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The Order of Disciplinarity, the Terms of Silence

JOSHUA MYERS

Music is the silence between the notes.

—Attributed to Claude Debussy

Don't play all that bullshit, play the melody! Pat your foot and sing the melody in your head or play off the rhythm of the melody, never mind the so-called chord changes. . . . Don't pick up from me, I'm accompanying *you!* . . . The *inside* of the tune [the bridge] is what makes the outside sound good. . . . You've got to know the importance of discrimination, also the value of what you *don't* play. . . . A note can be as big as a mountain, or small as a pin. It only depends on a musician's imagination.

—Thelonious Monk, quoted in Robin D. G. Kelley, *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original*

I.

The silences make the song. They remain in place not because they are oversights. They do not exist because they are forgotten spaces. They exist to make real that which must be heard. They are not merely spaces of absence. They determine how and what we hear. And obviously what we do not. To fill those silences then is to transform the hearing of the song. To play notes in place of silences makes the song unintelligible. It is no longer familiar. It is not even the song.

II.

While the practice of exposing and addressing silences has become a significant one within the academy, and while it is how some might characterize the leading motive of Black intellectuals in the academy, it is nevertheless reductionist and misleading to conceive of the whole of Black intellectual

history as a corrective to the silences that make Western knowledges. It is perhaps not ironic that the works that collect and categorize Black intellectual history and frame it as a project of addressing silences, filling lacunae, and making visible the invisible are, by their very nature, marketed as resistance to a silence. These works have mistaken their subject as *their* project. It is as if this act of addressing silences (the study of Black intellectual history) can only conceive of the silences they are addressing:

(the subject of Black intellectual history itself) as a project aimed at addressing silences, the perennial “dilemma” of the Black scholar.¹ And yet the glaring silence—perhaps the necessary silence—in too many of these studies revolves around the challenges that Black intellectuals have made to the very epistemological “forms of producing knowledge” that their rescuers have utilized to make them heard.²

Here we might raise a question, one that was raised by a coterie of intellectuals whose academic credentials were either nonexistent or less important to their work, and that is whether the silences at the center of this corrective work were constitutive of the disciplines that were subject to their exposure? What does it mean to expose a silence if it was not simply overlooked, but intentionally ignored in order to advance a particular regime of truth? Put another way, given the interests that disciplines serve and the political function that the university performs both historically and currently, do the silences that we believe call for our correction actually exist for a purpose?

One is reminded of the oft-quoted disquisition on the meaning of historical silences by the anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot in his *Silencing the Past*. There, Trouillot engages the necessary question of the relations between absences in the historical record and in the archive, as well as how the record and archive are located vis-à-vis power relationships in the social order, particularly those of the modern world. These locations reveal the key consideration that these absences are both logical and necessary given the importance of historical narratives and official memories of the past. Trouillot is often cited to endorse the projects that address narrative silences, that nonetheless attempt to remain *within* these official memories, neglecting a more honest insight about Western historiographical conventions, which is that Black conceptions of what it means to be human, Black “ideals of life,” remain “unthinkable” in the still domineering “framework of Western thought” that guides the very need to resist silence.³

In a recent article on this question, Jennifer L. Morgan revealed that it was only in writing *against* the archive, and thus against the normative thrust of historiographical inquiry, that Black women's lives could be legible.⁴ The writing against and writing beyond are hallmarks for radical Black intellectual inquiry, and yet how do we think of ways of replicating such forms of writing when everything that we are required to do in the academy asks us to write *within*, to correct absences rather than understand why they were constituted? What are disciplinary knowledges, that we should so desire their recognition?

Academic disciplines house Western knowledges in institutions that privilege and reward charisma, spaces, both conceptual and physical, that represent themselves as the prime locations to consider the meaning of reality: the modern research university. The conditions that exist to produce and make known facts about the world dictate that contributing to such projects requires the evocation of “new” knowledge. That is, one's contribution rests on the assumption that what has been said has never before been said.⁵ This conception of intellectual work naturally inculcates an impulse to challenge silences, to add sound to compositions that we imagine to be incomplete, to say something *new*. These corrections produce fascinating interventions that we argue reveal insights theretofore hidden. Our conceptual world expands. We believe ourselves to have contributed to our disciplines when those silences no longer exist.

