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Source: *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Spring 2010), pp. 119-137

Published by: University of Illinois Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jsporthistory.37.1.119>

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Photographs, Materiality and Sport History: Peter Norman and the 1968 Mexico City Black Power Salute

GARY OSMOND[†]

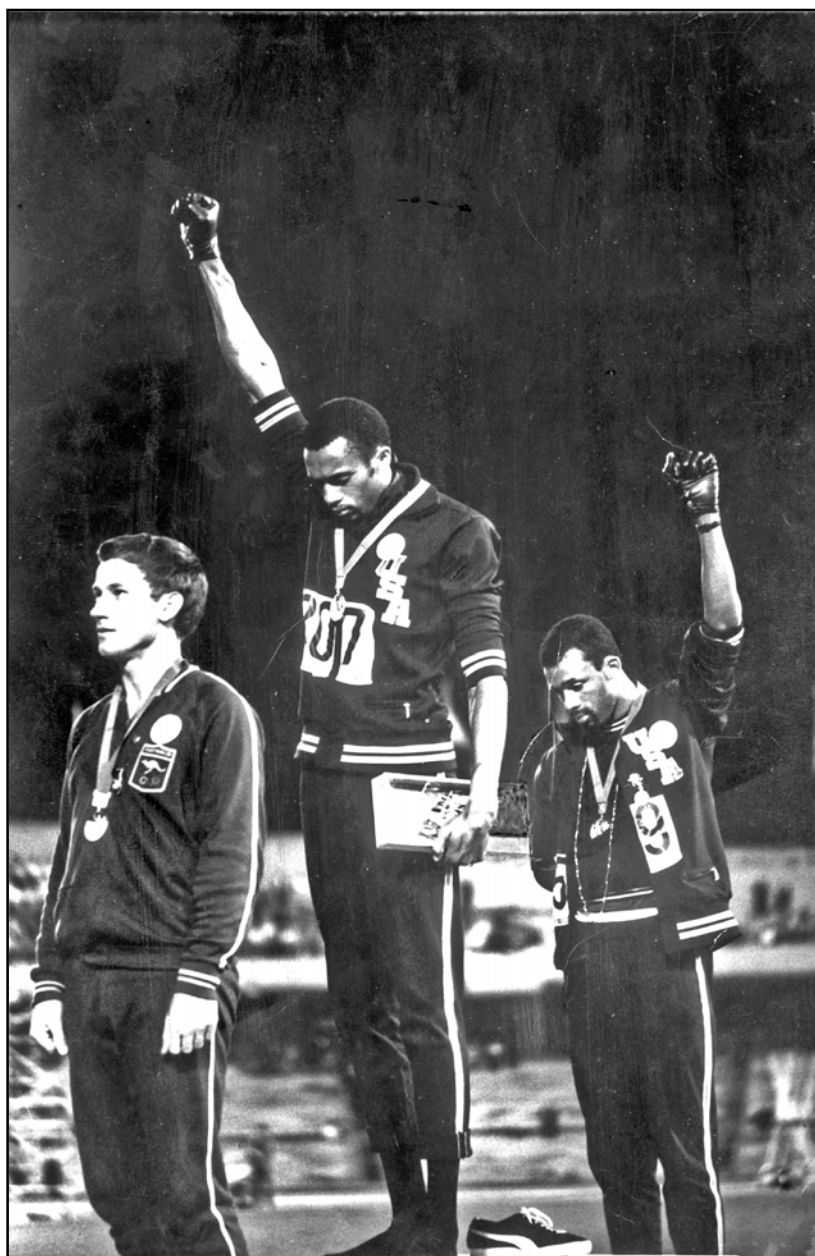
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This article considers the ways in which Australian athlete Peter Norman is presented and represented through the famous photograph of the 1968 Mexico City Olympic games “Black Power” salute. Photographic images are not simple, neutral, or objective records of the past; various material acts influence and affect the ways images are interpreted and read. This article will explore the materiality of the 1968 photograph with particular reference to Peter Norman, who is at different times, and in varying ways, both obscured and emphasized. A materiality approach contributes to understandings of the potential importance of photographs as sources. Most typically, photographs have been used by sport historians as decorative complements to verbal text. Borrowing from recent theoretical work on photographic materiality, by anthropologists and geographers in particular, this article sees photographs as supplementary to the written word, and offering new insights into how knowledge about the past is produced.

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Norman, Smith, and Carlos on the medal dais, Mexico City, 1968. Photograph by John Dominis. COURTESY OF TIME&LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES.

[T]he photographic act is re-enacted with each editorial choice, reproduction and viewing. It coalesces our recollections into a virtual gallery distributed across the neural networks of millions of minds, and in the myriad books, films and pictures that succeed the fatal moment when the shutter clicks and photo-sensitive platelets react to light.

PATRICK HAGOPIAN¹

The photograph of the 200 meters medal ceremony is probably one of the most reproduced images in the history of sports. But what about the third athlete in the photo, Peter Norman, the Australian silver medalist?

CHARLES KORR²

THE PHOTOGRAPH OF TOMMIE SMITH, JOHN CARLOS, AND PETER NORMAN on the medal dais at Mexico City is undoubtedly one of the world's most famous and enduring sports images. Snapped by *Life* magazine staffer and six-time Olympic photographer, John Dominis (1921-), it has been widely reproduced over the past forty-two years (see opposite). In 2003, *Life* magazine publishers included it in its anthology of one hundred photographs that changed the world.³ The image has become illustratively central to the event itself, yet as sociologist Douglas Hartmann observes in his book *Race, Culture and the Revolt of the Black Athlete* (2003), it is typically published "without any critical commentary or explanation, as if its significance were wholly self-sufficient or self-evident, a picture worth literally a thousand words."⁴ Its recognizability and evocative potency has led to its reproduction in myriad ways and places, typically in relation to the Civil Rights movement or 1960s American history but often divorced from its original context or meaning except as a point of reference. Tommie Smith, in his recent autobiography, comments on the proliferation of replica images, "on T-shirts, on posters, in works of art, on murals, on magazines and in books, and on album covers."⁵ Through this farrago of appearances, Hartmann argues, the image has assumed a "prominence and power as an object of meaning and collective memory."⁶

