

Mood Indigo by Jeanne Heuving (selva ocura press USA 2019)

'You ain't never been blue, no no
You ain't never been blue
Till you've had that mood indigo'ⁱ

'Mood Indigo' was composed by Duke Ellington in October 1930 (with the original title 'Dreamy Blues') for a radio broadcast to an African American audience. It was based on a theme by the clarinetist Barney Bigard, which he had learned from his clarinet teacher, Lorenzo Tio, who called it 'Mexican Blues'. After the very positive popular response to the broadcast of Ellington's arrangement, lyrics were added, and the tune acquired its new name. According to Ellington, the lyrics were written by his manager, Irving Mills. But, more recently, Mitchell Parish, who wrote the lyrics to 'Sophisticated Lady' and numerous other songs, claimed these lyrics as his own. This Depression-era story of cultural (and cross-cultural) transmission, uncertain textual origins, layers and accretions has a relevance to Jeanne Heuving's prose-poem sequence *Mood Indigo*.

One of the highlights of my adolescent calendar was what I (wrongly) remember as the annual visit of Duke Ellington and his orchestra to Liverpool. He had performed in Liverpool as early as 1933, when he played the Empire Theatre and the Grafton ballroom. According to Victor Brocken, he played a week at the Empire and made a keenly-anticipated guest appearance at the Grafton on the Friday night, playing 'Sophisticated Lady' and 'Mood Indigo' among other things.ⁱ Perhaps because of the direct shipping link to the US, Louis Armstrong, Paul Robeson and Duke Ellington all performed in Liverpool during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Armstrong had made a solo appearance in Liverpool in 1932, but it was Ellington's performance there that, as Brocken puts it, 'really advanced the popularity of jazz'. Ellington's music was familiar from records, and the Empire sold out. Indeed, huge crowds turned up at both venues for the 'gorgeous' music and the Duke's entertaining 'ad libs'. At the Grafton Rooms, there was an audience of about 1,000 people, almost all of whom stood listening rather than dancing, indicating, as Catherine Tackley observes, a contemporary distinction between 'hot' jazz and dance band music.

In October 1958, Ellington's orchestra returned to Liverpool to play the Liverpool Odeon with a guest appearance on board the newly-built ocean liner *Empress of Britain*. Five years later, in January 1963, as part of his next British tour, Ellington visited Liverpool again, playing the Empire with a band

that included the unforgettable trumpeters Cat Anderson and Cootie Williams (who had just re-joined Ellington after a 22-year absence), Paul Gonsalves on tenor sax and Johnny Hodges on alto. In 1966, the orchestra played at Liverpool University on 17 February, and they played the following year at the Liverpool Philharmonic (13 February). This was to be the last time Ellington played in Liverpool, and these are probably the two concerts I remember. Quite apart from the excitement of the music, from the introductory piano notes of Billy Strayhorn's 'Take the A Train' and the more exotic, if slightly threatening horns of 'Caravan', I was charmed (as my predecessors had been) by the elegance, playfulness and elaborate courtesy of Ellington's engagement with the audience.

Jeanne Heaving's *Mood Indigo* is a sequence of 21 prose poems. Each poem occupies three pages with usually seven lines per page (although the final page of each section is allowed to be fewer than seven lines). The opening poems begin with the basic material conditions of the writing situation: 'To begin with ink' (1#), 'To begin with paper' (2#). Starting from the materiality of her own mark-making practice ('I scratch my paper with pen, making abrasions, little torn pieces of pulp'), these opening sections also outline some of the reach of the sections that follow: paper and ink; landscape – particularly shores, grassland and marshland; indigo as a plant-based dye – and the processes of its production; the trade-routes that brought it from India and Africa to Europe and America; the rival plant-based dye, woad (*Isatis tinctoria*) – with its Neolithic, Caucasian and later Egyptian history; papyrus as the precursor (and etymon of paper); the production of paper; and the process of dyeing.

