# FOREWORD

**When black scholars hear the call to equal opportunity in darkness, they must remember that they do not belong in the darkness of an American culture that refuses to move toward the light. They are not meant to be pliant captives and agents of institutions that deny light all over the world. No, they must speak the truth to themselves and to the community and to all who invite them into the new darkness. They must affirm the light, the light movement of their past, the light movement of their people. They must affirm their capacities to move forward toward new alternatives for light in America.**
**—Vincent Harding, "Responsibilities of the Black Scholar to Community"**

I can say, without a trace of hyperbole, that this book changed my life. Like a specter, it has haunted me from the day I pulled it out of its brown padded envelope over sixteen years ago to the moment I agreed to write this foreword. The long hours, weeks, and months I agonized over this essay proved as exhilarating and frustrating and anxiety-ridden as my first encounter with Cedric J. Robinson's *magnum opus* during my first year in graduate school. It arrived out of the blue in the form of a review copy sent to *Ufahamu*, a graduate student journal published by UCLA's African Studies Center. The book's appearance caught me off guard; none of my colleagues had mentioned it, and I do not recall seeing any advertisements for it in any of the scholarly journals with which we were familiar. Nevertheless, for me the timing was fortuitous, if not downright cosmic. Just a few months into graduate school, I was toying with the idea of writing a dissertation on the South African Left. The inspiration was hardly academic; I was more interested in becoming a full-time Communist than a full-time scholar. I could not have cared less about historiography or the current academic debates about social movements. I wanted to know how to build a left-wing movement among people of color so that we could get on with the ultimate task of making revolution.

So when I saw the title, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, I could hardly contain myself. I had never heard of Cedric J. Robinson despite the fact that he was a faculty member and director of the Center for Black Studies at the

neighboring University of California at Santa Barbara. Whoever he was, I thought to myself, he was certainly well read: his footnotes could have been a separate book altogether. Indeed, I was shocked at the size of the text (just shy of 500 pages and with tiny, almost unreadable print to boot!) given my own futile search for materials on the history of the Black Left, not just in Africa but throughout the Diaspora. I quickly stuffed this unusually dense paperback into my bag and took it upon myself to read it in my capacity as book review editor for *Ufahamu*.

When I finally got around to opening the book, I realized why it was so big. *Black Marxism* is far more ambitious than its modest title implies, for what Cedric Robinson has written extends well beyond the history of the Black Left or Black radical movements. Combining political theory, history, philosophy, cultural analysis, and biography, among other things, Robinson literally rewrites the history of the rise of the West from ancient times to the mid-twentieth century, tracing the roots of Black radical thought to a shared epistemology among diverse African people and providing a withering critique of Western Marxism and its inability to comprehend either the racial character of capitalism and the civilization in which it was born or mass movements outside Europe. At the very least, *Black Marxism* challenges our "common sense" about the history of modernity, nationalism, capitalism, radical ideology, the origins of Western racism, and the worldwide Left from the 1848 revolutions to the present.

Perhaps more than any other book, *Black Marxism* shifts the center of radical thought and revolution from Europe to the so-called "periphery"—to the colonial territories, marginalized colored people of the metropolitan centers of capital, and those Frantz Fanon identified as the "wretched of the earth." And it makes a persuasive case that the radical thought and practice which emerged in these sites of colonial and racial capitalist exploitation were produced by cultural logics and epistemologies of the oppressed as well as the specific racial and cultural forms of domination. Thus Robinson not only decenters Marxist history and historiography but also what one might call the "eye of the storm."

Yet for all of Robinson's decentering, he begins his story in Europe. While this might seem odd for a book primarily concerned with African people, it becomes clear very quickly why he *must* begin there, if only to remove the analytical cataracts from our eyes. This book is, after all, a critique of Western Marxism and its failure to understand the conditions and movements of Black people in Africa and the Diaspora. Robinson not only exposes the limits of historical materialism as a way of understanding Black experience but also reveals that the roots of Western racism took hold in European civilization well before the dawn of capitalism. Thus, several years before the recent explosion in "whiteness studies," Robinson proposed the idea that the racialization of the proletariat and the invention of whiteness began within Europe itself, long before Europe's modern encounter with African and New World labor. Such insights give the "Dark Ages" new meaning. Despite the almost axiomatic tendency in European historiography to speak of early modern working classes in national terms—English, French, and so forth—Robinson argues that the "lower

orders" usually were comprised of immigrant workers from territories outside the nations in which they worked. These immigrant workers were placed at the bottom of a racial hierarchy. The Slavs and the Irish, for example, were among Europe's first "niggers," and what appears before us in nineteenth-century U.S. history as their struggle to achieve whiteness is merely the tip of an iceberg several centuries old.[1]

Robinson not only finds racialism firmly rooted in premodern European civilization but locates the origins of capitalism there as well. Building on the work of the Black radical sociologist Oliver Cromwell Cox, Robinson directly challenges the Marxist idea that capitalism was a revolutionary negation of feudalism.[2] Instead, Robinson explains, capitalism emerged within the feudal order and grew in fits and starts, flowering in the cultural soil of the West—most notably in the racialism that has come to characterize European society. Capitalism and racism, in other words, did not break from the old order but rather evolved from it to produce a modern world system of "racial capitalism" dependent on slavery, violence, imperialism, and genocide. So Robinson not only begins in Europe; he also chips away at many of the claims and assertions central to European historiography, particularly of the Marxist and liberal varieties. For instance, Robinson's discussion of the Irish working class enables him to expose the myth of a "universal" proletariat: just as the Irish were products of popular traditions borne and bred under colonialism, the "English" working class of the colonizing British Isles was formed by Anglo-Saxon chauvinism, a racial ideology shared across class lines that allowed the English bourgeoisie to rationalize low wages and mistreatment for the Irish. This particular form of English racialism was not invented by the ruling class to divide and conquer (though it did succeed in that respect); rather, it was there at the outset, shaping the process of proletarianization and the formation of working-class consciousness. Finally, in this living feudal order, socialism was born as an alternative bourgeois strategy to combat social inequality. Directly challenging Marx himself, Robinson declares: "Socialist critiques of society were attempts to further the bourgeois revolutions against feudalism."[3]