Yet, if regimes of race construct the known world from a set and range of “admissible and possible knowledges,” then this means that they necessarily impute silences.⁶ The question of Black intellectual history, inasmuch as it revolves around how to imagine a world that disrupts those regimes, makes it an *inadmissible* product within the very regime that needs and requires race—as well as “normative” constructions of gender and sexuality.⁷ This is a regime that includes the university and thus requires its forms of producing knowledge: disciplinarity. And herein lies the paradox for the production of knowledge within the university. Whereas work that might not challenge normative terms of knowledge can easily be folded into the interstices of academic disciplines, perhaps advancing their range and scope, it has been the case that work that necessarily challenges the foundations of racial capitalism, the work that considers and imagines “alternative, oppositional, or simply different relations of power,” when it has emerged from sites within the university, has met a consistent refusal to be acknowledged—and where it has been acknowledged, it has met disavowal.⁸

III.

The ways that disciplines have responded to their exposures perhaps is a first step to understanding their sense of what the silences mean to their project. The ways that disciplines routinely contain and marginalize them reveal that much like other regimes of truth, disciplinary traditions are “unrelentingly hostile” to the “exhibition” of their purposeful erasures. Following the late Cedric Robinson, who applies this analysis to theater and film, a “discoverable history” of the racial terms of disciplinary and Western knowledges “is incompatible” and “threatens their authority” and “claims of naturalism.”⁹

Mentions that replace silences are structurally cacophonous to compositions already imagined as coherent. These interventions then are silenced, producing a double silencing: the underlying silence plus the attempt to reveal it. This returns us to the same normative conclusions that required an intervention. They are updated, perhaps adapted, but they are ultimately reinforced rather than fully abandoned. Trouillot’s example of the historiography of the Haitian Revolution is instructive. He argues that these historical interventions “were made to enter into narratives that made sense to a majority of Western observers and readers . . . the narratives they build around these facts are strikingly similar to the narratives produced by individuals who thought that such a revolution was impossible.”¹⁰ Further, and perhaps most importantly, he states:

Effective silencing does not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus. Its roots are structural. Beyond a stated—and most often sincere—political generosity, best described in U.S. parlance within a liberal continuum, the narrative structures of Western historiography have not broken with the ontological order of the Renaissance. This exercise of power is much more important than the alleged conservative or liberal adherence of the historians involved.¹¹

Of course, the same could be said about attempts to expose the racial orders inherent to disciplines. Another example of this structural hostility (but also much more) can be found at the intersection of history and economics. Black thinkers have argued for years that slavery provided the foundation for capitalist development. Works from such thinkers as Eric Williams, C. L. R. James, and W. E. B. Du Bois, who shared diverse origins but found themselves drawn to what Cedric Robinson calls the “renegade Black intelligentsia,” were not necessarily concerned with making a historical claim as they

were about making a political one.¹² In some ways they ended up doing both, but their historical claims were silenced if not occluded, less for reasons of historiography—even though they did challenge many theoretical and conceptual norms of the craft—than for reasons of their political stance. According to Peter James Hudson, the recent attempts to update and revise some of the central claims about the link between slavery and capitalism reveal inquiries that disavow the radical scholarship that originated them, a tradition “that derives historical questions as much from political commitments as from academic concerns.” The radical intelligentsia that drew the linkages, in other words, shared a central interest: “the modern project of emancipation.”¹³

A few generations later, historians and economists not sharing that political posture (or “racial” consciousness) have emerged with new studies drawing connections between slavery and capitalism without these explicit political commitments, which has required that they be feted as innovators in the field. This has not come without pushback. The economists that have responded, however, have been more keen to attack the data that supports these claims, in order to, it seems, free capitalism from the taint of an association with enslavement. The debate, which has prominently centered on Edward Baptist’s *The Half Has Never Been Told*, has focused on questions of cottonseed variety and the efficiency of coercion and force to produce a certain level of production and not the moral questions at the center of the very idea of capitalism and the resistance to the social structures it has engendered.¹⁴ Even as these structures are ever-present and the underlying concern, the debates about the new histories rarely target capitalism for condemnation and destruction. What has happened is that the exposure of a silence—the idea that slavery generated modern capitalism—was greeted with disdain, only to be embraced generations later, often cleaved of the ideological stance of those earlier adherents, in order to advance a disciplinary regime of truth, a project of historiography rather than human liberation. The new sounds were imagined as complementary to the old; a new chord was produced, leaving the original silences intact. The result has been the further erasure of Black thought and its complex approaches to understanding the world. Disciplinary regimes were (and are) required to be hostile to Williams, James, and Du Bois, yet flexible enough to embrace this “new history of capitalism” within its complex of knowledge.¹⁵