These opening sections also establish some of the ways in which the prose poems that follow will work: the anaphora of that repeated opening formula ('To begin with'); the tendency towards parataxis; the corresponding possibility of sudden shifts – from paper and ink to grassland, marsh, pools and tides; the associative leaps ('I do not wish to paper over it' as one of a number of idioms drawn in by the word 'paper'); and the incorporation of quotations. Thus, the second section ends with a fragment from Robert Browning's 'Saul', prompted by the context of papyrus and paper: 'The river's a-wave / With smooth paper reeds'. This is spliced with the Miltonic pastoral diction of the 'oaten reed' and what seems like a memory of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem, 'A Musical Instrument', in which the 'great god Pan' takes a reed from the river and turns it into a pipe. Slippage between near homonyms ('literal' / littoral, 'shore' / 'shear', 'word' / 'woad'; 'otter' / 'ought to') as a form of parapraxis is another device that Heaving introduces in later sections. One of the volume's initial epigraphs (from the free-jazz pianist Cecil Taylor) refers

to 'the conscious manipulation of known material', a phrase which, in this context, links the jazz musicians' treatment of jazz standards to the practices of procedural and conceptual writing. But Taylor's prior reference to 'self-analysis (improvisation)' also suggests that the analytic processes of these twenty-one prose poems will involve the writerly equivalents of jazz improvisation where manipulation of the known acts as an opening to the previously unknown.

Thus, section 3# ('To begin with cloth') begins with the cloth that clothes the body – and, in doing so, touches lightly on the relations between 'cloth', 'clothes' and 'close', before taking us back to the 'earliest known uses of cloth', the use of fabrics to wrap the dead excavated at a Neolithic site in Anatolia, radio-carbon dated to 6,000 BCE. Heuving then riffs on the literal and figurative meanings of 'whole cloth' and then, after drawing in the process of dyeing, plays on the figurative sense of 'dyed in the wool' before transitioning (through a citation) to the Parable of the Sower (with its implication of the Last Judgement, where wheat and tares, sheep and goats will be separated). Similarly, section 8# ('To begin with shore') returns to the location of Section 4# and picks up on its shift from 'shore' to 'shear'. It repeats a sentence from Section 4# ('I shore the nap of the fabric'), but with the substitution of 'shore' for 'shear', and then moves through a definition of 'shore' to a description of a walk along the beach. Then 'shore' switches back to 'shear', which, in turn, brings in by association a citation from Lacan about the 'sexual cut'.

Here Heuving adapts a statement from *Ecrits* 678: 'The cut made by the signifying chain is the only cut that verifies the structure of the subject as a discontinuity in the real'. In Heuving's version, the unreality of the signifying chain is foregrounded – and the subject's arbitrary interpellation by it. The context that Heuving creates for this citation is the analyst's interruption of 'discourse in a therapeutic session'. In clinical practice, the analyst's cut checks and steers the analysand's associative chain of signifiers. It speaks 'something other than what is said' (Seminar XXV). In Lacanian analysis, the analyst's cut reframes the signifying chain from the vantage of the Real. Heuving's use of parataxis and citation is, by turns, an associative signifying chain and a disruptive breaking of such chains. However, something else is also at play here.

For Lacan, the originary cut is the child's separation from the Other through initiation into the meaning-making process: the constitution of subjectivity through the child's exposure to language. The signifying cut of language creates the divided subject of *jouissance*; 'the signifying cut' is 'that mark on the body that interpellates all subjects as sexually differentiated members of the social order'. In *Mood Indigo*, the allusion to Lacan initiates an implicit engagement with Fred Moten's *In the Break* and Moten's take on 'the sexual

cut', and through that with Nathaniel Mackey. Michelle Ann Stephens has pointed out how, in his address to 'the sexual cut', Moten 'links the black musical break, the mark of racial difference', explicitly to 'the sexual cut, the mark of sexual difference, that founds the symbolic order'. Stephens's specific context is her account of Bob Marley, dub and reggae, which she describes as expressing 'not just the liberatory urges and potential of a people but also the sexual codes and gendered social relations shaping that people's sense of community'. In this context, Stephens turns to Moten for his theorizing of the sonic as 'an aspect of a historicized, diasporic black subjectivity'.