There is yet another reason for Robinson to begin in the heart of the West. It was there—not Africa—that the "Negro" was first manufactured. This was no easy task, as Robinson reminds us, since the invention of the Negro—and by extension the fabrication of whiteness and all the policing of racial boundaries that came with it—required "immense expenditures of psychic and intellectual energies in the West" (4). Indeed, a group of European scholars expended enormous energy rewriting of the history of the ancient world. Anticipating Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization, Vol. I* (1987) and building on the pioneering scholarship of Cheikh Anta Diop, George G. M. James, and Frank Snowden, Robinson exposes the efforts of European thinkers to disavow the interdependence between ancient Greece and North Africa. This generation of "enlightened" European scholars worked hard to wipe out the cultural and intellectual contributions of Egypt and Nubia from European history, to whiten the West in order to maintain the purity of the "European" race. They also stripped all of Africa of any semblance of "civilization," using the printed page to eradicate African history and thus reduce a whole continent and

its progeny to little more than beasts of burden or brutish heathens. Although efforts to reconnect the ancient West with North Africa have recently come under a new wave of attacks by scholars like Mary Lefkowitz, Robinson shows why these connections and the debates surrounding them are so important.[4] It is not a question of "superiority" or the "theft" of ideas or even a matter of proving that Africans were "civilized." Rather, *Black Marxism* reminds us again today, as it did sixteen years ago, that the exorcising of the Black Mediterranean is about the fabrication of Europe as a discrete, racially pure entity solely responsible for modernity, on the one hand, and the fabrication of the Negro, on the other. In this respect, Robinson's intervention parallels that of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which argues that the European study of and romance with the "East" was primarily about constructing the Occident.[5]

At the very same moment European labor was being thrown off the land and herded into a newly formed industrial order, Robinson argues, African labor was being drawn into the orbit of the world system through the transatlantic slave trade. European civilization, either through feudalism or the nascent industrial order, did not simply penetrate African village culture. To understand the dialectic of African resistance to enslavement and exploitation, in other words, we need to look outside the orbit of capitalism—we need to look West and Central African culture. Robinson observes, "Marx had not realized fully that the cargoes of laborers also contained African cultures, critical mixes and admixtures of language and thought, of cosmology and metaphysics, of habits, beliefs, and morality. These were the actual terms of their humanity. These cargoes, then, did not consist of intellectual isolates or deculturated Blacks—men, women, and children separated from their previous universe. African labor brought the past with it, a past that had produced it and settled on it the first elements of consciousness and comprehension" (121).

Therefore, the first waves of African New World revolts were governed not by a critique of Western society but rather a total rejection of the experience of enslavement and racism. More intent on preserving a past than transforming Western society or overthrowing capitalism, they created maroon settlements, ran away, became outliers, and tried to find a way home, even if it meant death. However, with the advent of formal colonialism and the incorporation of Black labor into a more fully governed social structure, a more direct critique of the West and colonialism emerged—a revolt set on transforming social relations and revolutionizing Western society rather then reproducing African social life. The contradictions of colonialism produced the native bourgeoisie, more intimate with European life and thought, whose assigned task was to help rule. Trained to be junior partners in the colonial state, members of this bourgeoisie experienced both racism from Europeans and a deep sense of alienation from their native lives and cultures. Their contradictory role as victims of racial domination and tools in the empire, as Western educated elites feeling like aliens among the dominant society as well as among the masses, compelled some of these men and women to revolt, thus producing the radical Black intelligentsia. It is no accident that many of these radicals and scholars emerged both during the First World War, when they recognized the vulnerability of Western

civilization, and the second world crisis—the international depression and the rise of fascism.

The emergence of this Black radical intelligentsia is the focus of the third and final section of *Black Marxism*. Examining the lives and selected works of W. E. B. Du Bois, C. L. R. James, and Richard Wright, Robinson's engagement with these three thinkers extends far beyond intellectual biography and critique. Taking us on a journey through two centuries of U.S. and Diaspora history, Robinson revisits the revolutionary processes of emancipation that caught the eyes of these men. He demonstrates how each of these figures came through an apprenticeship with Marxism, was deeply affected by the crisis in world capitalism and the responses of workers' and anticolonial movements, and produced, in the midst of depression and war, important books that challenged Marxism and tried to grapple with the historical consciousness embedded in the Black Radical Tradition. Du Bois, James, and Wright eventually revised their positions on Western Marxism or broke with it altogether and, to differing degrees, embraced Black radicalism. The way they came to the Black Radical Tradition was more of an act of recognition than invention; they did not create the theory of Black radicalism as much as found it, through their work and study, in the mass movements of Black people.[6]

I finally completed my first reading of *Black Marxism* about two months after I took it home. The book so overwhelmed me that I suffered a crisis in confidence. I never wrote the review—thus contributing unwittingly to the conspiracy of silence that has surrounded the book since its publication. Instead, I phoned Professor Robinson and virtually begged him to take me on as his student. He agreed and played a formative role in shaping my dissertation (which, coincidentally, was published by the University of North Carolina Press a decade ago as *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression*) and all of my work thereafter.