This article examines how these multiple appearances of the 1968 photograph contribute to the manufacture of meanings. Conceptually, it engages with materiality, a methodological tool with which photographs are evaluated as objects. Anthropologists Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart argue that the "material and presentational forms and uses to which [images] are put are central to the function of a photograph as a socially salient object."⁷ Acknowledging the well-recognized idea that "a single change in context can drastically alter the meaning of an 'objective' image," photographic materiality focuses on "acts upon photographs" such as the deployment of images, their manipulation at various stages of production and reproduction, and the context of encounter.⁸ Unlike conventional approaches to photographs, which emphasize their "stillness" or ability to capture and preserve a scene, a feeling, or a symbolic moment, materiality emphasizes change.⁹ Through their use, manipulation, and changing presentation context, photographs change and with them their meanings change. The 1968 protest salute image confirms this. While the image has annealed in collective memory, in its reproduction and uses there are in fact various versions and iterations with differing emphases.

Of the many possible versions and emphases in reproduction, this article focuses on the “exposure” of Peter Norman. In respect to the famous image, he is the athlete who does not salute, but of course there are other facets of Norman which could be explored via the picture. These include his athletic performance and silver-medal win, his friendship with Smith and Carlos, his complicity in the protest, alternating constructions of that event as an Olympic disgrace and as a human-rights milestone, and narratives about race, nationality, and masculinity. From a materiality perspective on the photograph, however, Norman is significant because he is the disappearing man, one who is as important for being cut out of the scene as he is for being included. The uses and abuses of Norman highlight the benefits of materiality as an approach to understanding how photographic meanings are constructed.

Section one addresses materiality from an epistemological and methodological perspective. What new opportunities does materiality present to historians for using photographs as sources? How can the 1968 image be viewed as a material object as well as a visual image, and what are the implications of this? The second section will address the 1968 image directly, examining how it has been used and why. How do the material uses of the stock image tell different stories about Peter Norman and create different meanings? This section will highlight Norman’s trajectory via the photograph from initial visibility and inclusion in the 1968 story, to invisibility and exclusion, and to renewed interest in his identity. This tension between inclusion and exclusion is symbolized in a recently unveiled statue in California that commemorates the event, itself a material act on the photograph in the form of emulation and physical re-creation.

Handling Materiality: Photographs as Objects

Photography is “a central agent in the representation of sports and sports participants.”¹⁰ Sport photographs are everywhere, and every aspect of sport has been represented through the camera lens: from “portraits of players, athletes and administrators” to “equipment, uniforms, spectators and settings for events and incidents.”¹¹ Sport historians seek photographic records of individuals to form a sense of their personality through their appearance; forensically scrutinize images of material vestiges such as equipment, stadia, and uniforms to dissect their structure and physical nature; and pore over action shots of sporting moments to enliven, supplement, or challenge understandings of written representations of the same events. The photograph, when understood as “something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask,” perhaps helps to confirm the very existence of the past.¹² Epistemologically, photographs are vital to the ways we come to know the past, or at least the past since the invention of the camera in the mid nineteenth century.

Despite their ubiquity, subject range, and ascribed value, photographs are underexploited as sources by historians.¹³ Sport historians are no exception, typically utilizing images in limited ways as representations, or voices, of the past.¹⁴ They are published mainly as illustration, decoration, or adornment to written texts, sometimes discussed in varying degree of detail but often used gratuitously, as a visual gift to the reader, without explanation.¹⁵ As cited at the beginning of this article, Hartmann noted this trend in the case of the 1968 image.

There are various reasons for the limited use of photographs. First, it is linked to the epistemological primacy given to primary, written, documents in the production of history and the premium value ascribed to the “professionally approved referential artefact” such as books, monographs, refereed articles and dissertations.¹⁶ Second, and related to this, are suspicions about photographic reliability, accuracy, and depth that paradoxically run counter to ontological faith in their “beguiling realism.”¹⁷ Third is “our relative inexperience in using them historically:” most historians are not trained to assess photographs beyond veracity of content and representation of the actual and real.¹⁸ New theoretical and methodological “languages” and skills are required to expand our engagement with many types of sources, including photographs.¹⁹ Finally, using photographs presents logistical problems for historians that include copyright, reproduction quality, costs, and, less surmountable, the ability to incorporate more than a handful of images in an academic study such as a journal article.

How then can we expand our critical and creative engagement with photographs as sources beyond simply using *more* of them? How can we use images as “question marks” to “set in motion a procession of speculations,” as urged by historian Tessa Morris-Suzuki?²⁰ Australian photographer Tracey Moffat, a non-historian, opens one avenue for consideration through an exhibition of the emotional responses of fourth-place getters at the 2000 Sydney Olympic games that explores the meanings of success and failure in sport.²¹ Sport history yields some more examples. John Bale, for instance, has questioned the stability of photographs in an analysis of colonial racial discourses around images of Rwandan “jumpers,” and Thierry Terret has analyzed representations of race and gender in a popular French sporting magazine.²² And, while not addressing photographs, Michael Oriard has explored the role of illustrations in “creating football” as a spectacle in the U.S. popular press.²³ Other approaches to the study of photographs raised in the literature, which are beyond the scope of this article, include semiotics, iconography, iconology, psychoanalysis, and affect.²⁴

What these examples indicate is that there are many possible ways to read photographs. In the case of the 1968 image, the most obvious approach is as a symbol of the Civil Rights struggles of its era.²⁵ Semiotically, it draws attention to the “simple, elegant and individualistic gesture” of Smith and Carlos and highlights their bodies as “canvases of representation,” symbolism and signification.²⁶ Affect, or the study of emotional impact, could constitute another approach and might be especially pertinent in studying the emotive appeal of the salute to African-American, or Civil Rights, activists.²⁷ Like affect, materiality constitutes another way to address the social contexts in which the image is encountered and the impact of these contexts on meanings.

In sport history, the concept of materiality has guided a previous analysis of little-known photographs of Solomon Islander divers.²⁸ The 1968 image offers new possibilities to develop those ideas because it is singular, recognized, recognizable, and emotionally laden. In turn, materiality offers a useful lens into this image because it has been so widely manipulated, published, and seen. The image has become an object, become objectified, and, like any object, has acquired its own cultural currency through transfer and exchange.

