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INTRODUCTION

Our passion for categorization, life neatly fitted into pegs, has led to an unforeseen, paradoxical distress; confusion, a breakdown of meaning. These categories which were meant to define and control the world for us have boomeranged us into chaos; in which limbo we whirl, clutching the straws of our definitions.

—James Baldwin, *Partisan Review* (1949)

What do they know of sport who only sport know?

—Paraphrased from C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (1963)

Chapter 1

Unforgettable Fists

There's somethin' happenin' here,
what it is ain't exactly clear.
. . . . . .
Young people speakin' their minds
Getting so much resistance from behind.
I think it's time we stop, hey, what's that sound?
Everybody look what's going down.

"For What It's Worth," Steven Stills, for the band Buffalo Springfield (1966)

It begins, in this version at least, with a race, a simple footrace. Entering the Games of the nineteenth Olympiad, the men's 200-meter dash seemed destined to make history—a race, as the old sports cliché goes, for the ages. Tommie Smith was the favorite according to most knowledgeable observers at the time. Smith—the Jesse Owens or Carl Lewis of his day, when track and field was still a major American sport—held eleven world records both indoors and out, at distances up to 400 meters, and he had once long jumped 25 feet, 11 inches. And for all of this, the 200 meters was his specialty, the distance at which he reigned as world champion. Yet Smith was to receive a serious challenge from John Carlos, his collegiate teammate at San Jose State. Though a relative newcomer to the international scene, Carlos had beaten Smith for the first time only a month earlier at the U.S. Olympic trials, clocking a world-record time of 19.7 seconds in the process (a record never officially recognized because Carlos was wearing "brush spike" shoes, a short-lived innovation that, though never shown to aid runners unfairly, was ruled illegal at the time). So clear was the athletic brilliance of these two sprinters that the *Chicago Tribune* proclaimed that regardless of the outcome of their personal battle, there was "no question that the United States would be represented by the greatest 200-meter team in its history"—no small assertion considering that the United States had dominated the event since

it was first run in 1900, winning eleven of fourteen times and capturing twenty-nine of the forty-two total awarded medals.[1] Making the contest even more captivating were the personal differences that distinguished the two athletes. Although both came from poor black families and now ran out of coach Bud Winter's "speed city" in San Jose, they were otherwise a study in contrasts. Smith was from California, Carlos from Harlem; Smith was the calm, cool, hardworking, and graceful veteran; Carlos the cocky, brash, hugely talented and yet notoriously unpredictable upstart. It was to be a classic duel. But even in view of all this hype, hyperbole, and intrigue, few could have predicted the kind of history this event would make.

By all accounts, the race itself was glorious (as were so many of the track-and-field performances in Mexico City's high altitude: an astonishing fifteen world records were broken in track and field alone, including Bob Beamon's miraculous 29-foot long jump).[2] Smith and Carlos were assigned side-by-side lanes. Smith, who had taken no practice starts to avoid aggravating a severe hamstring pull he had sustained in a qualifying heat just two hours prior to the final, came out of the blocks gingerly, not knowing for sure whether he would even be able to complete the race, much less compete with Carlos. Next to Smith in lane four, Carlos came away from the start perfectly and rounded the turn holding a full meter and a half lead on Smith and the rest of the field. But Smith, who was using short, quick strides around the turn to keep pressure off his injured inside leg, appeared to be gaining confidence. He closed rapidly on his front-running teammate and then, with 60 meters to go, Smith burst by Carlos on the strength of a powerful and familiar kick—his fabled "Tommie-Jets." From there, Smith was a sight to behold: his long, smooth, classic sprinter's stride carried him gracefully, forcefully—*beautifully*—across the track. Even to see the race on tape today one cannot help but be struck by the sheer aesthetic brilliance that some consider the raison d'etre of high performance sport. Smith's victory, in fact, was almost anticlimactic: he won so decisively that even before he broke the tape he was smiling and waving in a jubilant, euphoric celebration that may, some have claimed, have cost him the greatest 200-meter time ever. Meanwhile on his right, Carlos had to settle for third place. When he turned his head to watch Smith go by, Carlos was surprisingly overtaken by the Australian Peter Norman, who, like Smith, had run the race of his life. The official result showed that Smith had won the race in a new official world-record time of 19.8 seconds, with Norman and Carlos finishing second and third respectively with identical times of 20 seconds flat. "It was a fine race, one that Smith could be proud of," *Sports Illustrated* commented, but not what

he would be remembered for. Instead, the magazine correctly predicted, Smith "will be remembered for what happened next"—that is, what happened during the victory ceremony shortly thereafter.[3]

Immediately after the race, according to the standard practice of the time, the runners were taken to their dressing rooms underneath the stadium to await the presentation of their medals. It was there, in dungeon-like confines, that Smith produced the black gloves that would serve as the focal point of the gesture that was to follow. Giving Carlos the left-handed glove and keeping the right one for himself, Smith explained to Carlos what he wanted them to do and what it would stand for. He stressed, above all else, the gravity of what was to happen: "The national anthem is a sacred song to me," he said. "This can't be sloppy. It has to be clean and abrupt."[4] The two Americans also gave a button reading the "Olympic Project for Human Rights" to the Australian Norman who, after having been privy to these deliberations, wanted to show solidarity with their cause. And everything was set for their victory ceremony.

As dictated by established Olympic protocol and practice, the three athletes were led across the stadium infield by the awards presenters, three young Mexican women in embroidered native dress and a group of senior representatives of the appropriate international sports organizations. The Americans mounted the awards podium clad in sweat suits and black stocking feet and carrying white-soled Puma sneakers. Smith wore a black scarf around his neck, Carlos a string of African-style beads. Both men (along with the Australian) displayed their OPHR buttons. Presiding over the ceremony was the president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, Lord Burghley, the marquess of Exeter. The marquess, the 1924 Olympic 400-meter hurdles champion later made famous as a composite character in the film *Chariots of Fire,* had requested that he present these medals in order to personally honor Smith as the greatest long sprinter who had ever lived. Years later, in fact, Smith would recall that the warmth and peace radiated by this man (whom he mistakenly identified as the Irishman Lord Killanin, the future president of the IOC) helped him to compose himself for what was to come. Along with his gold medal, the IOC official presented Smith a box with an olive tree sapling inside, an ancient emblem of peace, which the sprinter smoothly accepted into his own symbolic space. And then it was time. The "Star-Spangled Banner" began and the stars and stripes of the United States flag were lifted upward to honor the nation of the Olympic champion. In a stark break with convention, however, Smith and Carlos thrust black-gloved fists—Smith his right, Carlos his left—above lowered eyes and bowed heads.