From a different angle, we might see the desires to project W. E. B. Du Bois as a founder of modern “American sociology” as an attempt to address a silence that is at the heart of that academic discipline: the foundation of

American society as a racialized system of order. And just as much, the ways that this has been resisted is evidence of a more sinister prospect: that American sociology as a knowledge project endorses that very order. For Aldon Morris, whose *The Scholar Denied* is the most representative of this trend, Du Bois's alternative "school" of sociology at Atlanta University both preceded in time and challenged the most-cited founding "school" at the University of Chicago, which housed a Social Darwinist approach to the question of race relations led by Robert Park. Morris argues that Du Bois challenges these foundations by asserting a social constructionist view of race, but also by clearly viewing his project as an attempt to liberate African Americans by way of clarifying and arguing for the destruction of the structural relationships that underpinned both American and global caste systems. In this reading, Du Bois's social science was so far removed from the "mainstream," because it was imagined to break with the racial capitalism that the latter was created to manage and discipline.¹⁶

While perhaps necessary to recover Du Bois and the structures that opposed him, Morris and others have nevertheless occluded the more pertinent consideration, which is, at root, an epistemological one. If Du Bois attempted to utilize science to undermine a racial regime and generations of sociologists, including those practicing the craft today who continue to maintain it, how is it possible that they are practicing the same "discipline"? If Du Bois challenged sociology's pretense toward valorizing innate racial differences and its desire to elevate them into scientific law, would not the subsequent adoption by American sociology of the very ideas Du Bois stood against mark his project as different than theirs? If so, which one was "sociology"?¹⁷ It is difficult to imagine the depth of Du Bois's oeuvre, so aptly explored in *The Scholar Denied*, as simply another subdiscipline of American sociology. This is especially the case when one reads "Sociology Hesitant," Du Bois's early twentieth-century argument against the idea that human action could be measured by tools derived from the natural sciences.¹⁸ One reads Du Bois's studies as necessarily grappling with the tensions between scientific methodologies and disciplinary conventions. Ultimately, however, Du Bois's "multimethod" approach intentionally flouts the logics of disciplinarity in order to more effectively wield knowledge as a cudgel in the pursuit of both a political and epistemological space *beyond* the constrictions of the disciplines. Again, the recovery of Du Bois's praxis is a necessary one, and that this effort has met a significant amount of resistance *and* incorporation thus far might lead us to ask about the possibilities of doing something other than folding Du Bois's insights into the interstices of any single discipline

and perhaps finding a space beyond all of them where we do not *have* to acknowledge his relevance, a space where the “liberation capital” of his work is assumed.¹⁹

While the impulse to correct the record is understandable, much of the work of addressing silences remains wedded to disciplinary practices that reveal their decadence. When we consider the questions of inclusion and rethinking discussed above and how they have been debated and discussed in the disciplines of history and sociology, we see the ways that disciplines are decaying, and their pretensions to certainty have led to conditions where they assert themselves as “ontological.”²⁰ Lewis Gordon makes the argument that at this point, disciplines become “self-circumscribed” systems operating under the delusion that they are “*the world*” rather than “efforts to understand the world.”²¹ Knowledges and knowing that emerge outside such conceptual systems, such political boundaries, such theoretical norms are not properly that discipline’s knowledge or—and here Gordon is most prescient—become the evidence of the need for the underlying knowledge to be more disciplinary. That is, it must conform to how that discipline has already constituted its world.²²