These qualities form the core of materiality, which approaches any photograph as a “three-dimensional thing, not only a two-dimensional image” and emphasizes their role as

socially salient objects.²⁹ The social salience of photographs is derived less from their content, which remains important, but through their usage. American Studies scholar Patrick Hagopian argues:

The photographic act does not end with the tripping of the shutter and the exposure of the film; nor with the creation of the image in the processing lab. Nor does it end with the first publication of the photograph. The photographic act is mirrored to infinity with each new publication of the photograph and each new viewing.³⁰

This “mirroring to infinity” raises several questions. What is done to photographs? Where are they deployed? How and where are they encountered? What responses are engendered through these circumstances of encounter? These are central issues to a materiality approach, which can address technical issues of creation and production; editorial, artistic, and curatorial decisions around publication, distribution, storage, cataloguing, and display; circumstances of recycling and reuse; and oral, written, and physical acts on the image upon encounter. Materiality assumes many guises and forms, but its ultimate importance lies in the ways that it creates meanings.

Meanings of photographs derive from a number of factors. The 1968 image, as noted separately by Tommie Smith and by sports journalist Robert Lipsyte, acquires power from its temporal and political context.³¹ It captures a seminal and symbolic moment, and it could be argued that its power derives from the gesture and the moment itself. Seen this way, the image is simply a “vessel of memory,” passively doing political, historical, and memory work as a portal through which memories and emotions can be accessed.³² This is photography as snapshot, a frozen piece of time, a record of the past. What materiality offers is an alternative insight into photographs as “technologies of memory,”³³ an approach that emphasizes their malleable, organic, and active qualities and acknowledges that images can be about “empowerment, renewal and contestation” as well as simply “nostalgia and pastness.”³⁴ Rather than simply reflect memories, photographs create memories and meanings through the material circumstances in which they are embedded and encountered. While a photograph “may fix an event temporally, the meaning of that image is constantly subject to contextual shifts.”³⁵ Photographic context shapes viewers’ responses, reception, and reactions and through that process influences meanings. Epistemologically, this challenges the traditional separation of form and content by emphasizing how image content is not neutral and separate but rather contingent upon presentation mode or form.³⁶ Methodologically, materiality offers opportunities to revisit famous images such as “1968” to ask how, and in what ways, uses of photographs tell stories and create meanings independently of content and events depicted.

Viewing Norman: Running, Flagging, and Reviving

Three broad phases can be identified in representations of Norman via the 1968 photograph over the past forty years—remembrance, omission, and resurrection. These are not strictly chronological, although there is a rough temporal pattern in which initial interest in Norman fades before he is reinserted into the picture, both figuratively and literally. Geographic patterns are also evident, with Norman receiving greater attention on the whole in Australia than in the U.S. and elsewhere. This research relies heavily on

Australian uses of the image: no doubt a comprehensive international search for uses of the image and representations of Norman in those reproductions would yield different accounts. The purpose, however, is not to canvass every representation but to consider how various material uses of the photograph operate to tell stories about or without Norman.

While the focus is less on Norman per se than on photographic materiality, he does require some introduction. Peter George Norman (June 15, 1942 – October 3, 2006) was a 200-meters specialist who competed for Australia in three British Empire and Commonwealth Games from 1962 to 1970 as well as the Mexico City Olympic games, and held the Australian national 200-meters title for five consecutive years from 1966. His medal-winning time in Mexico City, 20.06 seconds, remains the Australian national record. He was a physical education teacher by profession and became active in sport administration, media, and the Olympic movement after his retirement from elite-level athletics.³⁷ Ultimately, however, it is less Norman the man but more Norman as he appears in the image that is important to this project. There is an apparent ambiguity about his presence in the picture—the image alone does not tell the viewer if he is aware of the protest, if he resists, or if he is somehow complicit. Decisions about the extent to which he is integral to the scene determine whether, how, and in what ways he is included in various reproductions. Race also plays a role: he is white, which at times influences how he is represented. Furthermore, Norman is Australian, and as silver medalist defeated the American athlete Carlos. In the Australian context at least, this figured in his representation. This section considers these various factors in the changing photographic representations of Norman.

Recognition: Placing Norman in the Picture

In their work on the materiality of magazine images, Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins have identified the “magazine’s gaze” as the mediating processes by which some portion of the photographer’s perspective is chosen for use and emphasis. Three significant aspects of this can be identified and extrapolated from magazines to newspapers: captions, positioning, and accompanying text.³⁸ These factors are important because images “seldom tell us much about causes or effects” without a narrated script.³⁹ The “way we identify with and interpret photographs is shaped by the context in which the image is seen: by the pictures and text which surround it.”⁴⁰ Captions, as one part of the interpretive “script,” “serve to guide the reader or suggest one of several possible meanings.”⁴¹ Captions, positioning, and accompanying text are material acts upon the photograph that influence meaning. In the case of newspapers, these acts “work as a way of imposing form on the booming, buzzing confusion of the day’s events” and indicate how time—a fourth dimension to photographs as objects—contributes to meanings.⁴² This section is concerned with how the 1968 salute image was positioned, captioned, and contextualized with text and other images in initial Australian press coverage in ways that represented Norman as an involved participant.

Work by historian Amy Bass in her 2002 book, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete*, guides this specific approach to examining Australian newspapers. Bass closely examines the original 1968 reportage of the event in the American press, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, *New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, and the *San Jose Mercury News*, to argue that these newspapers

typically accompanied a photograph of the salute protest with images of Smith winning the race in order to juxtapose politics and performance.⁴³ While the protest image used was the same in each newspaper, its positioning and accompanying headlines, stories and other photographs—the newspaper’s gaze—gave differing emphases to “the day of *sports* and the day of *sport politics*.”⁴⁴ For instance, while the *Chicago Tribune* relegated the photo and protest story to secondary status behind the gold-medal wins that day of Smith and pole-vaulter Bob Seagren, the *New York Post* focused on the political significance of the protest action.⁴⁵

While the experience of the photograph in American press coverage reflects national, regional, and local readerships, demographics, and racial politics, Bass’s identification of a distinction between politics and performance in presentations of the 1968 photograph is useful in approaching an Australian study. Her findings apply to the three Australian newspapers examined here: the *Melbourne Age*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and the *Australian*. As in the U.S., the protest image was used extensively in page-one coverage, and the newspaper’s gaze made clear distinctions between the sporting performance and sport politics. This was done in different ways by the newspapers involved, illustrating the complex interrelationship that exists between the photograph and the headlines, captions, and stories.