Protocol, custom, and fear demand that everyone—strangers, rivals, and enemies as much as countrymen and teammates—rise and remain silent and respectful for the duration of the anthem. Thus, as Olympic scholar John MacAloon has observed, the entire ritual company, even the stunned Lord Burghley, had no choice but to stand at formal attention, as if nothing unusual were happening, for the full ninety seconds of the American national anthem. And yet, obviously, something extraordinary was happening. In this moment was born one of the most vibrant and poignant images ever generated by that international spectacle of symbolism and myth-making we call the Olympic Games. In its aftermath, Smith gave a brief but powerful explanation of the meaning of these symbols and of his and Carlos's actions. It was an explanation that would be reprinted many times after it first appeared in *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (1969).

> My raised right hand stood for the power in black America. Carlos's raised left hand stood for the unity of black America. Together they formed an arch of unity and power. The black scarf around my neck stood for black pride. The black socks with no shoes stood for black poverty in racist America. The totality of our effort was the regaining of black dignity.[5]

Smith would not talk publicly about this moment again for more than twenty years. But over the course of those years, the image he had helped to engineer would come, for American audiences and many others around the globe, to define the 1968 Mexico City Olympics and, in many ways, to transcend sport itself.

Making Sense of an Icon

In 1968 the Vietnam War, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, the Democratic national convention in Chicago and riots in many other cities (including the student uprisings in Paris, troops rolling into Czechoslovakia, and both in Mexico itself) produced many vivid images and powerful historical icons. Yet the image of Smith and Carlos's victory-stand demonstration was reported with and has been remembered amid all of them. Within two days, Smith and Carlos's gesture was pictured on the front page (not the sports page, the *front* page) of newspapers across the United States and around the world. And still today, more than a third-century later, references to this image appear—a paragraph here, a sentence or two there, or more often than not just the photograph itself—with a surprising degree of regularity in a wide variety of contexts.

Pictures of Smith and Carlos have been used to illustrate American high school history textbooks (see, for example, Linden, Brink, and Huntington 1986), and posters of the image have provided inspiration and strength for generations of college students. The image of these two athletes has long been an object of reflection for artists, whether as the basis for the "civil rights" creations of Chicago-based Alanzo Parham or as an example of the more overtly political African American aesthetic practiced by Murray DePillars. Smith, Carlos, and their fists were emblazoned next to Malcolm X's picture on the "By Any Means" T-shirts and sweatshirts popularized by several Spike Lee films in the late 1980s, and a few years later Hollywood's Oliver Stone seriously considered making a feature-length motion picture based on Smith and Carlos's story. In 1988 the image of Smith and Carlos was prominently placed in a special *Time* magazine retrospective issue called "1968: The Year That Shaped a Generation," and many of that small cottage industry of books on the 1960s have given it prominent treatment as well.[6]

Home Box Office (HBO) Films eventually did produce the widely publicized *Fists of Freedom* documentary (1999), but this was long after Kenny Moore's landmark feature on the story behind the image supplied the backdrop and promotional vehicle for a two-part *Sports Illustrated* cover story, "The Black Athlete," in the summer of 1991. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the demonstration in 1993 occasioned a nationwide series of retrospective stories and commentaries. Said one writer, "[it was] the most significant athletic image of my sports life . . . I recall the black, gloved fists as if they were raised yesterday."[7]

Smith and Carlos's demonstration subsequently served as a touchstone for public reporting of events ranging from the USOC's "Tonya Harding dilemma" during the 1994 Winter Olympics to George Foreman's unlikely return to professional boxing (and eventual heavyweight championship) and O. J. Simpson's infamous double-murder trial. Since then the picture has appeared on the cover of a special issue of the academic journal *Race and Class,* was featured in a controversial European advertising campaign (juxtaposed next to duck-stepping Nazi soldiers), and was ranked among *TV Guide*'s one hundred most memorable moments in television history (number thirty-eight to be precise).[8] The memory of Smith and Carlos figured in John Berendt's account of African American tastes in hard liquor in *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1994, p. 319), and in the new millennium the image served as the focal point of a pivotal scene in the feel-good Hollywood picture *Remember the Titans*. My own surveys and interviews indicate that even those who claim to care nothing for sports and/or know nothing about the image itself—men and women alike—often experience strong emotional reactions to it. Although it is received

enthusiastically these days, in more than one library I have come across documents pertaining to Smith and Carlos or their demonstration that have been defaced or purged entirely.

No Olympic anthology, history of sport in the United States, or treatment of the African American athlete seems complete without some acknowledgment of Smith and Carlos's demonstration, and Jim Riordan and Arnd Kruger's recent (1999) volume on the international politics of twentieth-century sport is graced by a picture of the demonstration on its cover. A surprising number of sports biographies and autobiographies devote some sustained attention to the episode. Virtually all 1968 Olympic alumni—white or black, male or female—are eventually coerced or compelled to discuss their views on the episode because, as one 1968 Olympian told me, "their protest *is* the 1968 Olympics for most Americans."[9] But it is probably Smith and Carlos's African American male teammates who understand this best. Speaking in 1991, Jimmy Hines, the 100-meter gold medalist in Mexico City, sighed: "I've done maybe a thousand speaking engagements and after each I've had the question: 'Were you the ones . . . ? The ones who . . . ?' I guess that's forever."[10]

Each of these references, contexts, and anecdotes constitutes a portion of what the sociologist Wendy Griswold (1994) might describe as the social significance embodied in this cultural form. Despite its prominence and power as an object of meaning and collective memory, however, most Americans "know" little more than the image itself. Typically the picture of the two athletes is displayed (or the image rhetorically appropriated) without any critical commentary or explanation, as if its significance were wholly self-sufficient or self-evident, a picture worth literally a thousand words. One striking such example can be found in William O'Neil's (1978) widely read "informal history" of 1960s America. In one of the two photograph galleries that supplement the text is a picture of Smith and Carlos on the victory stand. It is presented under the caption "A Black Power salute at the Olympics, 1968," and yet, incredibly, no further reference to the image can be found in the entire book—not in the chapters involving black power, not in the discussion of the year 1968 itself, not even in the section devoted specifically to the decade's sporting events. Similarly, K. Sue Jewell's more recent book on the role of cultural images in the construction of American public policy, *From Mammy to Miss America and Beyond* (1993), features visual cues to Smith and Carlos on its cover that are not touched upon in any way in the text itself. Even Riordan and Kruger's recent volume on the international politics of sport, which has the image on its cover, contains only two scant references to the demonstration itself (one of which is historically inaccurate).