We can stipulate that some of the appeal in addressing silences rests in identifying exemplars that shared our ideas, our political sensibilities, our shared racial struggles, which we imagine would then signify that we belong, that the disciplines are redeemable, or, even more naively, that the silences were just accidental omissions. But again, the naïveté is structural. We should heed Vincent Harding’s statement about the meaning of vocation and its relationship to disciplinarity and ponder why it still resonates for many of us:

Our truth demands that we reject the artificial barriers of the academic disciplines to seek the human unity which underlies the experience of our people. Just as the best of the anti-colonial revolutionary leaders reject the national political, economic, and social systems created by the colonizers, so do we deny a priori validity of methodological disciplines, concepts, and “fields” which have been established without our participation, and which have often worked against the best intellectual and political interests of the African peoples.²³

Given what we know about the academic disciplines’ capacity to retain their ontologies, despite these critical interventions, we might ask what other intellectual projects might emanate from sites within the academy. While it is the case that ethnic studies projects necessarily engage and grapple with the

past, with social reality, and with the meaning of art, does that mean that they must necessarily intervene in the project of constructing new histories, new theories, and new criticist projects and folding them into the existing disciplinary traditions that silenced them in the first place? If it is true that disciplines are decaying, what does choosing “wisely from among the dying” look like for those who view knowledge as inherently emancipatory?²⁴

IV.

The project of Black studies serves as a pathway to the resolution of this question. It was a project that was not simply about corrective measures or a pivot toward inclusion, but one understood as a “critique of Western civilization,” of the very grounding assumptions that guided how disciplines approached reality.²⁵ In that same vein, the discipline (perhaps more appropriately the “antidiscipline”) was conceived as a reconstruction project.²⁶ But the idea was not to reconstruct or repair the West, which seemed to be the project of those using Black studies as a mechanism to diversify the university; a project of diversity rooted in the denial of its political foundations that resisted the liberal assumptions of the academy.²⁷ Black studies stood on a different foundation.

In the aforementioned essay, Harding argues that Black intellectuals such as C. L. R. James and others situated in university spaces during the founding eras of Black studies had “moved continuously beyond, and sometimes against, the disciplines assigned to them by the university. Instead they have allowed the experience of our people to become the organizing reality.”²⁸ This seems to run counter to claims that today seek to brand Black studies and other ethnic studies projects as “inherently interdisciplinary,” an approach that obscures the reality that this often presupposes a form of disciplinarity that is not necessarily “shaped by the truth of the black community, especially its struggles.”²⁹ The struggle of transformation must prefigure claims to disciplinary traditions. We might remind ourselves that what we are reconstructing is not a project from which we were excluded, but our memories of what existed before, our understanding of what exists now, our knowledge of ways of being and existing and producing knowledge about the world that cannot produce the silences that negated them.³⁰ Emancipatory work requires new compositions, with musical notes that are not crying out to be heard because they can only be heard; compositions that only contain radical silences that reproduce familiar, melodic sounds rather than the cacophony of noise; those that contain space-clearing, discriminatory silences that

produce harmony, rhythm, and balance rather than music we do not recognize as such.

Antidisciplinarity, counterdisciplinarity, or undisciplinarity, however one crafts alternatives to and of the disciplinary projects of the academy—such alternatives then are not evasions of the necessity of knowing. Rather, they are the abandonment of the desire to be included in spaces that can only marginalize. But going further than opposition, these maroon spaces created to think differently also privilege other ways of knowing that emanate from different political projects than those that guaranteed the primacy of the disciplines we engage (and embrace). It is not an accident that the disciplines of knowledge grew up and affirmed the liberal-democratic projects of Western society and began to fracture into countertraditions as the grounding assumptions of this order came under attack from anti-imperial, anti-colonial, and broader Leftist formations in the twentieth century.³¹ If the arrival of the postmodern moment mirrored the questioning of the regimes of late capitalism, then the reappearance of fixed disciplinarity in the modern academy mirrors the neoliberal hegemony that has wrested conceptual ground from the Left.³² Thankfully, this has not erased those earlier countertraditions completely, but it appears they are becoming less and less visible and appropriated to other apolitical projects. What role have disciplines played in this new dispensation? It would appear that they continue to carry political commitments that cannot be disconnected from the knowledge claims that they support and that are considered possible under their aegis.³³