Although his book scared me to death, Cedric the teacher turned out to be remarkably humble, straightforward, down-to-earth, and generous with his time and energy. A demanding reader, to be sure, he ranks among the warmest, funniest characters one could ever meet in this profession—and his subtle sense of humor finds its way even into *Black Marxism*'s most difficult passages. What also amazes me is that Professor Robinson was still in his thirties when he published *Black Marxism*, a book which would have compelled even the great Du Bois to take a seat and listen.

Like Du Bois and the other subjects of his book, Robinson's political work on behalf of Black liberation sent him to the library in search of the Black Radical Tradition. His ideas evolved directly out of the social movements in which he took part and the key social and political struggles that have come to define our era. For example, as an undergraduate at the University of California at Berkeley during the mid-1960s, Robinson was active in the Afro-American Association, a radical nationalist student group based in California's East Bay and led by Donald Warden. Founded in 1962, the Association became the basis for the California chapter of the Revolution-

ary Action Movement (RAM); some of its members, including Huey Newton, went on to form the Black Panther Party. This small but militant group of Bay-area Black intellectuals drew many of their ideas from Malcolm X and other Black nationalists, and they were deeply influenced by revolutions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Although they directed their attention to domestic problems such as urban poverty, racism, education, police brutality, and Black student struggles, they understood the African American condition through an analysis of global capitalism, imperialism, and Third World liberation.[7]

It is hard not to see the links between *Black Marxism* and Robinson's formative experiences in the Afro-American Association. One of the key documents circulating among this group was Harold Cruse's 1962 essay, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," which argued that Black people in the United States were living under domestic colonialism and that their struggles must be seen as part of the worldwide anticolonial movement. "The failure of American Marxists," he writes, "to understand the bond between the Negro and the colonial peoples of the world has led to their failure to develop theories that would be of value to Negroes in the United States." Cruse reversed the traditional argument that the success of socialism in the developed West is key to the emancipation of colonial subjects and the development of socialism in the Third World. Instead, he saw the former colonies as the vanguard of the new socialist revolution, with Cuba and China at the forefront: "The revolutionary initiative has passed to the colonial world, and in the United States is passing to the Negro, while Western Marxists theorize, temporize and debate."[8] Robinson took up Cruse's challenge to develop new theories of revolution where Marxism failed, but he moved well beyond Cruse's positions. Eventually, Robinson came to the conclusion that it is not enough to reshape or reformulate Marxism to fit the needs of Third World revolution; instead, he believed all universalist theories of political and social order had to be rejected. In fact, Robinson's first book, *The Terms of Order: Political Science and the Myth of Leadership*, critiques the Western presumption—rooted as much in Marxism as in liberal democratic theory—that mass movements reflect social order and are maintained and rationalized by the authority of leadership.[9]

The chaotic international political situation at the time Robinson was completing *Black Marxism* was enough to dispel the myth of order. It was, after all, the last decade of the Cold War, the era of Reaganism and Thatcherism and new imperialist wars in the Middle East, Grenada, and the Falkland Islands. Yet the late 1970s and early 1980s were also a new age of revolution. Dictatorships in Africa, Asia, and Latin America were being challenged by radical movements from El Salvador to Zaire and Nicaragua to South Africa. Political violence, torture, and assassinations seemed to proliferate in the early 1980s; the casualties included the great Guyanese historian Walter Rodney, an intellectual Robinson would certainly situate squarely within the Black Radical Tradition. Let us not forget that under Reagan, the United States invaded Grenada in 1983 precisely because it had undergone its own socialist revolution four years earlier. Closer to home, deindustrialization, the flight of American corporations to foreign

lands, and the displacement of millions of workers across the country created further turmoil in the metropolitan centers of global capital. Permanent unemployment, underemployment, and homelessness became a way of life. And despite the growing presence of African Americans in political office, city services declined, federal spending on cities dried up, and affirmative action programs came under assault. Racism was also on the rise, resulting in urban rebellions from Liberty City, Florida, to the English (and predominantly Black) suburbs of Bristol and Brixton. In the United States, the Ku Klux Klan tripled its membership and waged a campaign of terror and intimidation against African Americans. In Mississippi in 1980 (not 1890), at least twelve African Americans were lynched, and at least forty racially motivated murders occurred in cities as different as Buffalo, New York, Atlanta, Georgia, and Mobile, Alabama. The era, in fact, saw police killings and nonlethal acts of brutality emerge as central political issues among Black people on both sides of the Atlantic. Overall, the Reagan and Thatcher years ushered in a new era of corporate wealth and callous disregard for the poor and people of color.

This rightward drift did not go unchallenged, however. *Black Marxism* appeared during a crucial period of political organizing, just a few years after the founding of the National Black United Front (NBUF) and the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP). Black nationalism was on the rise in this period, following a decade in which an increasing number of Black radicals turned to Marxism-Leninism and Maoism as alternatives to liberal integrationism and "race first" capitalism. During the 1970s, Black radicals took factory jobs to reach the working classes, sought to free political prisoners and build prison movements, threw their energies behind building a socialist Africa, and continued the long tradition of community-based organizing. Meanwhile, Afrocentrism and cultural nationalism captured the imagination of various segments of the Black community across class lines. Independent Black schools flourished; kinte cloth and red, black, and green medallions adorned brown bodies; Afrocentric literature finally found its market. On the other hand, we had reason to be pessimistic. By the 1980s the jobs disappeared, the most progressive African nations were as unstable as ever, and the Black prison population was growing by leaps and bounds thanks to mandatory sentencing policies for possession of crack cocaine.