I received one of my first and most powerful lessons on this point when I began working with high school students from the South Side of Chicago after graduating from college in the late 1980s. I was, at the time, drafting a very early version of the narrative that would eventually become the first part of the present volume and wondered what these students knew about the image that had inspired me. I was especially interested in their understandings because I had seen many of them proudly sporting the Spike Lee sweatshirts that juxtaposed Malcolm X with Smith and Carlos's fists at the time of the release of the film *Do the Right Thing*. But to my surprise, none of these students knew anything at all about the image. They liked it—thought it was "hip" and "straight-up" and all the rest—but could say little more. I remember in particular a conversation I shared with about eight or nine African American junior high school girls—many of whom were athletes (volleyball players), most of whom fancied themselves as having very progressive racial politics, and all of whom planned to attend college. To a person, they found the image very appealing and yet were almost embarrassed to admit having absolutely no sense of where it had come from or what its enactors had intended it to mean. This is not to say they were uninterested in the story—they simply didn't know and hadn't even imagined that such a story existed.[11]

In the preface to *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (1987), Todd Gitlin observes that in late twentieth century American culture,

> "The Sixties" [have] receded into haze and myth: lingering images of nobility and violence, occasional news clips of Martin Luther King, Jr. and John F. Kennedy, Beatles and Bob Dylan retrospectives, the jumble of images this culture shares instead of a sense of continuous, lived history. "The Sixties": a collage of fragments scooped together as if a whole decade took place in an instant. (p. 3)

What Gitlin says about "the Sixties" must surely apply to the Smith and Carlos demonstration: it is—or at least has become—one of those familiar, spectacular, and utterly peculiar icons that fascinates the American imagination and satisfies its sense of news and history.

As with so much of popular culture, a great many concerns are raised by the superficial, impoverished sense of the past contained and conveyed in such images. To the extent that it is only an "image," a picture without a story, the particular social relations and historical conditions that occasioned Smith and Carlos's demonstration and that help account for its deeper social meaning are effectively trivialized, diluted, or even erased altogether, rendering our memories of their gesture either shamelessly sentimental and meaningless on the one hand, or subject to politi-

cal manipulation, reckless commercialization, and all manner of wanton co-optation on the other. These patterns of appropriation, subversion, and exploitation are familiar and disturbing enough for those of us who have studied the social life of cultural products in a mass commercial society, but their effect assumes tragic proportions if and when they serve to mystify and perpetuate the social injustices that created them in the first place—as has been the case for so much of African American culture throughout American history.[12] Such considerations make it easy to agree with Gitlin when he argues that the history behind such images needs to be "reclaimed."

A good portion of the work that follows will, as I pointed out in the preface, be devoted to reconstructing this history, to showing how this demonstration is actually best understood as the final product of a failed effort to organize an African American boycott of the Mexico City Games, a protest initiative that itself grew out of the frustration with the slow pace of post–civil rights racial change on the one hand and the emerging frustration of African American athletes with their treatment in the world of sport on the other. But this image has a kind of second life or history as well, one that is both easier to miss and yet just as important to grapple with, involving the social meanings and collective memories that have been invested in and attributed to this image over the years. In recent years—especially around the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the demonstration in 1993, but beginning as early as the 1984 Olympic Games—Americans have tended to view Smith and Carlos and the demonstration in generally positive, if not downright celebratory ways. Indeed, in the 1991 *Sports Illustrated* story in which Smith finally provided his account of the demonstration, the former sprinter is described as a "civil rights hero" . . . "cloaked in pride and dignity," a reading extended and further popularized by the 1999 HBO documentary *Fists of Freedom* and in TNT's 2002 treatment in their *Fifteen Minutes of Fame* series. In our comfortable era where Michael Jordan reigns supreme and Muhammad Ali and Martin Luther King have become icons for mainstream, middle-class America, it can be difficult to comprehend the historical specificity of these recollections. But the constructedness of these memories is made manifest when we consider them in contrast to the controversy and outrage Smith and Carlos engendered in mainstream America back in 1968.

It began immediately. Even before they had returned home from Mexico City, American newspapers were overflowing with reports, heated editorials, and emotional letters-to-the-editor criticizing and condemning the protest. The *New York Times* claimed that "a majority condemned [the protest] as disgraceful, insulting and embarrassing,"[13] and the mainstream media clearly did what it could to consolidate such a consensus among the American public. On its main editorial page, the *Chicago Tribune* called the demonstration "an embarrassment visited upon the country," an " act contemptuous of the United States," and "an insult to their countrymen," predicting with unmitigated disgust that these "renegades" would come home to be "greeted as heroes by fellow extremists."[14] *Time* magazine saw it as an "unpleasant controversy [that] dulled the luster of a superlative track and field meet," and *Sports Illustrated* relegated what it called the "Carlos-Smith affair" to four pejorative paragraphs buried on the fifth page of an otherwise verbose twelve-page story. ABC's official thirty-five-minute highlight film of the Games (which emphasized American performances almost exclusively and in fact concluded by playing the national anthem behind images of American flags and Olympic victors in competition and on the victory stand) made absolutely no mention of the events surrounding Smith and Carlos—despite the fact that the network had followed the story closely during its live coverage. One of the harshest indictments against Smith and Carlos was issued by a young staff writer for the *Chicago American* named Brent Musburger. Writing from Mexico City, Musburger began:

> One gets a little tired of having the United States run down by athletes who are enjoying themselves at the expense of their country. Protesting and working constructively against racism in the United States is one thing, but airing one's dirty clothing before the entire world during a fun-and-games tournament was no more than a juvenile gesture by a couple of athletes who should have known better.[15]

Calling their demonstration an "ignoble performance" that "completely overshadowed" a magnificent athletic one, Musburger likened Smith and Carlos to "a pair of dark-skinned storm troopers" and concluded that "they should have avoided the awards ceremony altogether."