In a 2015 talk at Princeton University, entitled “Mike Brown’s Body,” Robin D. G. Kelley asserted that his goal in undertaking a historical autopsy of the killing of Michael Brown was not to make a “historiographical contribution, but a political intervention.”³⁴ The work to be done required more than simply making one’s contribution to the “necessary” historiographical silences that have produced suffering—a deeper knowing also required an understanding that a critical lens from within these disciplinary matrices was not enough. Part of this approach seeks to reveal the facile process of rewriting liberal historiographies as contributing to the as yet unimagined freedoms that liberal narratives promise—and the freedoms stemming from other sources that these liberal narratives conceal.³⁵ Perhaps this sensibility can be traced to Kelley’s mentor, Cedric Robinson, who more than most was able to exemplify what it meant to critically engage the disciplines of knowledge, exposing both their complicity in the modern world and imagining ways of thinking about that very world as well as past and future worlds without reinscribing the orders of knowledge that made it—and that

“made” us, African people, into Negroes.³⁶ Like Kelley, Robinson, and others such as Sylvia Wynter, the question for us is not *whether* we should attempt this sort of fugitive Black study; the question is if we *can* in the places we inhabit.

For Robinson, this was the only alternative.

V.

New compositions, rather than additional notes. This is how we might characterize Cedric Robinson’s thought. His recent transition afforded the opportunity for many thinkers attached to similar academic and critical projects to reflect anew on this work. The chords of this work resounded for us because it showed us possibilities for freedom and for the expression of the depth of Black humanity that had been so constricted, and necessarily so, by the thinking traditions that define the academy. We hold on to the Black radical tradition as a conceptual path back to ourselves. It is a resolution to and a refuge from the alienation that is a product of academic disciplinary.

Robinson’s *Black Marxism* is the text that is most commented upon, for it is the work where he clearly distills the logical and spiritual foundations of Black radicalism, doing so in ways that were misunderstood by the few honest interlocutors that seriously engaged the work. But for those for whom this work resonated, admittedly a growing number, it has fundamentally shaped engagements with the meaning of modernity and Black life, but also the meaning of African spiritual traditions, and the political traditions they created and continue to create, and the ways that this has and continues to be captured by the radical intelligentsia.³⁷ One simply does not read and understand this work without experiencing a deep transformation in their conception of how the modern world should be conceived and reckoned with. And yet the work continues to be misunderstood, particularly by those more concerned with disaggregating certain components of the text, rather than seeing them holistically. This misunderstanding, perhaps, issues from a desire to take elements of *Black Marxism* and to discipline them—that is, fold them into the projects that guide how disciplinarily oriented interpreters imagine and order reality, rather than how Robinson charted that path. Historians of enslavement seek the text to contribute to their understanding of the lives and contexts of the enslaved. Intellectual historians grapple with the chapters on Du Bois, James, and Wright as well as, not surprisingly, the silences of these chapters. Sociologists interpret the question of class in parts one and three, attempting to reckon with the unorthodox ways

Robinson interprets its historical development. And Marxists of various disciplinary commitments assume the text is about—well, Marxism. The text—too often, and to our detriment—becomes disciplined, a practice that could be read as a disavowal of the intent and the tradition of struggle in which it was grounded.

No one has done more to interpret the conditions of Robinson's arrival than Robin D. G. Kelley. By arrival what is meant is not simply his physical location in the world of academe, but how he came to inhabit the conceptual space he did. In the days after his transition, Kelley penned "Cedric J. Robinson: The Making of a Black Radical Intellectual," which provided the biographical details to the familiar refrain, for Robinson readers, that his work was, at its base, both a critical and reconstruction project. Robinson *was* Black studies. Here is Kelley:

Cedric Robinson was a wholly original thinker whose five books and dozens of essays challenged liberal and Marxist theories of political change, exposed the racial character of capitalism, unearthed a Black Radical Tradition and examined its social, political, cultural, and intellectual bases, interrogated the role of theater and film in forming ideologies of race and class, and overturned standard historical interpretations of the last millennia. Like W.E.B. Du Bois, Michel Foucault, Sylvia Wynter, and Edward Said, Robinson was that rare polymath capable of seeing the whole—its genesis as well as its possible future. No discipline could contain him. No geography or era was beyond his reach. He was equally adept at discussing Ancient Greece, England's Middle Ages, plantations in Cyprus or South Carolina, anticolonial rebellions in Africa or Asia, as well as contemporary politics of Iran and Vietnam, El Salvador and the Philippines. No thinker—not Hegel, not Hannah Arendt, not even Frantz Fanon—was above criticism. We can see why academia basically ignored his writings until recently: he threw down the gauntlet before the altar of "Social Sciences," and challenged Black Studies to embrace its radical mission, which he once described as "a critique of Western Civilization."³⁸

Kelley is correct to assert that no discipline could contain them, that his thought was uncontainable. We might extend the point by going back to Trouillot's insights above; Cedric Robinson's thought was *unthinkable*. It is in his unthinking of the thinking traditions of Western order where we find a viable location to ponder the doings of the academy, and the possible undoings of its imperial logics and how they structure how we think of

ourselves and others. As Kelley states, Robinson was ignored, but he was ignored by people who could not afford to listen. But we who believe in freedom cannot afford to close our ears. His silencing should reveal to us not only different sounds, but new ways of hearing.

VI.

While Robinson's aforementioned magnum opus, *Black Marxism*, contains the kernel of this methodological unthinking and has received a fair amount of attention for those seeking to unthink Western radicalism and its necessary silences, the most unthinkable of Robinson's work might be the text that preceded it by three years, the recently republished *Terms of Order*.

A place to begin to unwrap the complex arguments of *Terms of Order* is the brilliant foreword to the reissue composed by Erica R. Edwards. Along with clearly stating the main arguments of the text, she pointedly connects the work to Robinson's larger conceptual project, particularly as it connects to the more familiar *Black Marxism* and *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning and Meaning*. In Edwards's view, *Terms of Order* is consonant with Robinson's method, a consistent critique of Western knowledge systems, in order to "carefully excavate the mechanisms of power."³⁹ At the core of these mechanisms, as has been argued by many thinkers, was "the whole of Western social science."⁴⁰ The task of the scholar, she reminds us, was for Robinson the dismantling of "the assumptions that found political science, Western statecraft, and the very idea of the political" rather than "Black scholasticism."⁴¹ This characterization is drawn from Robinson's critique of George Shepperson and liberal historiography and is interesting because it mirrors much of the argument above about historical silencing and the subsequent co-opting of historical corrections, and because it does for history, albeit in a shorter work, what *Terms of Order* sought to accomplish for political science.

In, "Notes Toward a 'Native' Theory of History," Robinson characterized scholasticism as the "the addition of 'new' facts or the challenge to old ones" as "insufficient in itself."⁴² A "native" theory of history would address itself to the idea of Africans "as producers of material and cultural wealth, as producers of ideologies and epistemologies, as producers of history," a historiographical project requiring resetting the terms under which liberal traditions were founded.⁴³ Edwards's invocation of this article is a reminder of the fact that *Terms of Order*, and Robinson's thought, was not simply a critique of political science, or the narrow question of leadership—it encompassed those and much more.

Robinson's "vantage point" for the discussion of his subject was that it was "inherited from a people only marginally integrated into Western institutions and intellectual streams."⁴⁴ And that secured for him the possibilities of excavating the meaning of what he called "the political" or "the order of politicality" in ways that were decidedly unthinkable. For it demonstrated that if political order, and the forms of leadership and authority that existed to enact it, were in fact mythologies, then it would stand to reason that they were, as he concludes, a "temporarily convenient, illusion."⁴⁵ Interestingly enough, one of the key features of this argument was that arrival to it was closed off from the very discipline that made the political its focus. For as Robinson demonstrates, the political was justified by the disciplinary practice of political science. And as such the only possible conclusion to be gained from contributing to this discipline would be perhaps the restructuring of order—which is necessarily structured by market justifications for violence and coercion—and not its dismantling. In fact, not only could one not understand how to resist the political from within political science, but one would not even be able to see how its foundations itself were constructed.⁴⁶