So there I and other young radicals stood, at a political and cultural crossroads, ready for action but unsure where the world was heading. We needed analyses of social movements that had made a difference. We needed to know how we built communities and kept ourselves whole in the midst of slavery and Jim Crow. We needed to figure out who our friends and enemies were, past and present. We needed new histories willing to adopt a more global perspective. In short, we needed a clearer, more radical understanding of the past in order to chart the way forward. And *Black Marxism* was one of several books written by Black radical intellectuals in the late 1970s and early 1980s to meet these challenges. Among the others were Chinweizu's *The West and the Rest of Us* (1975), Angela Davis's *Women, Race, and Class* (1981), Vincent Harding's *There Is a River* (1983), V. P. Franklin's *Black Self-Determination* (1984), Manning Marable's *Blackwater* (1981) and *How Capitalism Underdeveloped*

*Black America* (1982), and Cornel West's *Prophesy Deliverance* (1982). For Black folk with radical leanings, these were the new prophets of the era, and it seemed as if everyone kept their ragged, marked up copies close to them. To the rest of the world, however, these books barely existed. With few exceptions, they were initially ignored in the mainstream, and sales fell below expectations. Even books published by commercial publishing houses, such as Chinweizu's biting and witty critique of Western imperialism and its alliance with the African bourgeoisie, received very few reviews.[10]

*Black Marxism*, in particular, garnered no major reviews and very little notice in scholarly publications. The few reviews it did receive were mainly from left-leaning publications or very specialized journals, and the only substantial review essays that dealt with the book at length were written by Cornel West and the radical Black philosopher Leonard Harris, with both published several years after the book appeared.[11] West, whose very critical yet respectful essay in the socialist *Monthly Review* was a deliberate effort to generate renewed interest *Black Marxism*, suggested that the book "fell through the cracks" in large part due to the state of the academic Left, which was lost in "jargon-ridden discourses in which race receives little or no attention," and the Black Left, which was simply too weak and disorganized to cultivate and sustain a "high-level critical exchange."[12]

Whatever the reasons for the silence surrounding *Black Marxism*, the results have been unfortunate. The Europeanists, whose historical scholarship Robinson challenges head-on, have never, to my knowledge, responded to his criticisms. Even the new generation of scholars examining race and Black movements have paid scant attention to Robinson's insights. The 1990s witnessed the proliferation of scholarship on Black radicalism, the African Diaspora, the origins of Western racism, and the writings of Du Bois, James, and Wright, yet very few of these studies cite Robinson's work. One startling example is Winston James's *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America* (1998). While Robinson's book is much broader in chronology and scope, a portion of *Black Marxism* covers the same ground as James's text. Robinson, like James, discusses the overwhelming Caribbean presence in U.S.-based Black radical movements, examining groups like the African Blood Brotherhood and the Universal Negro Improvement Association and intellectuals including Hubert Harrison and Cyril Briggs. In some respects, Robinson's arguments prefigure some of James's claims; in other respects, the two are at odds. Yet as prodigious and carefully researched as *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia* is (it is over 400 pages), Robinson is neither mentioned nor cited.[13]

Paul Gilroy's much acclaimed *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) is also surprisingly quiet about *Black Marxism*. While Gilroy at least acknowledges Robinson in his text,[14] Gilroy's lack of an extensive engagement or dialogue with Robinson's work is quite jarring, since they explore much the same ground. I think it is fair to say that parts of *Black Marxism* anticipate Gilroy's argument, for Robinson had established the centrality of African people in the creation of the modern and premodern world. And he set the stage, in some respects, for Gilroy's

notion of Black Atlantic culture as a "counterculture of modernity." "The rebellious slaves," writes Robinson, "vitalized by a world-consciousness drawn from African lore and composing their American experience into a rebellious art, had constituted one of the crucial social bases in contradiction to bourgeois society" (314). Robinson continued the earlier legacy of Diaspora studies but also developed a conception of the Black Mediterranean as a precondition to the Black Atlantic and the making of Europe itself. As for Gilroy's emphasis on the double consciousness and cultural hybridity of New World Black intellectuals such as Wright and Du Bois, this recognition is fundamental to Robinson's argument about the radical petit bourgeoisie. Indeed, drawing on the writings of Amilcar Cabral and the various musings of C. L. R. James, Aimé Césaire, and others, Robinson demonstrates that their imbibing of Western Civilization and their hybrid cultural lives were key to their radicalization. When confronted with the limits of democracy under racial capitalism and colonialism and with the uprisings of the Black masses whose access to bourgeois European culture was limited, the Black petit bourgeoisie was forced to choose sides. Abandoning the West was never an option, Robinson argues, but critiquing and challenging it was.

Yet while Robinson and Gilroy grapple with many of the same questions, they do have different agendas. Gilroy's point, and one of his most important critical interventions, is to show the analytical limits of cultural nationalism and ethnic absolutism. He demonstrates that Black people are products of the modern world, with a unique historical legacy rooted in slavery; Blacks are hybrid people with as much claim to the Western heritage as their former slave masters. Robinson, on the other hand, takes the same existential condition but comes to different conclusions: slavery did *not* define the Black condition because we were Africans first, with world views and philosophical notions about life, death, possession, community, and so forth that are rooted in that African heritage. And once we understand how to define ourselves in terms of this collective identity, Robinson implies, then perhaps we can understand the persistence of nationalism and various forms of race consciousness (which have never been fully contained under the limited rubric of "nationalism"). *Black Marxism* is less interested in whether or not these collective forms of struggle and consciousness are "essentialist." Instead, Robinson wants to know where they come from and why they continue. Moreover, he is attempting to discover how these mass movements shaped the thinking and actions of the Black middle strata, the most direct recipients of Western "civilization."

All this is to say that Gilroy and Robinson are indeed examining the same issues, but each brings his own brilliant insights and challenging questions to the history of Europe and the African Diaspora. I am not at all suggesting, then, that one is right and the other wrong, or that any work that ignores Robinson's interventions ought to be discounted. My main point, instead, is that an opportunity for conversation has been missed. The disappearance of such a powerful, provocative book as *Black Marxism* from the landscape of Black cultural and political studies—not to mention the

vast literature on the rise of the West, capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, nationalism, transnationalism, Diaspora studies, race, labor, and intellectual history—was a genuine tragedy.