Obviously, then, the project of reclaiming the history of Smith and Carlos's demonstration has as much to do with understanding the meanings and memories that have been attributed to the image as it does with grasping the motivations and intentions of its actors in the first place. Given that the image itself did not change at all during this period and that neither Smith nor Carlos said or did anything that could have affected how it was interpreted, the only recourse for explaining this dramatic transformation is the sociological one: to look to the broader sociohistorical context within which its meaning was produced and imputed—putting

"text" in "context," to use the language Herman Gray (1995) has given us.[16] The developments that led to the dramatic rebirth and transformation of memories about Smith and Carlos, in fact, constitute the focus of the second part of this book.

But even for those who know the story behind this image and who have some appreciation of the sociohistorical context in which American understandings of it have been constructed, contained, and transformed, the Smith-Carlos demonstration itself remains as enigmatic and puzzling as it has been powerful and persistent. In 1984, to take one notable example, the sports historian Donald Spivey (1984, pp. 249–251) was still puzzling over what he called the "1968 Olympic boycott movement," describing it in one instance as "nothing more than a few symbolic gestures" and yet, in another way, as somehow "more than the sum of its parts." It has been this way ever since Smith and Carlos first clenched their fists and bowed their heads. *New York Times* sportswriter Robert Lipsyte, who had covered the OPHR throughout 1968 and was on location that day in Mexico City, remembers being disappointed, wondering "Is this all there is? . . . [T]wo handsome college students . . . raising their arms and bowing their heads did not seem exactly like wild in the streets."[17] In its 1968 Olympics retrospective *Ebony* magazine registered even more confused, contradictory impressions:

> In a nation where black protest has reached such heights as ghetto riots, school boycotts and impassioned requests for a separate state, the Smith/Carlos demonstration should look like child's play. In a nation where white Vietnam protesters have flaunted Viet Cong flags, burned and torn American flags and burned draft cards, the Smith/Carlos demonstration appeared as solemn as a church service.[18]

How could a reputable African American publication compare the demonstration to the play of children in one sentence and the seriousness of a church service in the next, without further comment? How can it be that one of the most thoughtful and well-positioned sports journalists in the country recalls being "disappointed" by the gesture at the time, only to still be writing about it more than twenty-five years later? Is Spivey's fundamental ambivalence, in the end, the only rational conclusion that can be drawn?

These are not puzzles and paradoxes we should move past too quickly. The fact that Smith and Carlos's victory-stand gesture was such a powerful and contradictory image back in 1968 and remains so today in spite of (or perhaps even because of) the absence of any substantial or "real" history is, I believe, interesting and in need of explanation itself.

In certain ways such questions call to mind the curious and contradictory historiography of Smith and Carlos's contemporaries and sometime collaborators Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown, and the organization with which they were famously associated. Much like the Smith-Carlos demonstration, the Black Panther Party is at once known and unknown, symbolically central to the 1960s and yet historiographically underdeveloped. In a recent and very important rethinking of this uneven historical legacy, Nikhil Pal Singh (1998) suggests that much of the paradox of the Panthers is a function of a general American ambivalence about "black liberatory aspirations" and the persistent problems of race in the United States. This is certainly the case for the Smith and Carlos demonstration and the memories and meanings that surround it: they reflect the ambiguities and tensions embedded in the ongoing African American struggle for social justice.

Singh goes on to argue that the Panther's distinctive local and global "appeal" cannot be understood apart from the realities of translocal and transnational intercultural transfer and exchange. More specifically, he maintains that the Black Panther's multifaceted commitment to counternationalism, anti-imperialism, and decolonization is (and was) profoundly unsettling, if not simply subversive for the usual narratives that perceive America as a unified national community, an ideal awaiting realization. This radical reading has profound parallels and implications for a demonstration that unfolded in the context of one of the most powerful and popular international institutions of the modern world—the Olympic Games. Indeed, the inherently global, international, and cross-cultural character of the Olympic movement ensures that issues of nationalism, internationalism, and racial colonization resonate in and through Smith and Carlos's victory-stand demonstration.

That said, it is far from clear that Smith and Carlos held the decisively radical if not fully revolutionary anticapitalist, transnational vision Singh claims for the Panthers. On the one hand, the dramatic black-gloved, clenched-fist salute at the emotional center of Smith and Carlos's victory-stand display is easily (and typically) described as a "black power salute." This gesture has a long history as a symbol of challenge or revolt in both formal and vernacular gesticulation.[19] Yet, at the same time, it is important to note that Smith (and, though to a lesser extent, even Carlos) pointedly did not describe it in this way. While he mentioned the "power in black America" in the phrase quoted above, Smith instead utilized the less explicitly radical language of "black pride" and "unity," moderate labels that were matched by the dignity and solemnity of bowed heads. If Smith and Carlos's gesture is implicated in the politics of race in the United States, then, its "authors" would seem to have had less do with the

radicalism of the Left and more with the challenge of the center. Indeed, I believe that it is largely because of this subtle rhetorical moderation that Smith and Carlos's demonstration was so readily rehabilitated in mainstream American culture in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

But there is something else that is ideologically distinctive about this story as compared to that of Singh's characterization of the Panthers. It has to do with its sport-specific nature, its status as a product of the popular cultural practices of the athletic world. Such attitudes about popular images and popular cultural forms in general are reminiscent of Pierre Bourdieu's famous description of the paradoxical social status of the sociology of sport: "[S]corned by sociologists," he notes, "it is despised by sportspersons." The challenge, then, to overcome the artificial, parochial divisions engendered by the study of all manner of popular culture by seeing what is so memorable and meaningful about images and practices—such as the Smith-Carlos gesture—that are essentially dehistoricized and disembodied.

Here it is instructive to recall that Bourdieu used a parable about black athletes in prestigious American universities in the 1970s to make his point about the problems of studying sport and all manner of popular culture. Despite their seeming prominence and importance, he noted, these student-athletes found themselves in "golden ghettos" of isolation where conservatives were reluctant to talk with them because they were black, while liberals were hesitant to converse with them because they were athletes.[20] If Bourdieu used this example to call attention to the problems of studying sport and popular culture more generally, my intent is to take this case even more literally and a step further to suggest that there is something about race as well that is peculiar and particularly problematic in American society, liberal democratic political ideology, and sport culture itself, something that comes out in Olympic symbology in general and the meanings inherent in the Smith-Carlos demonstration. Here it is imperative to realize that this image has a structure and history that is interesting, important, and all its own—independent of the movement that gave birth to it and separate from the historical context that subsequently enveloped it, yet intimately and inherently linked with the relationships between race and sport at the heart of this study. To fully capture the demonstration in this way, we must shift gears and take a slight detour through the lure of the Olympic Games and the sociologics of Olympic ritual and symbolism. I draw heavily and directly on the work of Olympic scholar John MacAloon, the anthropologist who is not only the foremost American expert on the international Olympic movement but who has produced the most compelling explanation of the power and significance of the Smith-Carlos demonstration to date.