The *Age*, Melbourne’s daily broadsheet, prioritized the sport politics in its breaking story on October 18, 1968, by publishing the protest photograph on page one within a story headlined “Negroes in protest at Games.” Its opening paragraph included Norman in the protest: “Two angry American Negro athletes and an Australian sprinter, Peter Norman, today turned the Olympic Games into a political demonstration of equality for the American Negro.” Norman is not only complicit, but also central to the *Age*’s story, which is confirmed by the placement of a prominent, close-up shot of Norman directly above the protest image. The caption reads: “Peter Norman with the badge inscribed ‘Olympic Project for Human Rights.’” The story identifies Norman as a civil rights supporter and quotes him as follows:

I think most Australians would favor what I did. At least I hope they do. I became friends with Tommie [Smith] in Los Angeles in 1966 and when he was in Australia last year. I have followed his career politically right through and have been very interested in what he is doing. I believe in civil rights. Every man is born equal and should be treated as humans [*sic*]. I thought this was a good chance to have a white man on their side.⁴⁶

The protest image itself is cropped to emphasize the fist salute and Norman’s “Olympic Project for Human Rights” badge. Indeed, the entire front-page story focuses on the protest and on Norman’s role. His athletic performance itself, in winning silver for Australia, is relegated to page 25. The headline of that buried story, “Norman’s feat has to take back seat,” referred to the paper’s privileging of the politics angle as well as the overshadowing of his outstanding race by the breaking of three track-and-field world records that day.⁴⁷

The *Sydney Morning Herald* took a similar approach to the *Age* in positioning the protest image on its front page within a story emphasizing the politics of the event. The main headline “AUSTRALIAN MEDALLIST LENDS HIS SUPPORT” is contextualized by the drop headline “Black Power rears its head at Games.” Whereas the headlines and

story unambiguously implicate Norman in the protest, the photograph caption is more nuanced:

Australian sprinter Peter Norman stands impassively, as Negroes Tommie Smith (centre) and John Carlos raise black-gloved hands in the Black Power salute during the 200 metres medal ceremony. All three are wearing 'Olympic Project for Human Rights' badges on their left breasts.⁴⁸

The attribution of impassivity to Norman during the protest contrasts sharply with the headline and story emphasizing his commitment to civil rights and is perhaps aimed at softening angry responses from those readers opposed to such political action at the Games.

As with the *Age*, sporting performance is de-emphasized in the *Sydney Morning Herald's* front-page inclusion of the protest photograph and story, and instead appears on page 18. While relegated to the inside pages, this story nonetheless praises Norman's achievements. It contextualizes Norman's silver against the three track-and-field records set that day but is headlined "Australian gains silver medal in men's 200 metres" and includes a photograph of Norman closing on Carlos in the final stages of the race. The headline and shot of Norman in action, a close-up that can be read to emphasize gritty determination, may have also served to redeem Norman before any potential critics.

The *Australian*, a national newspaper, also published the protest image on its front page and emphasized the political protest. At the same time, it merged sport politics and sport performance in the image headline: "Black Power wins 200 metres." While the story ostensibly highlights "Black Power," the photograph caption promotes Norman's role:

Peter Norman, an Australian Salvation Army officer, wore a civil rights button on his tracksuit when receiving his silver medal after the Olympic 200 metres final. The Negro runners, Tommie Smith (U.S.), who won the race, and John Carlos, who came third are giving the Black Power salute.⁴⁹

The story headline confirmed Norman's complicity: "Australian joins racist [*sic*] protest." Unlike the stories in the *Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, this article infers correctly that Norman was partially motivated by a personal opposition to the White Australia Policy (WAP) of the Australian Government that racially discriminated against Indigenous Australians and other "non-whites." In hindsight, the connection made by Norman between the medal dais protest and the WAP, which was not fully abandoned until 1973, made his support and statements particularly courageous. In 1968, however, press reports linking Norman's support directly to an Australian domestic political agenda tainted the image. The tone of the article is subtly critical of Norman, suggesting for instance that his involvement in the demonstration "might have rubbed the lustre off his silver medal." In line with this, the headline of the sport story, located on page 20, announces his win with the ambiguously worded: "Norman hits out at Australian tracks after silver medal win." While acknowledging his performance, and commenting on the parlous state of Australian cinder tracks in comparison to American tartan ones, the headline manages to portray Norman as a malcontent.

In each of these cases, the "newspaper's gaze" gives meaning to the protest image via its placement, cropping, headlines, captions, and surrounding stories and images that guided readers in interpreting the photograph. Even the back-page sporting stories that lauded Norman's race, as in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, or that subtly undermined his character and performance, as in the *Australian*, contextualized how the image was read

and received. Whether this was a deliberate action on the part of the photographic editors, or editorial teams, is not known. In any case, given that intent and effect are not always linked, this is probably less important than the fact that choices made about the image served to place Norman “in the picture.”

Forgetting Norman: Cropping and Chopping

Initial American newspaper coverage of the 1968 event identified Norman and sometimes discussed his involvement in the protest. The *Los Angeles Times*, for example, described how Norman “stood in respectful attention” as Smith and Carlos raised their fists during the American national anthem.⁵⁰ The *New York Post* linked Norman directly to the protest through his wearing of the “Olympic Project for Human Rights” badge and quoted him explaining how he had come to be wearing it.⁵¹ The photograph itself, rather than Norman’s mere presence on the dais that day, made necessary his identification by name in captions and stories. The elaboration of Norman’s identity and involvement via the stories accompanying the photograph was a material act on the image that assigned him a role.