Thanks to the University of North Carolina Press, this tragedy should prove to be temporary. Not unlike the music of Thelonious Monk, *Black Marxism* remains as fresh and insightful as when it was first composed, still productively engaged with the central questions posed by histories of the African Diaspora. For example, the book attempts to address the important matter of how extensively Black people reproduced an "African" culture in the New World. This age-old question was first raised provocatively by scholars such as Melville Herskovits and Lorenzo Turner,[15] but it has returned with a vengeance in the recent work of Michael Mullin, Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, Carolyn Fick, Margaret Washington, Michael Gomez, and Joao Reis. These newer studies, despite their emphasis on documenting and acknowledging African "ethnic" diversity, reinforce Robinson's thesis that African resistance to New World slavery was profoundly shaped by the influence of slaves' West and Central African roots.[16] Also, *Black Marxism* questioned what was then the existing scholarship on both the Haitian Revolution and Brazil's "Male Uprising" in Bahia, anticipating some of the arguments proposed by the abovementioned authors. Robinson suggested, for instance, as Carolyn Fick would later, that historians of Haiti need to pay more attention to the role of the Maroons. Indeed, Robinson even took C. L. R. James's *Black Jacobins* to task for not paying enough attention to the mass uprising.

Yet while Robinson's thesis finds confirmation in much of this new work, the manner in which he makes his case is bound to draw criticism from scholars resistant to the idea of "authentic" African culture or cultures. In our current era of extreme antiessentialism, Robinson's controversial chapter, "The Nature of the Black Radical Tradition," strikes a discordant note. The idea that all Africans share certain understandings of the world and their place in it, and that these shared understandings shaped virtually all encounters between Black people and their European masters, will invariably come across to some readers as a kind of nationalist fiction. But careful readers will recognize that Robinson's argument is deeply historical and powerfully supported by evidence. He does not claim that Africans possess some kind of fixed essence, for as he points out, the characteristics of the Black Radical Tradition are more clearly evident in Africans less assimilated into a common New World identity. Moreover, Robinson is broadly speaking of general ideas and belief systems—ways of seeing, ways of worshipping. Few bat an eye when confronted with similarly broad notions such as "Western thought," "Western civilization," and "Western philosophy."

The most important benefit of the return of *Black Marxism*, however, is not its confirmation of and challenges to recent scholarship but rather its ability to point scholars in new directions and encourage them to take up where Robinson left off. He opened up many roads we have yet to travel, roads that might bring us closer to understanding and even enacting the real agenda Robinson had in mind: liberation. How, for instance, have gender and sexuality shaped Black revolt? How do we interpret the fact that Black women were often invested with great spiritual powers, or that

Black men tended to have more opportunities to travel? Who else deserves a place in the pantheon of Black radical intellectuals, and who will tell their stories? How does Robinson's framework challenge the familiar narratives of Black radicalism after 1960? What do we make of radicals who are neither black nor white, militants such as Harlem's Yuri Kochiyama or Detroit's Grace Lee Boggs or the many South Asians in England and elsewhere who cast their lot with the Black Radical Tradition? Are there other avenues besides Marxism that have brought Black radical intellectuals face to face with the Black Radical Tradition?[17]

Let us briefly take up the last question. When we consider the lives and works of Black radical intellectuals such as Aimé Césaire, Suzanne Césaire, Wifredo Lam, Etienne Léro, Jayne Cortez, Simone and Pierre Yoyotte, René Dépestre, René Ménil, and even Richard Wright, I think it could be argued that surrealism served as a bridge between Marxism and the Black Radical Tradition. All of these thinkers were either active in the surrealist movement or expressed an interest in surrealism. A revolutionary movement whose official origins can be traced to post–World War I Paris, surrealism drew on Marx and Freud while remaining critical of Marxism. What is surrealism? The Chicago Surrealist group offers one of the most eloquent definitions:

> Surrealism is the exaltation of freedom, revolt, imagination and love. . . . [It] is above all a revolutionary movement. Its basic aim is to lessen and eventually to completely resolve the contradiction between everyday life and our wildest dreams. . . . Beginning with the abolition of imaginative slavery, it advances to the creation of a free society in which everyone will be a poet—a society in which everyone will be able to develop his or her potentialities fully and freely.[18]

Although the surrealist movement was led by European writers and artists such as André Breton, Paul Éluard, and Benjamin Péret, one could see in their pronouncements why surrealism would attract the radical Black petit bourgeoisie. Surrealists explicitly called for the overthrow of bourgeois culture, identified with anticolonial movements in Africa and Asia, and turned to non-European cultures as a source of ideas and inspiration in their critique of Western civilization. In 1925 the Paris surrealist group asserted in no uncertain terms, "We profoundly hope that revolutions, wars, colonial insurrections, will annihilate this Western civilisation whose vermin you defend even in the Orient." And seven years later, amid economic crisis and the spread of fascism, the group issued a document titled "Murderous Humanitarianism" (1932) that consisted of a relentless attack on colonialism, capitalism, the clergy, hypocritical liberals, and even the Black bourgeoisie. They also declared war: "we Surrealistes pronounced ourselves in favour of changing the imperialist war, in its chronic and colonial form, into a civil war. Thus we placed our energies at the disposal of the revolution, of the proletariat and its struggles, and defined our attitude towards the colonial problem, and hence towards the colour question."[19]

For these Black intellectuals and activists, their dissatisfaction with socialist realism had to do with the suppression of key elements of Black culture that surrealism embraced: the unconscious, the spirit, desire, magic, and love. That most Black

radicals did not jump headlong onto the surrealist bandwagon, ironically, has to do with its similarity to the revolutionary core that was recognized as having always existed in African and Black diasporic life. To paraphrase Cedric Robinson, surrealism was not the path to inventing a theory of Black radicalism, but it might have been a path to recognition.