The Sociological Structure and Power of Olympic Ceremony

John MacAloon's pioneering body of work explicating the various performative and symbolic aspects of Olympic sport provides the structural framework within and against which to begin to understand the sheer emotional impact of the Smith-Carlos demonstration and its image.[21] The modern Olympic Games, even though barely one hundred years old, have grown into what MacAloon calls "a cultural performance of global proportion" (1984, p. 241). Participants in the Games come from almost two hundred countries and number in the tens of thousands; live spectators from all over the world number in the millions. Broadcast audiences are estimated in the billions and generate revenues of comparable scale, although, as MacAloon points out, what may be even more significant than these sheer numbers is the fact that—quite unlike the audience for any other sporting event, and to an extent little programming can match (at least in the United States)—the demographic composition of Olympic television audiences closely reproduces actual sociological structure. The Games are almost universally recognized for their importance in international commerce and politics (among the world's developed nations, in fact, only the United States lacks a cabinet-level minister of sport), as well as their cross-cultural sway over individual hopes and dreams. For reasons large and small, MacAloon seems justified in concluding that "Insofar as there exists, in the Hegelian-Marxist phrase, a 'world-historical process,' the Olympics have emerged as its privileged expression and celebration" (1984, p. 242).

Many factors, of course, contribute to the remarkable social status of sport in the modern world, but one of the factors unique to the Olympics is what MacAloon describes as "its encasement of sociological and ideological elements within evocative ritual performances":

> Olympic rituals, like all rites, are sets of evocative symbols organized processually in space and time. Olympic rituals take body symbolism, join it with symbols of determined social categories and meld the whole into expressions of Olympic ideology that the rituals are designed to render emotionally veridical. (p. 242)

MacAloon attributes much of the global import of the Olympic Games to the striking and consistent effects generated by the Games' particular constellation of performance genres, calling them the "closest we have been able to come to true world rituals" (1988b, p. 286). The central objective of Olympic participation for many national delegations is simply to march in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and thus allow their country to assume its place alongside the nations of the world commu-

nity. This is not surprising, MacAloon points out, when we consider that 40–50 percent of the participating nations have their entire delegation eliminated in the first round of competition, and fewer than 30 percent actually win a medal. (He also asserts that the United Nations' inability to generate ceremonies of comparable force and consistency has been one of its greatest failures as a world organization, which helps account for UNESCO's largely forgotten attempt to take over the Olympic movement in the 1960s and 1970s.) In any case, it is in the context of international spectacle and ritual that we really begin to appreciate the power and prominence of Smith and Carlos's victory-stand demonstration.

Although little noticed by American observers (stemming in large measure from conventions of American media coverage of the ceremonies and the utilitarian, antiritualistic nature of American culture more generally), the rituals and icons of the Olympic Games pay homage to a specific triad of identities: those of the individual, the nation, and the whole of humanity itself. These are displayed in various ways but largely in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and on the victory stands. In the Opening Ceremonies, national and transnational (i.e., Olympic or broadly "human") symbols are juxtaposed and stressed: this is accomplished, in the first stage of the rite, as athletes and officials "march" into the stadium in national groups marked by distinctive flags, anthems, emblems, and costumes, while the presentation of the Olympic flag, the playing of the Olympic anthem, and the lighting of the flame follow in the second stage. Consistent with the universal humanist ideals that have dominated the International Olympic Movement since its restoration under Pierre de Coubertin over one hundred years ago, the role of national symbols is significantly downplayed in the Closing Ceremonies. Only the anthems of Greece (the birthplace of the Games), the host nation, and the nation that will host the next Games are heard; additionally, the flags and name cards of each country are separated from the athletes and carried into the stadium by anonymous young people from the host country. The athletes then process in a rather unruly, ad hoc band, ordered in no particular fashion that, ever since it emerged in Melbourne in 1956, is said to offer a ritual expression of the bonds of friendship and mutual respect transcending differences of class, ethnicity, ideology, and language the athletes are supposed to have achieved during the festival. It is also thought to express the higher "humankindness" said to be necessary for all moral men and women as well as to display Coubertin's overriding conviction that patriotism and individual achievement are not only compatible with true internationalism but in fact indispensable to it.[22]

While individuals are obviously the actors who compose the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, their identity *as* individuals (the third level of identity expressed in Olympic ritual) is brought to the fore only when the results of the athletic contests themselves are confirmed and consecrated in the victory ceremonies. Here, the athlete's body itself serves as the primary symbolic capital (though the effect is enhanced by the medals, flowers, and an olive branch cut from the grove of Zeus at Archiaia Olympia presented by a high-ranking member of the International Olympic Committee) representing the best and the brightest individual among "us," the highest exemplar of the species known as human being. This victory ceremony in itself is so well known and enacted across nations, continents, and cultures that MacAloon considers it alone "the object of a genuinely global popular culture" (1988b).

Though I have left out many details along the way (most notably, the liminal "rites of passage" that mark and define Olympic ceremony and festival from "ordinary life"), this description captures and conveys what MacAloon calls the "normative exegesis" of Olympic symbology (1984, 1988b) that can be distilled from official Olympic protocol and broadly confirmed by observation and the experience of participants, athletes, officials, and spectators alike. What is significant about all of this, in the context of the Smith and Carlos demonstration and this study as a whole, is what is missing. Olympic symbology provides no formal space for representing various nonnational social categories such as race, religion, region, ethnicity, or gender, the collective identities and social solidarities that for many Olympic participants define most fundamentally who they are, the very essence of their being. It is precisely in the face of this tripartiad ritual structure that Smith and Carlos—whose identity as black Americans constituted their foremost political and existential preoccupations—were confronted with a challenge, that of interjecting their own blackness into a ceremonial system that (not unlike classical, color-blind liberal democratic ideology) quite literally had no place for them.