In the ensuing years, other material acts would occur on and to the image that would demote Norman’s importance, as will be discussed below. As the photograph gained symbolic racial capital, the story distilled to highlight the action of Smith and Carlos. Norman was not the only casualty. As historian Eric Zolov has argued, the Olympics themselves are “subsumed in this image as mere background text,” and Mexico as host country and city lacks representation anywhere in the photograph.⁵² For Mexico, the “telescoping” of the Games into a “single image of black-gloved defiance,” along with memories of the massacre of students prior to the opening ceremonies, erases the prior “shared sense of optimism” and appreciation of challenges faced by Mexico as the “first developing nation to host an Olympics.”⁵³

Along with Mexico, Norman became dispensable to the protest story. While Norman, as silver medalist, was nominally Number Two on the medal dais, in terms of the image he was distinctly Number Three from the beginning. In time, via the photograph and its uses, he would in various contexts effectively fade to merge with Number Four and the other non-medalists whose identities are largely unknown. This evaporation of memory occurred via physical cropping of various aspects of the picture. New digital photographic media with their potential for clever manipulation of images have spawned the word “photoshopping,” which presents various challenges for establishing the verisimilitude and meaning of images.⁵⁴ Cropping as one manipulative device long predates this new technology, however, and stands out as an obvious and powerful material act on photographs.⁵⁵ The 1968 photograph, as it concerns Norman, has been “photoshopped” in three ways: outright cropping, detail cropping, and caption cropping.

Outright cropping, or wholesale removal of aspects of an image, offers publishers a means of highlighting particular facets of a story and removing those aspects that they deem to be tangential to their perspective. Many published versions of the 1968 image removed the Olympic officials and assorted cameramen who fill the foreground. The London *Evening News*, in its breaking news story in 1968, removed both Norman and Carlos. Its image, simply of Smith, seems absurdly truncated today but at the time was likely designed to focus attention on the fist, which extends slightly beyond the photo margin

and into the headline space which blared: "GAMES ARE ROCKED BY BLACK POWER."⁵⁶ More frequently, however, it is Norman alone who is removed.

A cartoon based on the image, which appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* shortly after the episode, replaces Norman with Avery Brundage, the International Olympic Committee president, who holds an U.S. flag in one fist and shakes the other at Smith and Carlos.⁵⁷ Replacing Norman with Brundage allows the cartoonist to illustrate dramatically arguments about symbolic gestures and power relations in an American racial context. The cartoon also draws attention to the possibilities of emulation or inspiration as material acts on images, a theme that will be developed below, but for now the point is the way in which Norman is dispensable to the overall image when co-opted to a racial-politics agenda. This is well illustrated in a recent prominent example, the front cover of Bass's book, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle*. Here, Bass crops Norman altogether, although the gap to the left of Smith perhaps symbolically references him. By removing him, and by using a stark, dramatic, black background, the publisher highlights Bass's theme of racial struggle. This has also occurred in the Australian context, for example in a book about Australian Olympic gold medalists that summarizes highlights of each games. Reporting on 1968, historians Reet and Max Howell excised Norman completely from the photo.⁵⁸ These examples are not exceptional: as journalist Tim Blair has noted, Norman has been "cropped out from most of the thousands of newspaper images of the famous scene."⁵⁹

More common than outright cropping of Norman is selective culling of detail. A number of published images retain the three medalists but remove the rostrum, which indicates medal positions.⁶⁰ To those viewers familiar with Olympic medal ceremony protocols, this would not present a problem, but the majority of viewers cannot be presumed to know where Norman was placed. His silver-medal achievement is removed, and with it part of his identity. Even more significant, however, is caption cropping, in which captions on the famous image fail to identify Norman. Lipsyte uses the full image to accompany his commentary in *Media Studies Journal*, "Backlash Defined a Gesture," which does not mention Norman. Nor does the caption, which reads: "Oct. 16, 1968: Americans Tommie Smith, center, and John Carlos, right, stand in protest at their Olympic medal ceremony in Mexico City."⁶¹ Such omission is less surprising in some contexts than in others. The on-line African American Registry, which highlights Civil Rights campaigns, displays all three athletes but with the caption: "Smith and Carlos send a message."⁶² Here the context and intended audience explain the limited focus. Less explicable, however, is a book caption on the photograph that identifies Smith, Carlos, and Olympic official Lord Burghley, who stands in the foreground, but does not name Norman.⁶³ There are many other examples of similar obfuscation of the Australian.⁶⁴ Name cropping is most effective when it is combined with cropping of the dais. Unnamed and un-positioned, Norman exists only as a spectral presence, practically invisible. And while historians and sports buffs would know his identity, and it is not hidden to anybody with a modicum of initiative to find it, these material acts contributed to Norman's partial erasure from memory.

Reinserting Norman in the Picture: Naming "The Third Man"

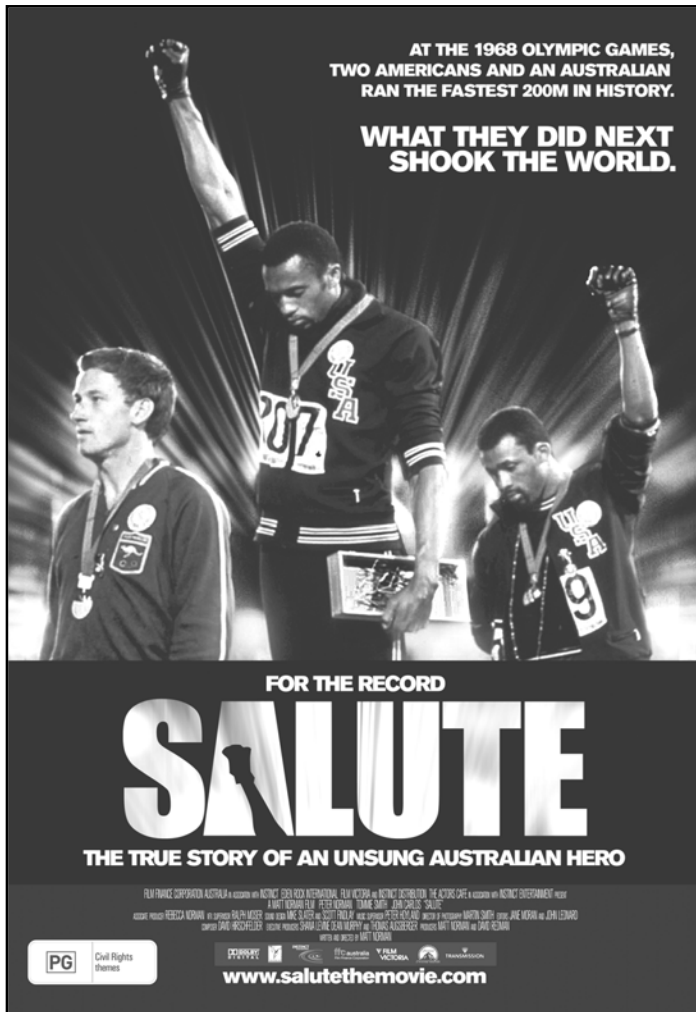
Media interest in Norman began to grow in the U.S. by the early 1990s, and with it memories of Norman the man and Civil Rights sympathizer. What occasioned this shift is

