

REVOLUTIONARY VOICES: MLK, JR. AND MALCOLM X

Oppression & Justice (Fall 2013)

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LET'S LISTEN

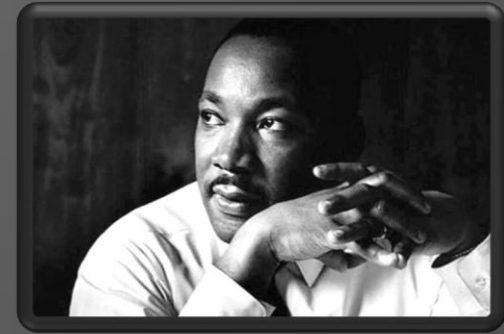


Excerpt: "I Have a Dream" (1963)

"Who Taught You to Hate Yourself?" (1962)



“THE SWORD THAT HEALS”

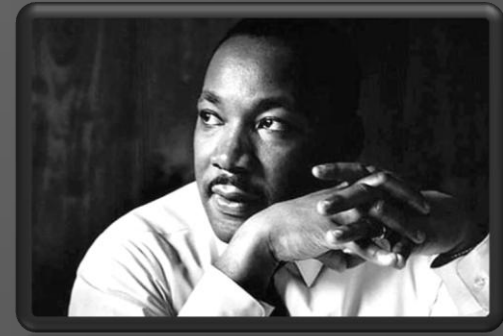


- 1964, *The Critic*
- Expands on ideals and methodology of **black integration**
 - Notion of a loving community with many races
- Wanted to lead a revolution that showed the dignity of black Americans to themselves and to their oppressors
 - “The Revolution of the Negro not only attacked the external cause of his misery, but revealed him to himself” (16)



More here: <http://www.thekingcenter.org/archive/document/sword-heals>

“THE SWORD THAT HEALS”



- **Non-violent** direct action + legal change
 - Violence as ineffective, reifies denigrating stereotypes of black people as dangerous, unhinged, or uncivilized
 - Important to support the “soul” of protestors by not making them forfeit their virtue, morals, religious beliefs
 - More inclusive strategy (anyone of any age, ability, race welcome)
 - Democratic – does not rely on hierarchies
 - Aimed at oppressive systems, not directly at individuals who act as permitted within those systems

“THE BALLOT OR THE BULLET”



- ▣ 1964, Cleveland and Detroit
- ▣ Summarizes key points of **black nationalism**
 - “You don’t integrate with a sinking ship”
 - Favored separatism—building black communities with African-Americans in political, economic, and social power
- ▣ Wanted to lead an effective and efficient revolution that would elevate the position of black Americans ASAP
 - African-Americans are in a desperate state of long-standing injustice

“THE BALLOT OR THE BULLET”



- “Being here in America doesn’t make you an American. Being born here in America doesn’t make you an American. [...] I’m one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism” (2)
 - Democracy as “disguised hypocrisy”
- Systems as unjust, without reciprocity, unfair, unequal
 - America’s wealth built on the back of slaves
 - Black Americans subjected to routine violence but expected not to return that violence
- Use the ballot when doing so will *actually* achieve what it’s supposed to
 - Forget the ballot when democracy fails its citizens and when the State won’t defend the black population against violations of civil/human rights

DISCUSSION

- ❑ What sources and types of oppression are identified by these two leaders? Refer to and expand on the concepts we have discussed in class.
- ❑ Given the spottiness of political progress, blatant tokenism, and continued sanctioned violence against the black community observed in 1964, do both positions and methodologies seem compelling?
- ❑ Why do they think that the plight of African-Americans and other black Americans have not been completely rectified by the Emancipation Proclamation and Constitutional Amendments?

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

More here: <http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/black-separatism-or-beloved-community-malcolm-x-and-martin-luther-king-jr>