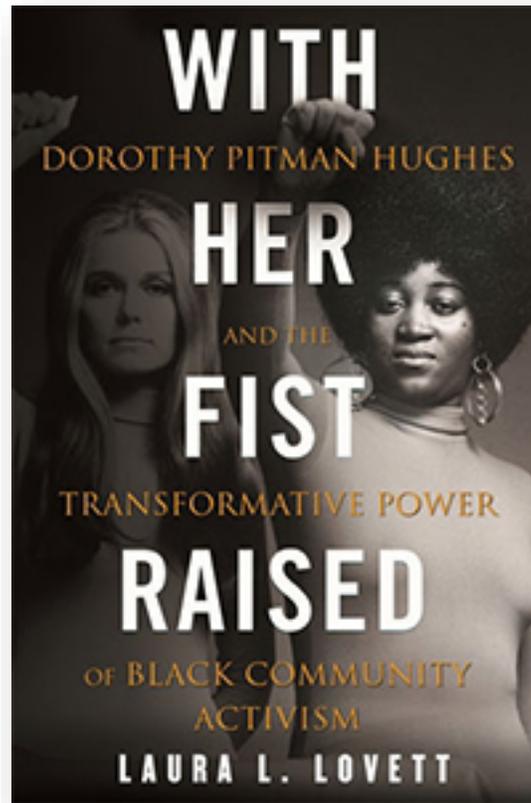


*With Her Fist Raised:  
Dorothy Pitman Hughes and the Transformative Power of Black Community Activism*  
by Laura L. Lovett

Readers' Guide Discussion Questions



1. What are your first impressions of the image on the cover of this book? How does Dorothy's relative anonymity in this well-documented photo speak to the women's movement in general? What lessons can be learned from this image, and what other seminal images come to mind that demand a similar critical review?
2. On pages 58–59, Lovett notes, quoting Dorothy, that much of Dorothy's success with the West 80th Street Day Care Center was rooted in the links she established “between what children see in the classroom and what they experience in the community.” How is this “linking” a radical practice? In what ways are these efforts reflected in contemporary educational systems, and how, where, and why are they neglected?
3. On page 61, Lovett notes that the basis of Dorothy's activism was distinct from that of white women—her radical ideals were not shaped by literature but, rather, by experience.

How does Dorothy's experiential approach shape the legacy of her activism? How does it influence your understanding of racial difference within the women's movement?

4. What is the effect of interracial solidarity within the women's movement, and what are the pitfalls of this solidarity? To what degree would you consider the women's movement of the 1980s to be successfully intersectional? How are the legacies of this interracial solidarity incorporated into contemporary activist movements, and where—if ever—does this intersectionality fall short?
5. On page 69, Lovett notes that “Gloria [Steinem]'s place in the movement [. . . ] contributed to the elision of race as a foundational experience informing feminism” and thus led to the narrative erasure of Black women (Hughes, especially) from well-documented history. What other histories are obscured by biased archival obstacles? How does this erasure influence *With Her Fist Raised*? How does Lovett bypass these archival obstacles?
6. What did the Miss America pageant represent to Dorothy, and how does her investment in the pageant shift or solidify your understanding of Dorothy's activist legacy?
7. In addition to her efforts in early childhood education and her foundational role in the Harlem copy center, Dorothy actively fought against Harlem's gentrification to protect Black businesses and homeowners. What was Dorothy's vision of community, and how did her many activist efforts work to manifest this vision?
8. In 2020, the Movement for Black Lives has taken center stage as a site of urgent activism. Which of Dorothy's lessons are incorporated into #BLM, and which lessons are left behind? What might current feminist efforts and the Movement for Black Lives stand to learn from Dorothy's legacy?