unclear, but it likely relates to a search for new perspectives on what was undeniably recognized as a significant and famous moment and artifact. A brief article in *Sports Illustrated* in October of 1993, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the event in Mexico City, carried the image and identified Norman as the “forgotten man in the drama.” The article’s title both acknowledges Norman’s absence from public memory and clearly reinserts him in the picture—“The third man. (Australia’s Peter Norman was third man on medal podium when African-American sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos gave their black power salute in 1968 Olympics).”⁶⁵ The previous year, historian Charles Korr used the image in a similar way, arguing in the *New York Times* that translations of the photograph had overlooked Norman and his contribution. The headline introducing the image not only adds Norman to the line-up but also, most importantly, argues that he was a full participant in the protest: “When Protest Made a Clean Sweep. Add Peter Norman, the Silver Medalist, to the Smith-Carlos Saga.”⁶⁶

These articles are significant from a materiality perspective for two reasons. At the most obvious level, the captions and accompanying text offer new translations of the photograph. They are material acts on the image that alter its meaning by expanding its knowledge context. At a less obvious level, the stories implicitly acknowledge the recognizability and power of the image itself by referencing its ubiquity as a cultural object. It is only because the image is so well known through regular reproduction that these stories can be written about, and around, it.

Korr also makes the important point that the image is not simply passively known but actively engaged with through discussion. He refers to his own use of the image with students and colleagues, whom he found were aware of Smith and Carlos and unaware, yet curious, about what “the white guy” was doing there. It is a reminder that talking to, and at, and about, photographs are important material acts. Art historian Martha Langford analyzes photograph albums as mnemonic devices that elicit memories through the “conversations” they prompt.⁶⁷ Images that are frequently reproduced in a variety of contexts over time also prompt discussion, both conversationally and in print through articles such as the *Sports Illustrated* and *New York Times* examples. Indeed, as Hagopian argues, it is not the ubiquity of an image that confers meaning, but its engagement of the viewer.⁶⁸ Global knowledge of Norman, probably heightened by the photograph and its discussion, prompted another form of communication: the website for *Salute: The Peter Norman Story*, the then-unreleased movie made by his nephew, Matt Norman, received over 800,000 hits in the twenty-four hours after Norman died in 2006.⁶⁹

In Australia, Norman’s death renewed sustained discussion. Here, too, the photograph was central to memories. Stories similar to those American articles discussed above had also appeared in the Australian press, drawing attention via the image to Norman’s identity and role.⁷⁰ When Norman unexpectedly died at his Melbourne home on October 3, 2006, the Australian press utilized new digital technologies to alter the image in ways that again imbued it with new meanings through new contextualization. The Brisbane *Courier-Mail* newspaper, for example, produced a photographic diptych that paired the classic image with one of Norman holding the Commonwealth Games baton in Melbourne in 2006.⁷¹ In a similar vein, the *Sydney Morning Herald* inset a small, recent photograph of Norman in the upper-right-hand corner of the 1968 image.⁷² The 1968 photograph helps



Cover image for the movie *Salute* (2008). COURTESY OF MATT NORMAN.

market the movie *Salute* via its appearance on promotional material [see opposite], and the film itself engages directly with the image both as the central point of reference and through various animation techniques.⁷³ In all of these cases, the manipulation of the original image honors Norman, asserts his role in the original protest action, and symbolically reinserts him into the picture.

The effectiveness of such altered images relies on recognition and intertextuality, whereby one representation refers to other textual representations.⁷⁴ Intertextuality in the case of this photograph works most clearly when it is not the original event or even the image itself but rather its symbolic actions that are being reproduced. The cartoon in which Brundage shakes a fist at Smith and Carlos, discussed above, is one example. Images



Statue of Tommie Smith and John Carlos at San José State University, California. COURTESY OF MAUREEN SMITH.

of clenched fists on political posters in the U.S. constitute another, as do reenactments by African-American students at athletic meets in the U.S.⁷⁵ So too does commercial appropriation of the image, as done by footwear and urban apparel maker, Mecca USA, in a 2003 advertising campaign featuring a young man, dressed in Mecca gear, standing on a podium raising his fist against an urban background: the slogan reads “Chase the dream, not the competition.”⁷⁶ In these examples, viewer knowledge of the 1968 action is assumed and is necessary for the new image to make sense. Perhaps the most prominent example of emulation of the photograph in another medium is the statue unveiled at San José State University in California in 2005.⁷⁷ In an indirect sense, it represents a material act, on the image, of copying or inspiration, but it is useful too in summing up the way varying uses of the photograph have emphasized and deemphasized Norman.

The statue depicts Smith and Carlos standing on the medal dais with clenched fists held high, as in 1968. The third position on the rostrum is empty. The monument clearly references the photograph, but its treatment of Norman is ambiguous. Clearly, Norman has again been cropped. Whereas he was airbrushed from photographic reproductions in

order to focus attention on Smith and Carlos and to downplay his role lest it confuse viewers or deflect from the centrality of Smith and Carlos, here Norman's absence paradoxically involves him. Cropping a photograph obscures; leaving empty the silver-medal dais in a statue illuminates. Visitors are tacitly invited to ask: "Who is missing?" Moreover, visitors are invited to do more than passively "spectate" and speculate: they are invited to step into Norman's place and "take a stand."⁷⁸ Norman himself was consulted in the design of the statue, agreed to his non-depiction, and attended the opening ceremony. As in 1968, he was complicit. Also, as in the photograph, Norman is present while being un-present. Read in this way, the statue symbolically represents the myriad material acts on the photograph that, over time, variously inserted, removed, and reinserted him in the picture.