For Moten, as Stephens notes, blackness speaks 'in the musical break' – not in black speech as such, but in 'the breaking of black speech'. She draws attention to Moten's extended engagement with a passage in the *Bedouin Hornbook* in which Mackey compares the sexual cut to the 'beat one hears in reggae'. The detail she quotes, which is the following sentence in Mackey's text, is the citation from Mackey that appears in Section 8# of *Mood Indigo*: 'The syncopation comes down like a blade, a broken claim to connection'. Stephens glosses this sentence: 'The signifying cut leaves a kind of mark, a leftover scar, as the sign of a bodily past irrecoverable and forever lost to the subject cut away from a more primordial sense of living, sensational being'. Here Stephens cites Mackey's own subsequent comment on the sentence (and on his use of quotation marks around 'broken' in the original): 'I put the word "broken" in quotes to get across the point that the pathos one can't help hearing in that claim mingles with a retreating sense of peril, as though danger itself were beaten back by the boldness, however "broken", of its call to connection'. Mackey goes on: 'the image I get is one of a rickety bridge (sometimes a rickety boat)'. Stephens compares Mackey's processes here to 'spinning aural images from a dub track', and she cites his description of listening to Burning Spear: 'I drifted off to where it seemed I was being towed into an abandoned harbour. I wasn't exactly a boat but I felt my anchorlessness as a lack, as an inured, eventually visible pit up from which I floated, looking down on what debris looking into it left'. Stephens describes this 'ambient dreamscape' as expressing the 'flickering sense of being' of the black male subject 'aware that he has had to divest himself of something ... in order to lay claim to the signifier'.

Heaving collages the original sentence by Mackey about syncopation and these two explanatory images that Mackey then offers to produce her own bridge to what appears initially as her dream of 'being towed into an abandoned harbour'. However, in the context of Heuven's paratactical practice, we should also remember Moten's reference to 'the bridge's double figuration as both connection and disconnection'. It is the mode of 'a beginning whose ori-

gin is never fully recoverable' and 'something other than itself that is yet to be determined' (73). It is significant that this is also where Moten introduces the statement by Cecil Taylor which provides one of Heuving's epigraphs.

I have traced these intertextual connections between Lacan, Moten and Mackey to show something of the hinterland of this section of *Mood Indigo*. Given the Ellington title and the history of indigo cultivation, trading and use in dyeing, it is unsurprising that the sequence engages with African American experience and culture. There was a trade in West African textiles to Egypt before the Common Era, and, as Heuving notes later, some West African slaves were brought to America specifically for their skills and knowledge of indigo dyeing. In this context, Ellington's title 'Mood Indigo' acquires a very particular resonance.

In section 7#, Heuving introduces the idea of the quilt. It begins as part of a description of otters swimming: 'They quilt the sea in regularly spaced parabolic upswellings converging in peaks and ripples'. This metaphor leads to an extended description of quilting as another artisanal work process like dyeing. Quilting is a traditional form of women's domestic labour which has become the focus of considerable feminist interest in recent decades following the 'great quilt revival of the 1970s'. More precisely, it is the kind of work that raises the question of the relationship between craft and art: quilting points to a history in which a female artistic tradition is redefined as a craft. Heuving's alignment of quilting with her own textual practice in *Mood Indigo* implicitly counters this devaluation: 'A quilt is a multi-layered textile ... Decorative threads can be sewn through the layers creating knots of two or more threads that make their own grid'. However, in section 7#, Heuving also provides another context for quilting: 'African American quilting drew on textile traditions from four civilisations of Central and West Africa'. The threads of this quilting run back through plantation practices to the cultures of Africa. As Maude Southwell Wahlmann notes, 'Asymmetrical arrangements of cloth are forms of improvisation, found in West and Central African textiles'. In the African context, this improvisatory practice has a specific spiritual dimension: 'Improvisation, break-patterning, or flexible patterning in Kuba raffia cloth and painted Mbuti textiles has also been linked to spirit possession'. The Kongo scholar Fu-kiau Bunseki, whom Heuving quotes at this point, specifically links this 'break' to the 'rebirth of (ancestral) power' in the quilter. In the African American context, the 'break' has a different valency related to the diasporic condition. For Valorie Thomas, for example, the break is 'a trade mark of African diaspora music': the break 'adds a new element that challenges the structure of a composition', but it is also a way of living and surviving in a racist

culture. The double-voicing and double vision activated by the break in Grey Gundaker's account of the diaspora is related to W. E. B Du Bois's theory of the African Americans' double consciousness. As Thomas puts it, the break is 'a kind of possession that intervenes on, but does not invalidate, the communal links on which it depends': 'The break, the crossroads and the void signify the potency that haunts the space between forms (as hidden genealogy)'.