The Structure—and Power—of Smith and Carlos's Demonstration

Before we go into how Smith and Carlos were able to maneuver within and around—or, to be more precise, directly through—the powerful constraints imposed by this ceremonial system, let us first consider the victory-stand experience of another 1968 Olympic champion, Dick Fosbury, the American who revolutionized the high jump that year with his backward leap—now known as the "Fosbury flop"—over the bar.[23]

Again, this case is the product of John MacAloon's extensive scholarly engagement with the Olympic Games and Olympic ritual in particular. It comes from an interview he conducted with the high jumper in the 1970s. After Fosbury recounted how he felt while jumping ("his sense of absolute risk and absolute control . . . and the certain though unspeakable knowledge that he would prevail"), MacAloon asked Fosbury to describe his victory-ceremony experience. Fosbury's initial responses are what any casual observer would probably expect. He talked about getting "really emotional" and nearly crying, about family and friends who had helped him to get there, and about all of the different emotions that "surged in waves" through his body (1988b, pp. 288–289).

According to MacAloon's careful report of the exchange (which I am forced to condense unmercifully), Fosbury continued, struggling to account for the powerful emotions he had "never experienced before," only to stop and abruptly change the subject moments after he had recalled welcoming some sort of "patriotic feeling." When he returned to the matter a bit later, it was to insist—quite incongruously—that he "didn't need the victory ceremony at all"; that he had not appreciated being put "on a pedestal," had not wanted to be a "role model" or a "hero," and felt like he had been forced to serve as a vessel for something foreign to himself (1988b, p. 289). Fosbury clearly detested being a symbol of any kind. But it became clear moments later that there was something quite specific, quite personal about his distaste for the victory ceremony:

> Being a college student at that time, I was against everything the government was doing as far as Viet Nam and as far as resisting any kind of protest the people were doing legitimately. So I was really against the United States government and so I really felt kind of anti-patriotic. And then I go to the Olympic Games and they play the anthem and I get this overwhelming feeling and it was pretty confusing. I couldn't believe what was happening. I guess it didn't make any sense to me. Maybe I did feel proud to be an American and proud to be from Oregon and proud to be representing my friends and different people from my hometown, but at the same time I didn't respect the government. (1988b, p. 290)

Fosbury's remarks clearly highlight the tensions and contradictions between nationalism, patriotism, and the state, and an individual's sense of self and his (or her) collective commitments contained in the victory-stand ritual. Above all else, Fosbury's account (which, in spite of MacAloon's efforts to the contrary, remains outside the domain of either public or scholarly knowledge about the rite) highlights the compelling and

unyielding structure of the victory-stand ritual, as well as the demands and pressures it can put upon individuals whose personal sense of self is not fully satisfied or properly expressed in the classic Olympic triad of individual, national, and global identities.

If Fosbury found himself caught up in these contradictions and confusions, unable to express them then and still pressed to even begin to understand them many years later, it might seem easier for athletes with intense or even overwhelming loyalties to religion, race, region, or politics to downplay the ceremony, laugh it off, or simply avoid it altogether. And, in fact, prior to the 1968 Games one of the protest possibilities entertained by Smith, Carlos, and their colleagues in the OPHR (strongly endorsed by some, as we shall see) was to simply boycott Olympic ceremonies—the victory rite in particular—altogether. Four years later in Munich, in fact, two of Smith and Carlos's friends and teammates, Vincent Matthews and Wayne Collett, enacted the symbolic equivalent, standing casually during the anthem, at one point twirling their medals on their fingers. Obviously Smith and Carlos did nothing of the sort. Quite the contrary, they chose to remain squarely within the confines of the ritual ceremony. But rather than giving themselves fully over to its conventional structure and implied sociological meanings, they tried—by the force of a logic they may not have been able to articulate in any other way—to reshape its symbols and sociologics into a meaningful expression of their own racially inflected sense of self and social solidarity.

Given their social interests and the established symbolic structure and sociological function of Olympic ritual, MacAloon (1988b) argues in what has been one of the only sustained intellectual commentaries on the episode, Smith and Carlos's actions could not have been choreographed and performed more perfectly. Precisely as the flag rose, the anthem began and the words "Oh say can you see / by the dawn's early light / what so proudly we hailed" resonated silently in the hearts and minds of American spectators, these two black athletes bowed their heads and fixed their eyes on the ground, refusing—in stark symbolic opposition—to "see" or "proudly hail" the nation they were supposed to represent. By rejecting the ritual celebration of a national identity they could not unconditionally accept, denying what and when the "script" of the ritual called for them to affirm, they recast the ceremony to function in a way that it was surely not intended, flipping it upside down; denying, surely not honoring, the integrity of their native United States.

Theirs was not simply an expression of negation or opposition, however. Having countermanded the symbols upon which the ritual usually depended, Smith and Carlos had created what MacAloon (1988b, p. 287)

describes as a "sudden symbolic void." This void allowed them to draw the spotlight onto themselves and the clothing they wore, the "new" symbols of the ritual: clenched fists for unity and power; "human rights" patches covering their U.S. emblems; black stocking feet for black poverty and the myth of black economic progress through sport; a black scarf for black pride and tribal beads to pay homage to their own African heritage; and, perhaps most simply of all, their own black bodies. Introducing these new, more appropriate symbols at *exactly* the right time, Smith and Carlos co-opted and supercharged the Olympic victory ritual—"hot-wired" it, as MacAloon has put it—to send a solemn and powerful message to Americans and the world that attention and honor should be directed away from mainstream America, deflected even away from their personal selves and redirected instead toward the problems of race in the United States.

Rarely is human expression as focused, elegant, and eloquent as Smith and Carlos's was that day. Whatever else we discover about their politics, personal lives, and ideological commitments, this gesture must be recognized, as John MacAloon has suggested (1988b, p. 288), as an act of inspiration, passion, and originality, of sheer expressive genius—truly, by these standards or any others, a work of art.

Agency and Understanding in the Performance

To speak of this performance as a work of art is, of course, to ascribe considerable critical and creative capacity to Smith and Carlos themselves. It is a degree of agency and intention that has regularly been minimized or denied ever since. For example, for many years highly placed USOC officials whispered that Smith and Carlos were "put up to" the protest by an American newsmagazine in search of a cover story. While this charge (leveled against *Newsweek* and its longtime sports reporter Pete Axthelm) has long since been denied and dismissed, a great deal of prevailing wisdom attributes the demonstration not to Smith and Carlos but to the lead organizer and spokesperson of the Olympic Project for Human Rights, Harry Edwards. To this day, their Olympic sprint coach Stan Wright insists that "Smith and Carlos didn't plan the protest by themselves. I think Harry Edwards exploited [them] and used them for his own movement."[24] Historian Donald Spivey (1984) reports that the black boycott movement was "practically a one-man show," a "virtual one-man crusade," kept alive only by Edwards, who, during the final days before the Games, "could be found working out of the back of his rented van near the Olympic Village" urging prospective spectators not to attend (pp. 245, 248).