Conclusion

This article has considered how material acts on the famous 1968 photograph have influenced cultural memories of Peter Norman, the white Australian silver medalist in the 200-meters race. The focus has not been on his whiteness, or his nationality, or any of the various other stories that could be told about Norman. Instead the emphasis has been on how the image has been used in telling the story of the 1968 protest salute in ways that sometimes exclude and sometimes include Norman for different ends. The broader intention has been to consider new ways of addressing photographs as sources in sport history.

What emerges is the way meanings are created through material uses of photographs. An image itself may have clear, direct, and understandable content but in itself has no inherent meaning. Scholar John Tagg has argued that photography "has no identity" outside the contexts in which it is employed.⁷⁹ Materiality helps elucidate this claim: meanings are conferred on photographs by those who present and view the image through a variety of means. In newspapers, articles and books, the chief focus of research here, these methods include captions and other accompanying text and images, positioning, cropping, "photoshopping" or manipulation, and emulation or reenactment. Whereas we may conceive of a single image, as is the case with the 1968 photograph, materiality highlights the existence of multiple images in varying contexts with varying emphases, foci, and meanings. Materiality is central to the power of images as sources and for understanding photographic meaning.

Photographs, which are sources for the creation of histories, are in themselves histories. This article has only scratched the surface in tracing the biography of this particular image, focusing by design on the single trajectory of Peter Norman. A more thorough exploration of its material life would yield other examples and suggest other uses and meanings. The task would be worthwhile in and of itself but could be more effective if integrated with other possible approaches to photographs as sources. Combined with an affect perspective, for instance, such a study would offer insight not only into where and how the image was used but also into how it was received, what emotions and actions it inspired, and how photographs have the potential as material objects and "technologies of memory" to move, motivate, and empower.



¹Patrick Hagopian, "Vietnam War Photography as a Locus of Memory," in *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts*, eds. Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 219.

²Charles Korr, "When Protest Made a Clean Sweep: Add Peter Norman, the Silver Medalist, to the Smith-Carlos Saga," *New York Times*, 28 June 1992, p. 11.

³Life Magazine, *100 Photographs That Changed the World* (New York: Time Warner, 2003).

⁴Douglas Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 Olympic Protests and Their Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 8.

⁵Tommie Smith with David Steele, *Silent Gesture: The Autobiography of Tommie Smith* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007), 245. See also Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 6-10, 172-173.

⁶Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 8.

⁷Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds., *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (London: Routledge, 2004), 2.

⁸Lawrence W. Levine, *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 270 [1ST QUOTATION]; Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 14 [2ND QUOTATION].

⁹Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister, "Locating Memory: Photographic Acts—An Introduction," in *Locating Memory*, eds. Kuhn and McAllister (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 12.

¹⁰John Bale, "Partial Knowledge: Photographic Mystifications and Constructions of 'The African Athlete,'" in *Deconstructing Sport History: A Postmodern Analysis*, ed. Murray G. Phillips (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 95.

¹¹Douglas Booth, *The Field: Truth and Fiction in Sport History* (London: Routledge, 2005), 103 [QUOTATION], 261n141-145. Booth provides references to examples of their use by sport historians.

¹²Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977; reprint ed., New York: Dell, 1982), 154.

¹³Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 10; Hayden White, "Historiography and Historiophoty," *American Historical Review* 93 (1988): 1, 194.

¹⁴Murray G. Phillips, Mark E. O'Neill, and Gary Osmond, "Broadening Horizons in Sport History: Films, Photographs, and Monuments," *Journal of Sport History* 34 (2007): 271-293.

¹⁵John Bale, "Capturing 'The African' Body? Visual Images and 'Imaginative Sports,'" *Journal of Sport History* 25 (1998): 234.

¹⁶Alun Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 109.

¹⁷Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 9.

¹⁸Levine, *The Unpredictable Past*, 270.

¹⁹Douglas Booth, "Evidence Revisited: Interpreting Historical Materials in Sport History," *Rethinking History* 9 (2005): 477; idem, *The Field*, 105; Tara Brabazon, *Playing on the Periphery: Sport, Identity, and Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 83.

²⁰Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us: Media, Memory, History* (New York: Verso, 2005), 118.

²¹Tracey Moffat, "Fourth," 2001, <<http://www.lagalerie.de/moffatt8.html>> [28 March 2008].

²²Bale, "'The African' Body," 234-251; Thierry Terret, "Race and Gender in the French Sporting Press at the End of the 1950s: The Example of *Sport & Vie*," *Sporting Traditions* 23 (2006): 103-122. For another example, see Cheryl L. Cole, "One Chromosome Too Many?" in *The Olympics at the Millennium: Power, Politics, and the Games*, ed. Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 128-146.

²³Michael Oriard, *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), especially chap. 2.

²⁴Booth, *The Field*, 105; idem, "(Re)Reading the Surfers' Bible: The Affects of Tracks," *Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 22 (2008): 17-35; Burke, *Eyewitnessing*, 34-45; Nick Ford and David Brown, *Surfing and Social Theory: Experience, Embodiment, and Narrative of the Dream Glide* (London: Routledge, 2006), 40; Mike Huggins, "The Sporting Gaze: Towards a Visual Turn in Sports History—Documenting Art and Sport," *Journal of Sport History* 35 (2008), 311-329.

²⁵Smith, *Silent Gesture*, 245.

²⁶Robert Lipsyte, "Backlash Defined a Gesture," *Media Studies Journal* 12 (1998): 74; Amy Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 241.

²⁷Booth, "(Re)Reading the Surfers' Bible," 17-35.

²⁸Gary Osmond, "Reflecting Materiality: Reading Sport History through the Lens," *Rethinking History* 12 (2008): 339-360.

²⁹Edwards and Hart, eds., *Photographs Objects Histories*, 1-2.