To complete this task, Robinson employs "instruments, approaches which have a marginal relationship to the 'world hypothesis' of political order—approaches which convene critically if not exactly with what Michel Foucault called the 'Counter-Sciences' to construct a 'mixed paradigm,'" which conceives of the rational elements of the political together with their irrational foundations in order to demonstrate the ways in which the former appropriated the latter to render the world more orderly.⁴⁷ With the countersciences of structural linguistics, analytical mythology, and philosophy of history, among others, Robinson unpacks the Greek origins of order and the Judeo-Christian attempts to contain charisma. In engaging Max Weber's understanding of the meaning of charisma and the political, Robinson is able to pinpoint his error:

Weber recognized the primitive and irrational elements associated with eschatological ideologies, whether Christian or Marxist, but in reversing these historicisms his theory of history remained no less primitive and irrational. His charismatic legitimation of authority was no less mythological than the traditions upon which it too rested. The mixed paradigm of charisma was ideological, epistemological, and archaic.⁴⁸

This inability extended to the antipolitical traditions that emerged in the West. In the final chapter of the text, Robinson demonstrates how anarchism

as a conceptual and revolutionary tradition could not effectively escape the episteme of the political. While anarchists opposed the ravages of the political, and while they resented its imposition on their lives, they did not oppose order. While theirs was an attempt to remap the various traditions of Western life along different paths than the *current* order—it was not a rejection of the *idea* of Western order.⁴⁹

The next task then became the fulfillment of the other portion of Edwards's characterization of Robinson's method, that of detailing "the radical epistemologies and ontologies that those mechanisms [of power] have been erected to restrain."⁵⁰ In the Ila-tonga, Robinson sought a continuous and transferable example of a conception of order that remarkably did not require forms of hierarchy and violence that had marked Western conceptions of the idea. While the tools for excavating this example—functional anthropology—were just as compromised, Robinson's analysis was able to avoid the assumption that the absence of order necessarily produced chaos; or what anthropologists labeled "primitive society."⁵¹ In the Tonga, Robinson found a society that found ways of resolving human problems from first-order premises that did not rely on violence and coercion, but on the notion that humans were not indivisible from their own (the Tonga's *mukowa*) and from every other "thing" in the universe.⁵² This required other forms of authority based on kinship. And it is this that remains unthinkable on spectrums of the political, both left and right.

The Terms of Order is one of a growing number of interventions that reveal what Western disciplinaries have necessarily silenced. And in the case of the other ways of knowing that Robinson has excavated for us—in this example the Tonga, and in his other texts, a range of different peoples and traditions—are those conceptions of reality that require different interpretive compositions to be heard. On those terms, to follow Robinson, must we resist and "subvert" the political—and other disciplinary traditions—as *the way* "of realizing ourselves"?⁵³

VII.

While Robinson's thought demonstrates that there are more productive ways to construct emancipatory knowledge systems, ones that do not revolve around disciplined categories for knowing the world, there is still more to be said about why the latter resonate: They are recognizable. We are all trained to think and categorize reality in this way. Breaking up is hard to do. But there is more, even for those committed to unthinking. There is the

methodological concern that these projects by constructing different ways of knowing, if approached haphazardly, could end up replicating other forms of silence. How do we imagine, as Hortense Spillers does, the kinds of instruments we might use to “play” these sorts of tunes?⁵⁴

First, we might address other attempts to play. Many Black studies compositions have been uncommitted to the playing of instruments imagined as necessary by Spillers and others and have thus been insufficiently attuned to the ways that racial subjectivities necessarily incorporated sexual ones, to the detriment of truly liberatory sounds. Not only were these initial compositions insufficient, but they also misread the Black radical tradition through a particularly Western “bodily” framing—ones that reified male identity as normative. Black thought in its most freeing manifestations might create a model that undoes projects of race, undoes projects of gender, so that what Wynter called “the human” might emerge.⁵⁵

There, too, is the conceptual concern that revolves around how expansive these models might be and/or how closed they should be. Does antidisiplinary work require permeable boundaries, and if so, where would we mark their conceptual limits?