In Kay and Lori Lee Triplett's *Indigo Quilts: 30 Quilts from the Poos Collection*, the history of indigo is presented in terms of a technology transfer (in relation to cotton and indigo) across the Sahara to Egypt from 5,000 to 3,000 BCE (20) and, much later, from Africa to the Americas. By 1460 the Portuguese had established a settlement on the Cape Verde Islands with enslaved Mandingo weavers for the purpose of growing cotton and making textiles using indigo (22). In 1619, the first recorded slaves from Africa were brought to British North America from a captured Portuguese slave ship and brought ashore near Jamestown. Indigo was subsequently grown at Jamestown, Plymouth and other early American colonies alongside tobacco and cotton (24). In South Carolina, African slaves were instrumental in introducing irrigated rice culture along the coastal lowlands and indigo plantations at higher elevations. In the early 1740s, Eliza Lucas (1722-93) spent several years on her South Carolina plantation experimenting with indigo: indigo was an easier crop to grow than rice; it was the production of the dye that was more problematic. According to some sources, she consulted with neighbouring planters and with indigo experts from the West Indies in her attempts to produce indigo as a dye; according to other sources, she learned the process of extracting the dye from her slaves. This initiated a mid-century boom in the production of indigo in the Southern colonies with profits exceeding those of cotton and sugar.

As the Triplets suggest, the history of indigo is an under-explored African influence on North American culture. However, there is another aspect to this story. While indigo cultivation and dyeing was part of the formal business economy of the British colonists, quilting was passed down informally from mother to daughter. It had a role in the Underground Railroad in carrying coded messages and providing effective maps, and it continues to provide a cultural resource for African American artists like Faith Ringgold, Clementine Hunter and Winnie McQueen. Faith Ringgold's *The French Collection* (1991-97), for example, consists of a series of twelve 'story quilts': paintings on quilted canvasses with strips of hand-written text along top and bottom. Her best-known work is probably *Flag Story Quilt* (1985), which combines texts and African textiles to present the multi-ethnic reality of the USA. With

fifty white heads for the stars and lines of text along the white stripes, between red stripes of tie-dye material, Ringgold tells the fictional story of Memphis Cooly and his experience of racism. He returns from Vietnam as a quadriplegic and is accused of the rape and murder of a white woman. As this suggests, where European quilts focus on pattern and technique, African American quilts are emotionally expressive and tell stories. At the same time, they are based on an aesthetic of 'off-beat patterning' and 'multiple rhythms'. They are 'the visual equivalent of jazz or blues'.

In section 9# ('To begin with quilt'), through the use of the first-person (though these statements are almost certainly citations), Heuving explicitly identifies her own practice with this tradition. She quotes the quiltmakers of Gee's Bend, an isolated community in Alabama, whose quilt-making began as a necessary response to living in unheated shacks and developed its own distinctive geometric style. The re-use of sacks to provide the quilt backing (and scraps of fabric pieced together), to which this section refers, is specifically part of this African American tradition. From section 10# onwards, Heuving practices her own piece work – frequently with larger samples from other sources. There is also a sense of repetition with variations – from the repetition of opening statements ('To begin with indigo' for both Section 10# and 11#), and the revisiting of elements from the earlier sections ('The seed pods turn black and begin to open' in Sections 1# and 10#). One of the new elements in the second half of the sequence is the cuttlefish with its defensive use of ink. The main constituent of cephalopod ink is melanin, which gives it its dark colour. Melanin, of course, is the pigment that gives human hair, eyes and skin their colour also.

One of the repeated passages is a fragmented extract from Anais Nin's *Ladders to Fire*. In Nin's novel, the passage begins with the heroine's reflection: 'She was weaving and sewing and mending because he carried in himself no thread of connection ... of continuity or repair'. A second passage begins 'She was sewing together the little proofs of his devotion out of which to make a garment for her tattered love' and concludes: 'She sewed the lining so that the warmth would not seep out of their days together, the soft inner skin of their relationship.' As its Prologue makes clear, Nin's novel addresses 'woman's struggle to understand her own nature' freed from men's interpretations and patterns. Heuving suppresses Nin's reference to sewing (which is the link to her own quilting context) and detours the fragments to refer to the Gee's Bend quilters and, perhaps also, her own practice. Nin's account of a self-protective attempt to preserve the memory of a relationship becomes, in Heuving's hands, a woman's attempt to preserve 'the soft inner skin of her exist-

ence' through piecing and quilting. In the contexts Heuving creates for these fragments, this, in turn, becomes a subject-rhyme for both Lacanian invagination and the cuttlefish's self-protective action. The former brings in the subject's chiasmic interaction with a world felt on the boundaries of the skin; the latter draws in melanin and a song by Nina Simone, 'She does not know her beauty', an encouragement to African Americans to unthink what they have been taught through the lens of whiteness and through the separation from African culture.