³⁰Hagopian, "Vietnam War Photography," 201.

³¹Lipsyte, "Backlash Defined a Gesture," 74; Smith, *Silent Gesture*, 245.

³²Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the Aids Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 9.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Edwards, *Raw Histories*, 11.

³⁵Sturken, *Tangled Memories*, 21.

³⁶Osmond, "Reflecting Materiality," 357; Munslow, *The Routledge Companion to Historical Studies*, 113-117.

³⁷Damian Johnstone and Matt Norman, *A Race to Remember: The Peter Norman Story* (Melbourne: JoJo Publishing, 2008); Paul Jenes, "Vale Peter Norman," *Athletics Australia*, 4 October 2006, <www.athletics.com.au/community/news/vale_peter_norman> [30 April 2008].

³⁸Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, "The Photograph as an Intersection of Gazes: The Example of National Geographic," in *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from V.A.R. 1990-1994*, ed. Lucien Taylor (New York: Routledge, 1994), 368.

³⁹Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us*, 23.

⁴⁰Ibid., 99.

⁴¹Bale, "Partial Knowledge," 106-107.

⁴²Robert Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), xvi.

⁴³Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle*, 242.

⁴⁴Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁵Ibid., 241-246.

⁴⁶*Age* (Melbourne), 18 October 1968, p. 1.

⁴⁷Norman's feat was in fact enormous. In addition to winning silver, he broke the Olympic record in his heat and set a new Australian record of 20.06 seconds in the final: see Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle*, 238.

⁴⁸*Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 October 1968, p. 1. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁹*Australian*, 18 October 1968, p. 1.

⁵⁰*Los Angeles Times*, 17 October 1968, sec. III, pp. 1, 4, cited in Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle*, 242-243.

⁵¹*New York Post*, 17 October 1968, p. 1, cited in Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle*, 245.

⁵²Eric Zolov, "The Harmonizing Nation: Mexico and the 1968 Olympics," in *In the Game: Race, Identity, and Sports in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Amy Bass (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 210.

⁵³Ibid., 192.

⁵⁴"Photoshopping" as a term originated from Adobe PhotoShop, a professional software package for editing photographs. For a brief discussion of computer-manipulated photographs, with useful examples, see: Timothy Dow Adams, *Light Writing & Life Writing: Photography in Autobiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 11-12.

⁵⁵See, for instance, David King, *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin's Russia* (New York: H. Holt, 1999).

⁵⁶*Evening News* (London), 17 October 1968, p. 1. Emphasis is the original.

⁵⁷*Los Angeles Times*, 19 October 1968, reproduced in Avery Brundage Collection 1908-1975, microfilm, reel 102, box 178 (Cologne, Ger.: Bundesinstitut fuer Sportwissenschaft, 1977).

⁵⁸Reet Howell and Max Howell, *Aussie Gold: The Story of Australia at the Olympics* (Albion, Qld.: Brooks Waterloo, 1988), 252.

⁵⁹*Time International*, 9 November 1998, p. 1.

⁶⁰See, for example, Booth, *The Field*, 188; Jay Coakley, *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies*, 7th ed. (Sydney: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 509; Sebastian Coe, David Teasdale, and David Wickham, *More Than a Game: Sport in Our Time* (London: BBC, 1992), 125.

⁶¹Lipsyte, "Backlash Defined a Gesture," 74-75.

⁶²The image appeared on the African American Registry, <http://www.aaregistry.com/african_american_history/404/AfricanAmerican_athletes> [14 February 2007].

⁶³Coe, Teasdale, and Wickham, *More Than a Game*, 125. Lord Burghley's name is spelled here as "Burleigh."

⁶⁴See, for instance, Booth, *The Field*, 188; Coakley, *Sport in Society*, 509; Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete*, xv.

⁶⁵*Sports Illustrated*, 25 October 1993, p. 14.

⁶⁶Korr, "When Protest Made a Clean Sweep," p. 11.

⁶⁷Martha Langford, "Speaking the Album: An Application of the Oral-Photographic Framework," in *Locating Memory*, ed. Kuhn and McAllister, 224.

⁶⁸Hagopian, "Vietnam War Photography," 216.

⁶⁹Mike Hurst, "Peter Norman's Olympic statement," *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 8 October 2006, <www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,,20541398-10389,00.html> [10 November 2008]. It would be interesting to know if these viewers engaged in a "dialogue" with the site via an on-line guestbook. The film was released in July of 2008.

⁷⁰See, for instance, Peter Fitzsimons, "Powerful Friends," in *Sydney Morning Herald*, "Good Weekend," 24 June 2000, pp. 62-64; "Bitter Price of Iconic Image," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 October 2003, <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/10/16/1065917551992.html>> [12 June 2007].

⁷¹Hurst, "Peter Norman's Olympic Statement."

⁷²Philip Derriman and Len Johnson, "He Didn't Raise His Fist—But He Did Lend a Hand," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 October 2006, <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2006/10/03/1159641325056.html>> [2 November 2008].

⁷³*Salute*, dir. Matt Norman, The Actors Cafe, 2008, 92 mins.

⁷⁴Douglas Booth defines intertextuality in a postmodern sense as meaning "that there is nothing outside texts and that all texts are based on other texts." Booth, *The Field*, 304.

⁷⁵C. Keith Harrison, "Racing with Race at the Olympics: From Negro to Black to African American Athlete," in *The Olympics at the Millennium: Power, Politics, and the Games*, ed. Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 65; Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete*, 172.

⁷⁶"Controversial '68 Olympic Moment Inspires Mecca Ads," *Brandweek*, 13 January 2003, p. 12.

⁷⁷Maureen Smith, "Frozen Fists in Speed City: The Statue as Twenty-First-Century Reparations," *Journal of Sport History* 36 (2009) 393-414; Smith, *Silent Gesture*, 255-258; "Tommie Smith/John Carlos

sculpture to be unveiled at SJSU on Oct. 17", San José State University, *News*, 11 October 2005, <http://www.sjsu.edu/news/news_detail.jsp?id=1426> [2 November 2008].

⁷⁸Smith, "Frozen Fists in Speed City," 402.

⁷⁹John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 63.