Edwards himself has done little to dispel these impressions. As he told a magazine reporter in 1993, "If I am remembered for nothing else, I want to be remembered for 1968. . . . Of all the things on my resume . . . the thing that's most important to me is the thing I have not put on [it]: my role in organizing the Olympic Project for Human Rights in 1967 and 1968."[25] Yet a huge portion of Edwards's substantial resume has been predicated directly on his role in these events. His first major work, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (1969), recounts the 1968 demonstration and the protest organization behind it: both the back cover and the foreword describe Edwards as "the architect of the rebellion." Most of his subsequent writings (which are still recognized among the authorial voices of the American sociology of sport), furthermore, seem to be either informed by or directly predicated upon these experiences (cf. Edwards 1979, 1980), and few of his numerous public appearances fail to mention them as one of his major accomplishments (Leonard 1998). Even his legendary tenure battle at the University of California, Berkeley, in the 1970s (which Edwards won only after the state governor intervened on his behalf over and above the objections of his department, the Academic Senate, and the Office of the President) seems to have been impacted decisively by his activism in and around sport.

I don't want to be misunderstood here. Edwards is a central figure in all of the pages that follow. As a young sociology instructor Edwards played a crucial and indispensable role in organizing and sustaining the OPHR, as well as in educating African Americans like Smith and Carlos about the racial injustices they experienced as athletes and in society as a whole. In addition, it is clear that Edwards was central to the discussions of how the athletes would express these discontents, and *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* has been the standard source of information on 1968 Olympic protest activities all the years since. Perhaps most important of all, Edwards led the movement for racial justice in and around sport in the aftermath of the Mexico City Games and helped to transform the academic subdiscipline of sport sociology in the process. But none of this should be confused with Smith and Carlos's victory-stand demonstration. There is no indication in the historical record that Edwards (or anyone else, for that matter) formulated any strategy resembling the one these two athletes put into action on October 16, 1968. The protests suggested by Edwards and his OPHR to politically conscious black athletes (such as wearing black armbands or socks) were vague and halfhearted at best. Unable to settle upon a mutually agreeable gesture prior to the Games, in fact, activist-minded athletes had resolved simply to do their own protest "thing" at the Games (much to Harry Edwards's disappointment, as I will discuss in chapter 5).

And if it is true, as Edwards would later write, that they agreed that the victory-stand ceremonies would be the focal point of the protests, it is also evident that his idea at the time was to boycott the rite entirely. Thus, sitting in the stands that day even fellow teammates and friends such as Vincent Matthews would be "shocked" by "the spontaneity of [Smith and Carlos's] protest." According to Matthews, there had been "little evidence until then that any form of protest might be forthcoming" and "it wasn't until [Smith and Carlos] were under the stadium waiting for the ceremony that they decided what to do" (Matthews with Admur 1974, p. 197).[26]

Many years later, speaking publicly on the topic for the first time since 1968, Smith described the difficult situation he and his teammates faced in Mexico City as they searched for some kind of a gesture to express their frustrations and discontent. "It had to be silent—to solve the language problem—strong, prayful and imposing. It kind of makes me want to cry when I think about it now. I cherish life so much that what I did couldn't be militant, not violent." Smith went on to recall how his sisters cringed at his activism even before the Olympic Games because they didn't want him to embarrass the family by describing how poor they were. But, as he saw it, they were poor and this fact alone was nothing to be ashamed of—which is why still today Smith is convinced they did the right thing: "[W]e had to be heard, forcefully heard, because we represented what others didn't want to believe" (Moore 1991a, p. 72).

Again, MacAloon's structural analysis of the victory-stand ritual should help us understand how—by calling attention to their own black bodies in a space where their blackness was otherwise seen but not seen—Smith and Carlos succeeded in "forcing" those who may not have "wanted to believe" what they had to say about the problems of American race relations at least to be confronted with some representation of them. But there was also more to it than this. In working *through* sport (or, to be more precise, through the ceremonial system of the Olympic Games, one of sport's most cherished and sacred expressive venues), rather than protesting *against* it (as the symbolic logic of a boycott would have had it), Smith and Carlos challenged an institutional-symbolic system that had made great claims about being a positive, progressive force for African Americans to explicitly recognize and represent race, to finally—and formally—live up to its claims. This is not to say that Smith and Carlos consciously planned the demonstration symbolic-detail-by-symbolic-detail, nor to claim that they would have been able to situate it in the comprehensive analytical context MacAloon provides. But it is to insist that Smith and Carlos's performance was founded on—indeed literally embodied—an exceptionally deep and comprehensive *understanding* of the sociological elements of

Olympic ritual and the potential for political expression also made possible by what was simply taken for granted and by what was left out altogether.[27]

Even so, the problem remains that over the years the two athletes—intense rivals then and never really friends—have offered different versions of the story.[28] On the one hand, Smith claims he "knew what [he] would do" a few days before the race and waited to tell Carlos until afterward because the two athletes were, after all, competitors as well as teammates. Carlos, for his part, says he suggested some sort of a gesture immediately prior to the race to Smith, who then agreed to go along. Indeed, in an interview with one of my research assistants on this project, Carlos called Smith's recollections "imaginative," saying he had "let" Smith win the race because his priority was to make a nonviolent demonstration, insisting that one day "we'll know the real truth; if I have to live to wait for that day to come, I will."[29]

But Carlos's claims are both dubious and vague. For one thing, it was Smith who produced the gloves that he and Carlos wore on the victory stand. His wife and the wife of another teammate had bought them a day earlier after watching black teammate and 100-meter champion Jimmy Hines refuse to shake hands with IOC President Avery Brundage, who presided over his gold medal ceremony. No one, as far as I am aware, has ever disputed this. Second, existing video footage makes it clear that Smith took the lead both in stepping onto the podium as well as in initiating the clenched-fist gesture. At least one psychologist, in fact, claimed that the bend in Carlos's arm (clearly discernible in photographs) indicates that he was somewhat less certain of his cause than Smith, whose arm is clearly ramrod straight.[30] More telling, perhaps, is that Smith offered a concentrated and coherent explanation of the protest's symbolism immediately following the ceremony, while Carlos was only able to (re)produce a familiar, if inflammatory, political rhetoric.[31] Moreover, ever since he first spoke out in 1991, Smith's recollections (incorporated above) have proven powerful, consistent, and compelling. It is for all these reasons that I consider Smith the primary architect of the demonstration and why I followed his account of the exchange leading up to the demonstration in the opening pages of this work.