Later sections not only return to sea roads, the indigo trade, and the plantation production of indigo, but also meditate on the symbolic significance of the plantations using black rather than white slave-labour, citing Frank Wilderson's work on the anti-Black structuring of the libidinal economy of America society. In this context, the citing of jazz lyrics and jazz musicians is not only a celebration of Black culture, but it also implies a contemporary counter-narrative: 'A mood can consume the populace as dye penetrates a cloth, altering dispositions that before had seemed inclined to go along with things'. Thus Nina Simone's account of her inter-action with her audience ('There's more electricity coming from you because you're getting it from them, and they are getting it from you ... it gets stronger all the time, because it's been building wave by wave'), in this new context, suggests another kind of collective action, and the repeat of part of the song 'She does not know her beauty' ('If she could dance naked under palm trees ... she would know') now carries quite a different significance.

At the same time, these later sections also reflect on Heuving's own practice in *Mood indigo*. Thus, the jazz musicians' reflections on hot jazz ('individual instruments will be heard to stand out and then retreat and you will catch new notes and broken up rhythms') also reflect the reader's experience of the voices and motifs of this sequence, 'waiting on edge for the hot variations you feel are coming up at any moment'. In Section 20#, Heuving introduces the term 'synchresis' ('To begin with synchresis'): the mental fusion of a sound and a visual when they occur at the same time. In Section 21, she explains the term further: the musician reading a musical score and hearing the sounds; the fusion of sound and image in cinema. In Section 20#, she takes this in a different direction ('In synchresis the elements are not synthesized but altered in their make-up into a new thing'), which she prompts us to interpret in relation to language and reading (more specifically, the fusion of orthography and phonology). In Section 21#, the exposition of the sequence's own methods appropriates a passage from Walter Benjamin's account of the surrealists' 'pushing the "poetic life" to the utmost limits of

possibility.’ Benjamin’s statement that ‘language only seemed itself where sound and image, image and sound interpenetrated’ offer a precise instance of synchresis, but also points to a potential use of language that reaches for a meaning beyond the ‘penny-in-the-slot called “meaning”’. The sequence concludes with a decentring reminder of our place within a larger ecological system: seaweed (like mushrooms, lichen and other algae) is neither plant nor animal, but destabilises those common-sense categories; more importantly, like plants and other algae, it engages in the photosynthesis that produces the oxygen we breathe.

Heaving’s sequence takes us through the long history of indigo, but also engages with the social injustices of the present moment, while not forgetting the third crisis that we are currently (and concurrently) facing.

ⁱ Victor Brocken, *Other Voices: Hidden Histories of Liverpool’s Popular Music Scenes 1930s–1970s* (), p.56.

ⁱⁱ Paul Robeson gave an impromptu concert in Lord Street (in May 1949) to an audience of some 10,000 people. See *Nerve* 11 (Winter 2007) – an electronic journal ‘providing grass roots art & culture on merseyside’.

ⁱⁱⁱ Catherine Tackley, ‘“Art or Debauchery”: The Reception of Ellington in the U.K.’, in John Howland (ed.), *Duke Ellington Studies* (Cambridge University Press,), pp. 76–107), p. 84.,

^{iv} *The Empress of Britain* was built at Govan for Canadian Pacific Steamships. It was launched there in June 1955 and made its maiden voyage from Liverpool in April 1956 (bound for Montreal).

^v Milton’s ‘Ode on the Morning of Christ’s Nativity’ might be an intertext here with its Arcadian shepherds and the linkage of the birth of Christ with the announcement ‘Great Pan is dead’ (which Spenser mentions in his pastoral, ‘The Shepherdes Calender’). See David M. Rosenberg, *Oaten Reeds and Trumpets: Pastoral and Epic in Virgil, Spenser and Milton* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1981), i36–7.

^{vi} I am indebted here to Arka Chattopadhyay, Dipanjan Maitra and Arunava Banerjee, Introduction to ‘Lacanian Psychoanalysis and the Logic of the Cut’, *Sanglap: Journal of Literary and Cultural Inquiry* 4.2 (2018).

^{vii} I am indebted here to Laure Razon, Olivier Putois and Alain Vanier, ‘The Lacanian Concept of Cut in Light of Lacan’s Interactions with Maud Mannoni’, *Frontiers in Psychology* (2017),

^{viii} Michelle Ann Stephens, *Skin Acts: Race, Psychoanalysis and the Black Male Performer* (Duke University Press, 2014).

