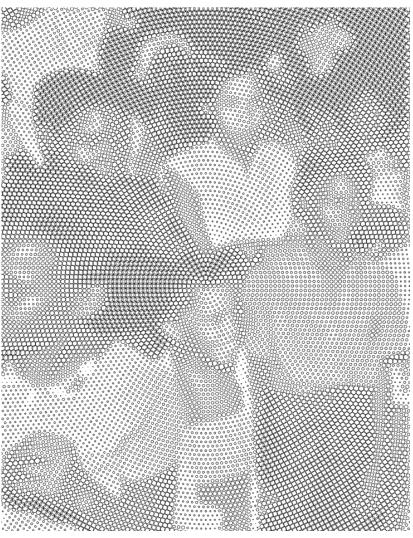
The Anarchy of Colored Girls Assembled in a Riotous Manner



Saidiya Hartman

Esther Brown did not write a political tract on the refusal to be governed, or draft a plan for mutual aid or outline a memoire of her sexual adventures, "A Manifesto of The Wayward"; "Own nothing refuse the given, live on what you need and no more get ready to be free," was not found among the items contained in her case file

She didn't pen any song lines: "My momma says I'm wreckless My daddy says I'm wild I ain't good looking But im somebody's angel child,"

She didn't commit to paper her ruminations on freedom, with human nature caged in a narrow space wooped daily into submission how can we speak of potentialities?

The carboard plackards for the tumult and upheaval she incited might have said: "Don't mess with me I am not afraid to smash things up,"

But hers was a struggle without formal declarations, policies, slogans, or credos. It required no party platform or 10 point program.

Walking through the streets of New York City, she and Emma Goldman crossed paths but failed to recognize one another.

When Houghward * Harrison encountered her in the lobby of the Renaissance Casino after he delivered his lecture on Marriage vs. Free Love at the socialist club, he noticed only that she had a pretty face and a big ass.

Esther never pulled a soap box onto the corner of 135th Street on Lennox avenue to make a speech about autonomy, the global reach of the color line, involuntary servitude, free motherhood, or the promise of a future world but she well understood the desire to move as she wanted was nothing short of treason.

She knew first hand that the offense that was punished by the state was trying to live free: to wander through the streets of Harlem, to want better than what she had, and to be propelled by her whims and desires was to be ungovernable —

Her way of living was nothing short of anarchy.

Had anyone ever found the rough notes through reconstruction jotted in the margin area of her grocery lists, or correlated the numbers circled most often in her dog-eared dream book, with routes of escape not to be found in McNally's Atlas or seen the love letters written to her girlfriend about how they would live at the end of the world the master philosophers, and the card-holding radicals in all likelihood would've said that her analysis was insufficient, dismissed her for failing to understand those Key Passages in the Grundrisse about the ex-slaves refusal to work, and emphasized the limits of Black feminist politics

"They have ceased to be slaves, but not in order to be wage laborers!"

She had Amen'd an enthusiastic agreement at all wrong places content with producing only what i strictly necessary for their own consumption and she embraced wholeheartedly indolence, indulgence, and idleness as the real luxury good.

What did the untested militants, and smug ideologues,

know of Truth and Tubman? Unlike Unruly Colored Women, they failed to recognize that experience was capable of opening up new ways, yielding a thousand new forms and improvisations. Could they ever understand the dreams of another world that didn't trouble the distinction between State, Law, Settler, and Master? Or account the struggle against servitude, captivity, property, and enclosure that began in the Barracoon and continued on the ship where some fought, some jumped, some refused to eat. others at the plantation and the fields on fire poison the Master?

They had never listened to Lucy Parsons... They had never read Ida B. Wells, or envisioned the riot as a rally cry: a refusal — a fungible life... Only a misreading of the key text of anarchism could ever imagine a place for Wayward Colored Girls.

No, Kropotkin never described Black women's mutual aid societies or the chorus in mutual aid – although he imagined animals sociality in its rich varieties in the forms of cooperation and mutuality found among ants, monkeys, and ruminants and possible recalcitrant domestics weren't yet, in his view, or anyone else's. It would be a decade and a half before Marvel Cooke and Ella Baker wrote their essay: "The Bronx Slave Market" and two decades before Claudia Jones' "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman"

Their revolt against the personal degradation of their work, and unjust labor conditions expressed itself in militant refusals, soldierings, sullowness, petty pilfering, unreliability, and fast and fruitless change of Masters. Yet it had no chronicler none responded to the call to write The Great Servant Girl Novel

It is not surprising that a negress would be guilty of conflating idleness with resistance or exalt the struggle for mere survival, or confuse petty acts for insurrection, or imagine a minor figure might be capable of some significant shit, or mistake laziness and insufficiency for a general strike, or recast theft as a kind of cheap socialism for two fast girls and questionable women, or steam wild ideas as radical thought.

At best the case of Esther Brown provides another example of the tendency to exaggeration and excesser friends raised hell on 132nd Street, or turned out Edmond's cellar, or made such a beautiful noise during the riot that their screams, and shouts were improvised music so that even the tone deaf from the New York Times described the Black noise of disorderly women as a jazz chorus. that is common to The Race.

Nobody remembers the evening she and her friends raised hell on 132nd Street, or turned out Edmond's cellar, or made such a beautiful noise during the riot that their screams, and shouts were improvised music so that even the tone deaf from the New York Times described the Black noise of disorderly women as a jazz chorus.