The Afro-Chinese Cuban painter Wifredo Lam says he was drawn to surrealism because he already knew the power of the unconscious having grown up in the Africanized spirit world of Santeria. Aimé Césaire insists that surrealism merely brought him back to African culture. In a 1967 interview he explained, "Surrealism provided me with what I had been confusedly searching for. I have accepted it joyfully because in it I have found more of a confirmation than a revelation." Surrealism also helped him to summon up powerful unconscious forces: "This, for me, was a call to Africa. I said to myself: it's true that superficially we are French, we bear the marks of French customs; we have been branded by Cartesian philosophy, by French rhetoric; but if we break with all that, if we plumb the depths, then what we will find is fundamentally black." Likewise, Richard Wright, who began studying surrealist writings in the late 1930s, discussed its impact on his thinking in his unpublished essay titled "Memories of my Grandmother." Surrealism, he claimed, helped him clarify the "mystery" of his grandmother, and by extension, the character and strengths of African American folk culture. He gained a new appreciation for the metaphysical as well as for cultural forms that do not follow the logic of Western rationality.[20] The artist Cheikh Tidiane Sylla is even more explicit about how surrealism reveals what is already familiar in African culture. "In the ecologically balanced tribal cultures of Africa," he writes, "the surrealist spirit is deeply embedded in social tradition. The 'mysticism' prevalent in all Black African philosophy presupposes a highly charged psychic world in which every individual agrees to forget himself or herself in order to concentrate on the least known instances of the mind's movement—a thoroughly emancipatory experience." He further asserts that in Africa, the practice of poetry was always a way of life, whereas in the West, surrealism was the product of a long philosophical and political struggle "to recover what the traditional African has never lost."[21]

In many respects, the assertions of Sylla and other Black surrealists resonate powerfully with Robinson's description of the nature of the Black Radical Tradition. For the Africans whom Robinson identified as the progenitors of this tradition in the New World, he insists that the focus of their revolt "was [always] on the structures of the mind. Its epistemology granted supremacy to metaphysics not the material" (169). One can easily surmise from *Black Marxism* that surrealism might have been, at least for some, the missing link that brought Black intellectuals (especially in the Francophone world) face to face with the Black radical tradition. The connection between surrealism and Black radicalism certainly deserves greater exploration.

Of course, other missing links and roads not taken might shed greater light on the history and meaning of Black radicalism. It is precisely because Robinson has written such an ambitious, bold, and provocative book that it is bound to stimulate an endless array of questions and challenges. And *Black Marxism* is as politically important and

relevant now as it was seventeen years ago. The crises faced in the early 1980s have hardly abated. We enter the new millennium with fewer well-paying jobs, fewer protections for the rights of oppressed people, poorer health care, more prisons, more wealth for fewer people, more racist backlash, more misery. In these cases, we end the twentieth century almost where we ended the last one. Here, in the 1990s, so-called legitimate intellectual circles openly proclaim a link between race and intelligence; some, in very serious tones, are proposing the return of formal colonialism as a way of solving Africa's problems; the United States continues to wage imperialist wars; and the problem of the color line as Du Bois saw it at the dawn of our century is still with us.

Yet, amidst crisis and defeat, during the middle and late 1990s we witnessed well over a million Black men and women, young and old, willing to march on Washington or through Harlem in the name of atonement, freedom, self-determination, even revolution. And in June 1998, several thousand of us gathered in Chicago to launch the Black Radical Congress. The people drawn to these movements are looking for direction, trying to find their bearings in a world where Black existential suffering is as much an internal, psychic, spiritual, and ideological crisis as it is a crisis of the material world. We debate these tensions constantly—structure versus culture, spirituality versus materiality. They are tensions Cedric Robinson explores in *Black Marxism*, which is why the Black radical movement needs this book as much as the academy.

I have no doubt that the return of *Black Marxism* will have as great an impact on current and future generations of thinkers as it had on me almost two decades ago. I am also confident that this time around, it will reach a much larger audience and will be widely discussed in classrooms, forums, and publications that take both the past and the future seriously. Why? Because for all of its illuminating insights, bold proclamations, subtle historical correctives, and fascinating detours along paths still unexplored, *Black Marxism*'s entire scaffolding rests on one fundamental question: where do we go from here? It is the question that produced this remarkable book in the first place, and it is the question that will bring the next generation to it.

Robin D. G. Kelley

## Notes

1. On the construction of "whiteness," see Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, vol. 1, *Racist Oppression and Social Control* (London: Verso, 1994); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness* (London: Verso, 1991), and *Toward the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working Class History* (London: Verso, 1994); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (London: Verso, 1990); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

Two important texts that appeared after Robinson's work and that trace European racialism back at least to the early Enlightenment are George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); and David Theo Goldberg, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1993).

2. In addition to discussing Cox in chapter 1 of *Black Marxism*, Robinson makes a more explicit

connection between his work and Cox's in note 47 of chapter 4, below. Robinson further develops his analysis of Cox's contribution to a critique of Marxist historiography in his essay, "Oliver Cromwell Cox and the Historiography of the West," *Cultural Critique* 17 (Winter 1990/91): 5–20; also see Oliver C. Cox, *Capitalism as a System* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964).

3. See Robinson, 46, below. Henceforth, references to this edition of *Black Marxism* are cited parenthetically in the text.

4. Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, vol. 1, *The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785–1985* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987); Mary Lefkowitz, *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* (New York: Basic Books, 1996). For the sources Robinson draws on, see notes 53–129 of chapter 4, below. A recent and insightful intervention on this question is Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Afrotopia: The Roots of African American Popular History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

5. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

6. Of course, Robinson in no way is saying that these three men are the only ones to have confronted and eventually embraced the Black Radical Tradition. He is merely offering an opening, locating three figures whose lives and works clearly embody these ideas. One can extend his analysis to Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, Claudia Jones, Aimé and Suzanne Césaire, Wifredo Lam, "Queen Mother" Audley Moore, Martin Delany, the historian Vincent Harding, musician/composer/playwright Archie Shepp, and many others.

7. Ernest Allen, phone interview by author, April 7, 1996; Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 71–72; Donald Warden, "The California Revolt," *Liberator* 3, no. 3 (March 1963): 14–15. Perhaps it is worth noting that one of Robinson's first scholarly publications was a study of Malcolm X; see Robinson, "Malcolm Little as a Charismatic Leader," *Afro-American Studies* 3 (1972): 81–96.

8. Harold Cruse, "Revolutionary Nationalism and the Afro-American," in *Rebellion or Revolution?* (New York: Morrow, 1968), 74–75; originally published in *Studies on the Left* 2, no. 3 (1962): 12–25.

9. Robinson, *The Terms of Order: Political Science and the Myth of Leadership* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980).

10. Chinweizu, *The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers, and the African Elite* (New York: Vintage, 1975); Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Random House, 1981); Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Random House, 1983); V. P. Franklin, *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of the Faith of Our Fathers* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984); Manning Marable, *Blackwater: Historical Studies in Race, Class Consciousness, and Revolution* (Dayton, Ohio: Black Praxis Press, 1981), and *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America* (Boston: South End Press, 1982); Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982).

I am indebted to V. P. Franklin for his insight into the publicity problems that surrounded these and similar books. He told me an interesting story about his efforts to find a publisher for *Black Self-Determination*. He had written Toni Morrison, then editor at Random House and the person most responsible for their publication of several Black radical books, about possibly sending the manuscript to her for consideration. Random House had published Chinweizu's *The West and the Rest of Us*, which received almost no notice or reviews, so Morrison warned Franklin about the difficulty of publishing Black radical scholarship. He eventually published with Greenwood Press and, to his disappointment, *Black Self-Determination*—like *Black Marxism* and others—received the same treatment. (Franklin's book has since been reprinted as *Black Self-Determination: A Cultural History of African American Resistance* [Brooklyn: Lawrence Hill Books, 1992].) Aware of this conspiracy of silence, Franklin took it upon himself to promote this body of radical scholarship; his efforts included a lengthy review of *Black Marxism*, a shorter version of which was published in *Phylon* 47, no. 3 (1986): 250–51. V. P. Franklin, conversation with author, October 24, 1998; V. P. Franklin, letter to author, November 2, 1998.

11. See, for example, Cornel West, "Black Radicalism and the Marxist Tradition," *Monthly Review* 40, no. 4 (September 1988): 51–56; and Leonard Harris, "Historical Subjects and Interests: Race, Class, and Conflict," in *The Year Left 2: An American Socialist Yearbook*, ed. Mike Davis, Manning Marable, et al. (London: Verso, 1987), 90–105. Most of the reviews were short summaries with a few passing critical remarks. See V. P. Franklin's review in *Phylon* 3, no. 3 (1986): 250–51; Charles Herrod, *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 15, nos. 1–2 (1988): 153; Errall Lawrence, *Race and Class* 26, no. 2 (Autumn 1984): 100–102.

12. West, "Black Radicalism and the Marxist Tradition," 51.

13. Winston James, *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early-Twentieth Century America* (London: Verso, 1998). James sets out to explain the overwhelming presence of West Indians in Black radical movements and the American Left. His explanation lies in the peculiarities of Caribbean history and the profiles of the migrants themselves. This early wave of West Indian migrants were generally "race" men and women with superior education, white collar occupations, protected legal status as British subjects, experience as international travelers and sojourners, political experience in the Caribbean, little or no commitment to Christianity, and a tendency for direct confrontation rather than

retreat. For these reasons, James argues, they were predisposed to radicalism. A careful reading of *Black Marxism*, however, suggests that many of these characteristics, especially with regard to education and political experience, can be found among members of the U.S.-born radical Black petit bourgeoisie. Indeed, building on the insights of Amilcar Cabral, Robinson had already identified the key role of colonial education in the formation of a radical Black intelligentsia, but whereas James emphasizes the "love of reading" as a unique Caribbean cultural characteristic, Robinson suggests a more structural explanation tied to the imperatives of empire. Colonial rulers, especially in the British and French empires, very consciously sought to nurture a class of functionaries—a Black petit bourgeoisie willing and able to run things on behalf of the imperial order. After all, the love of reading was equally intense among U.S.-born Black people, as was argued in Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction*, and more recently, V. P. Franklin's *Black Self-Determination*.

More significantly, Robinson's findings call into question James' generalizations that West Indians adopted a tradition of "frontal assault" on forces of oppression while Blacks in North America adopted dissimulation, or "wearing the mask." Robinson identifies a tendency on the part of New World Africans to avoid direct confrontation and the use of violence in the Caribbean and North America; instead, these New World Africans sought to recreate village life on foreign soil. Indeed, Robinson places great emphasis on the absence of violence throughout the Diaspora and the critical importance of spiritual and psychic well-being. While I do not believe these positions are in direct contradiction, I do think Robinson's insights, developed almost two decades ago, might have enriched or complicated James's discussion.