^{ix} Michelle Ann Stephens, *Skin Acts: Race, Psychoanalysis and the Black Male Performer* (Duke University Press, 2014),

^x Nathaniel Mackey, *Bedouin Hornbook* (Lexington: Callaloo Fiction Series / University of Kentucky Press, 1986), 34.

^{xi} This revival of interest was initiated by Jonathan Holstein’s exhibition ‘Abstract Design in American Quilts’ at the Whitney Museum of Modern Art, New York, in July 1971. Patricia Mainardi’s *Quilts: The Great American Art* (Miles & Weir, 1978) was written in part as a feminist critique of the exhibition. See also Patricia Cooper and Norma Bradley Buford, *The Quilters: Women and Domestic Art* (New York: Doubleday 1978) on the quilt-making of women pioneer settlers of Texas and New Mexico. Miriam Schapiro’s *Femmage* (1971–85) incorporates

porated doilies, tea-towels and quilt squares into a collaborative collage practice. The 'Artist and the art and craft. See also Melanie Anne Pauls, 'Piecing Together Creativity: Feminist Aesthetics and the Crafting of Quilts' (2014), College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Theses and Dissertations, De Paul University.

xii See Cheryl B. Torsney, Judy Elsley (eds), *Quilt Culture: Tracing the Pattern* (University of Missouri Press, 1994).

xiii Namely, the Mande-speaking peoples of West Africa; the Yoruba and Fon peoples from the Republic of Benin and Nigeria; the Ejagham peoples of Nigeria and Cameroon; and the Kongo and Kongo-influenced peoples of Zaire and Angola.

xiv Maude Southwell Wahlmann, 'Textiles: African American Quilts, Textiles, and Cloth Charms' in Philip M. Peek and Kwesi Yankah (eds), *African Folklore: An Encyclopaedia* (Routledge, 2005), 920-31.

xv Valorie Thomas, 'The Break' in Rebecca Walker (ed.), *Black Cool: One Thousand Streams of Blackness* (Berkeley: Soft Skull Press, 2012).

xvi Grey Gundaker, *Signs of Diapora, Diaspora of Signs* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

xvii Kay and Lori Lee Triplett, *Indigo Quilts: 30 Quilts from the Poos Collection* (C & T Publishing, 2016).

xviii Richard W. Bulliet et al, *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History* (Stamford, CT.: Cengage Learning, 2008), 461.

xix This boom resulted also from the contemporaneous switch from indigo production to sugar in the West Indies.

xx See Kyra E. Hicks, *Black Threads: An African American Quilting Sourcebook* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2003) and *1.6 Million African American Quilters* (2010). For quilts and the Underground Railroad, see Galdys-Marie Fry, *Stitched from the Soul: Slave Quilts from the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: The Museum of American Folk Art and Dutton Studio Books, 1990).

xxi See Dan Cameron et al, *Dancing at the Louvre: Faith Ringgold's French Collection and Other Story Quilts* (University of California Press, 1998) and Alexandra M. Kokoli, *The Feminist Uncanny in Theory and Art Practice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p.160 ff.

xxii In 1970, Ringgold helped organise the People's Flag Show at Judson Memorial Church in Manhattan, featuring a hundred works based on the American flag. The show was closed down, and she and her two fellow-organisers were charged with desecration of the flag. She had produced flag paintings for many years prior to this exhibition in her American People and Black Light series. She returned to the flag in her later quilt work. Her poster for the People's Flag show included the lines (written by her daughter, Michelle Wallace): 'A flag which does not belong to the people / To do with as they see fit / Should be burned and forgotten'.

xxiii See Carolyn Mazloomi, *Spirits of the Cloth: Contemporary African American Quilts* (Clarkson Potter, 1998).

xxiv Elsa Barkley Brown, 'African American Women's Quilting', *Signs*, 14.4 (Summer 1989), 921-29, 923.

xxv Wahlmann, 'Textiles', 920.

xxvi The Gee's Bend quilts that Heuving focusses on are not story-telling quilts, but abstract.

xxvii Nina Simone, *Let It All Out* (1966).

xxviii Walter Benjamin, 'Surrealism: The last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia', *One Way Street* (London: New Left Books, 1979), 225-39, 226.

Robert Hampson