In a certain sense, of course, this attention to the details of attribution may seem to succumb to fundamentally asociological (if not simply trivial) fascinations with individual intention, authenticity, and creative genius that are precisely the opposite of the expressed intent of this narrative. One reason I have spent so much energy on attribution is that any commentary that minimizes Smith's (and Carlos's) role in the

demonstration—whether intended to absolve them of responsibility or take credit away from them—simply plays upon and reproduces insidious cultural stereotypes about athletes and African Americans being incapable of creative or intelligent labor. But there is much more to it than simply giving credit where credit is due. For credit, in this case, has a great deal to do with the meaning and significance bound up with this image, the very lessons about race, sport, and culture in the United States that it has to teach and we have to learn.

Following the account originally offered by Harry Edwards in *Revolt,* most commentators in the world of sport scholarship have highlighted the role of the organizing committee Edwards created and directed for the purposes of promoting an Olympic boycott (he called it the Olympic Committee for Human Rights, the OCHR) and its various protest activities in the year leading up to the Games as a way to explain the demonstration and its impacts.[32] More important, they have interpreted this entire constellation of sport-based protest activities—Smith and Carlos's dramatic stand most of all—as dictated by and directed against racism and discrimination in the world of sport itself. While there is truth in such interpretations (Smith and Carlos were certainly part of a movement and an organization that was much larger than them), it is not the whole truth. What such interpretations miss is that Smith and Carlos's demonstration carried racial meaning and significance far beyond the world of sport and its particular racial problems. Even at the level of motive and intent, this vision is misleading and misinformed. As we shall see in the next chapter, when Smith and his colleagues initially put forward the idea of race-based Olympic protest, they were careful *not* to criticize sport on racial grounds. Their hope was to use the Olympic Games to spotlight their concerns about race and racism in the United States broadly conceived.

Whether cause or consequence, these narrow, one-sided interpretations are closely connected with the muddled theorizing that has marked the conventional sociology of sport in the United States ever since. The primary program of this work has been to demonstrate that dominant sociopolitical structures and relationships—especially in the particular social categories of race and gender—tend *not* to be challenged and overcome in the sports world but instead are maintained and reproduced there. To be sure, these critiques initially provided a much-needed deconstruction of the sport-as-positive-social-force discourse that has been dominant to the point of being oppressive in the Western world. Yet, these formulations—grounded, as they tend to be, in conventional functionalist and reductionist theories of cultural domination, mystification, and/or hegemony—have simply exchanged one kind of totalization for another. They have thus failed to grasp the complex ways in which sport (not to mention popular culture more generally) is bound up with the constitution, reproduction, transformation, and, in some cases, contestation of racial order in societies organized according to liberal democratic principles.

Demonstrating this crucial and complicated vision is, of course, one of the primary objectives of this book.[33] It is also what brings us back, once again, to the particular understanding of sport and its problematic relationship to race that Carlos and especially Smith intuitively grasped and literally embodied on the victory stand in Mexico City. What is it, then, that they understood so well? What insight about sport and its significance for race was embodied in their victory-stand demonstration?

The answer to this question is complicated by the fact that it was not at all clear what import, if any, their demonstration was intended to have for concrete, political action. Even the interpretations they offered to the international media served to perpetuate rather than clarify its practical implications. If, for example, they had utilized a gesture many recognized as a "black power salute," then it was also the case that, as I alluded to earlier, Smith had refused to name it as such: the "power in black America" and "an arch of unity and power" was as close as he came, phrases he immediately qualified by referring also to the "regaining of black dignity." Along these same lines, it is hard to reconcile the radical black power nationalism associated with the clenched fist salute with the bowed heads that were also a part of the demonstration, especially when viewed through the lens of Christian iconography as a sign of submission and powerlessness. Thus, the gesture was full of paradox and ambiguity: at once subversive and respectful, silent but resounding, seemingly empty of political content, on the one hand, yet packed with meaning and significance on the other.

In many cases, such opacity would be the mark of confusion, expressive inefficiency, or a more basic indecisiveness. But my reading in this instance is quite the opposite. I believe that this very ambiguity constitutes the final portion of brilliance and meaning contained in their gesture. Standing on the victory stand with clenched fists jutting powerfully over silently bowed heads, Smith and Carlos captured, in a single and singularly powerful gesture, the complicated, controversial, and contradictory constellation of racial experiences, ideologies, and political programs swirling around them, in sport and in society at large and in the relations between sport and society. They made race a problem that could not be dismissed or avoided. And, in capturing, without fully commenting upon, the problematic nature of race both in and outside of sport, Smith and

Carlos opened a unique symbolic space for dialogue and debate about these issues. More than that, given the intrigue and emotion their gesture typically generates, they virtually obligated people—especially sports fans and historians and social scientists like myself—to recognize and make sense of all of this for themselves.

And so it was in the twenty-odd years that followed. Tommie Smith's adamant refusal to speak on public record about the gesture can and should be read, as John MacAloon insisted (unpublished manuscript), as an extension of that same demonstration, a protracted, personal, and highly successful effort to "force" Americans to confront the issues of race, sport, and the relationships between them that meant so much to him.

Ever since Smith's version of the story was made part of the public record by *Sports Illustrated* in 1991, much of the intrigue and controversy surrounding the demonstration seems to have dissipated. I am not convinced that this development has been wholly positive, especially given the straightforward, civil rights frame that now seems to surround the story. Indeed, I daresay it is time for us to return to this remarkable episode, to reexamine the social and cultural structures that endow it with meaning and the historical forces that help us understand how our memories and perceptions of it have shifted and changed over time. The drama of Smith and Carlos's victory-stand gesture deserves and demands nothing less.

PART ONE

The Movement, 1967–1968

> He didn't know where he was going, but he knew he had to run, because it was rapidly making little sense and he knew if he was still for a minute to digest everything he would have to give up. . . . He had to run, search, look, fight—but more than anything, not give up.
>
> —Barry Beckham, *Runner Mack* (1972)