Furthermore, while Robinson acknowledges the large numbers of Caribbean radicals in New York during World War I and the immediate postwar period—the period and place of James's incredibly rich and detailed study—because Robinson's scope extends globally and across a longer time span, he is able to locate the impulse toward Black radicalism throughout the Diaspora. Even if we were simply to limit our scope to the continental United States, once we get out of New York City and explore the South, the Midwest (especially Oklahoma), and the West Coast, the West Indians are not so prominent in radical movements.

14. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993). Surprisingly, *The Black Atlantic* only mentions Robinson once to level a criticism based on what appears to be a misreading of the text. Gilroy disputes Robinson's use of the term "Black Radical Tradition" because "it can suggest that it is the radical elements of this tradition which are its dominant characteristics . . . and because the idea of tradition can sound too closed, too final, and too antithetical to the subaltern experience of modernity which has partially conditioned the development of these cultural forms" (122). Robinson, however, does not use "radical" as a way of closing off other characteristics of black life, thought, and struggle—on the contrary, the term is a way of specifying the source of opposition to slavery, Jim Crow, and various other modes of oppression born of racial capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism. By "tradition" he is simply signaling the need for a long view, because his argument rests on his point that the logic of slavery and capitalism does not explain Black opposition, nor its particular nature; rather, Robinson explains, we need to trace resistance back to who Africans were at the moment of their incorporation into the world capitalist system. The Black Radical Tradition is not conceived as a static thing but as a process, one borne not only of African life and thought but also of European life and thought, one linked directly to premodern forms of European racialism and the subsequent invention of the Negro.

15. Melville Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), and *The New World Negro: Selected Papers in Afro-American Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966); Leonard Barrett, *Soul-Force: African Heritage in Afro-American Religion* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1974); Roger Bastide, *African Civilisations in the New World* (London: C. Hurst, 1971), and *The African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpretation of Civilisations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, 1979); Sidney Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*, 2d ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992); Richard Price, *First Time: The Historical Vision of an Afro-American People* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983).

16. Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992); Carolyn Fick, *The Making of Haiti: The Saint-Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990); Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736–1831* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992); João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). See also Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage, 1983); Margaret Washington Creel, *"A Peculiar People": Slave Religion and Community-Culture among the Gullahs* (New York: New York University Press, 1988); Sandra T. Barnes, ed., *Africa's Ogun: Old World and New* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); George Brandon, *Santeria from Africa to the New World:*

*The Dead Sell Memories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Joseph Holloway and Winifred Vass, *The African Heritage of American English* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Joseph Murphy, *Santeria: African Spirits in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), and *Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994); Karen Fog Olwig, *Cultural Adaptation and Resistance on St. John: Three Centuries of Afro-Caribbean Life* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1985); and Jim Wafer, *The Taste of Blood: Spirit Possession in Brazilian Candomble* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

Among these newer books, the one that I think shares the deepest affinity with *Black Marxism* is Sterling Stuckey's *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), which focuses on the ring shout as a key element in the construction of a black culture and oppositional ideology. Published just four years after *Black Marxism*, *Slave Culture* also recognizes the African roots of black folk opposition to racial capitalism, demonstrating how the ring shout's conception of community—as a metaphor and practice—shaped black thinkers as diverse as David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Paul Robeson.

17. Numerous scholars—Black radical intellectuals, for the most part—have taken up these and other questions related to themes in *Black Marxism*. While I do not have the space to cite all of the exciting work of which I am aware, let me offer just a small sampling. Aside from the texts cited above and below (not to mention Robinson's own work, which continues to explore Black radical movements, intellectuals, and culture), see Rod Bush, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Black Womanhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), and *Race Men* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998); Angela Y. Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday* (New York: Pantheon, 1998); Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Farah Jasmine Griffin, *Who Set You Flowin'?: The African-American Migration Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Michael Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1945–1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Gerald Horne, *The Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995); Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997); Lewis Gordon, *Her Majesty's Other Children: Sketches of Racism From a Neo-Colonial Age* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), and *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man: An Essay on Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Joy James, *Transcending the Talented Tenth: Black Leaders and American Intellectuals* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists during the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), and *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994); George Lipsitz, *A Life in the Struggle: Ivory Perry and the Culture of Opposition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1994); Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Penny von Eschen, *Race against Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: Race, Power, and the Blues in the Mississippi Delta* (London: Verso, 1998); as well as forthcoming books by Barbara Bair, Elsa Barkley Brown, Nahum Chandler, Cathy Cohen, Gina Dent, Brent Edwards, Grant Farred, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Adam Green, Jonathan Holloway, Peniel Joseph, Chana Kai Lee, Wahneema Lubiano, Tony Monteiro, Jeffery Perry, Vijay Prashad, Barbara Ransby, Nikhil Singh, Tracye Matthews, Genna Rae McNeil, Tiffany R. L. Patterson, Linda Reed, Ula Taylor, Akinyele Umoja, and Cynthia Young, to name a few.

18. Quote from "Surrealism and Blues," *Living Blues* 25 (Jan.–Feb. 1976): 19.

19. Franklin Rosemont, ed., *Andre Breton: What Is Surrealism?: Selected Writings* (New York: Pathfinder, 1978), 37; The Surrealist Group of France, "Murderous Humanitarianism," *Race Traitor (Special Issue—Surrealism: Revolution against Whiteness)* 9 (Summer 1998): 67–69, originally published in *Negro: An Anthology*, ed. Nancy Cunard (London: Wishart and Company, 1934); also see Michael Richardson, ed., *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean* (London: Verso, 1996).

20. Max-Pol Fouchet, *Wifredo Lam*, 2d ed. (Barcelona: Ediciones Polgrafa, S.A., 1989), 38, 192, 196; Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. by Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 67; Eugene E. Miller, *Voice of a Native Son: The Poetics of Richard Wright* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 78–85.

21. Cheikh Tidiane Sylla, "Surrealism and Black African Art," *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion* 4 (1989): 128–29.