
2. Combine cultural and quantitative methods to connect production with audience reactions to media
3. Even if small, up to 6 microfocus, continue to focus on prison media production

Thank you!