These are critical issues to be resolved. As a consequence, Black studies—insofar as it seeks to claim for itself the goal of emancipation—remains undone, unfinished. And depending on how one resolves the above concerns, it might be conceived as perpetually incomplete, if the task is to consistently comprehend the real. What remains to be seen is whether we can take the energies consumed by projects of inclusion and diversity and the impulse to frame intellectual work as contributing to silences at the core of Western traditions of knowledge, and replace them with a project that does not require such silencing, even as it engages these knowledges, à la Robinson. Part of that requires unearthing the deep philosophical basis of the need to respond to silences. Lewis Gordon writes of African philosophers and their approach to the question of erasure, not as a project of addressing silences, but from a deeper need to address the “disappearance” of ancestors who must remain in view, as they must inhabit our present as much as our past:

For the African philosopher and intellectual historian, the narrative is about ancestors and their deeds and thoughts and their suffering. If part of their suffering was their “disappearance,” which may be in effect similar to the wrong of an improper burial, then the act of getting the past right is also a corrective act of justice through the resources of truth. It makes the role of the African philosopher, whether that philosopher likes it or not, more than

secular notions of method and procedure, and it poses a challenge that transcends aspirations enmeshed in the dialectics of professional recognition.⁵⁶

The way from here to there is less a question of intellectual capacity than it is one portending other kinds of concerns. Creating proper ways of correcting centuries of Africans subjected to “improper burials” has been sacrificed at the behest of the “academic” concern of professional viability. Disciplines have made “realizing ourselves” a professional liability. And thus the kind of reimagining that Gordon, Robinson, Wynter, and others suggest is deeply political and vivifying them requires resistance.⁵⁷ The tools necessary for this reimagining require different kinds of training and modes of knowledge that resist the formations in which we find ourselves. As Lisa Lowe suggests, and as responses to our often misplaced desire to address silences reveal, there are many “matters absent, entangled, and unavailable” to practices founded under the rubric of formations devoted to academic study.⁵⁸

One possibility for another formation comes from the oft-cited work of Stefano Harney and Fred Moten. In their reading, those committed to Black radical praxis should take our locations in the academy and convert them into “the undercommons.” Harney and Moten’s framing of fugitive Black study resonates as a place committed to the unthinkable and to the unthinking of disciplinary silences that, absent an undoing, will perpetuate the role they have played in the power structures that enslave us. It is only by creating refuge for those whose life was “stolen by the Enlightenment”—by creating a space to think that is free of the academic and disciplinary justifications for that Enlightenment knowledge project—that we can develop a sort of foundation to think anew.⁵⁹ This must become the only meaning, the only relations of our presence in the university. The academy is nothing to us if not a site to perpetuate the tradition of spaces like the Communiversity, the Centre for Black Education, the New School of Afro-American Thought, and other, more recent formations.⁶⁰ Yet it must be remembered that there is a danger to institutionalizing the undercommons. The undercommons is the space for thinking about the formation and connecting to existing spaces that animate other ways of being and existing; it is not *the* formation. *The* formation requires a different world.

VIII.

We do not simply oppose the silences. We recognize they constitute a reality. A reality we would like to change. But we do not need to address these

silences, on terms set by the silencers, to change our realities. A new reality only requires us to take what was never here, in those silences, to enliven what is always there, in *our* consciousness of what is possible; our song.

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NOTES

1. Works that describe Black intellectual history in this manner or draw attention to this particular dynamic include, for instance, John Hope Franklin, "The Dilemma of the American Negro Scholar," in *Soon, One Morning*, ed. Herbert Hill (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 60–76; Jonathan Scott Holloway and Ben Keppel, "Introduction: Segregated Social Science and Its Legacy," in *Black Scholars on the Line: Race, Social Science, and American Thought in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jonathan Scott Holloway and Ben Keppel (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 1–37; Mia Bay, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones, and Barbara D. Savage, "Introduction: Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women," in *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*, ed. Bay et al. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 1–14; Kevin Gaines, "African-American History," in *American History Now*, ed. Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), 400; and Mamadou Diouf and Jinny Prais, "Casting the Badge of Inferiority beneath Black Peoples' Feet": Archiving and Reading the African Past, Present, and Future in World History," in *Global Intellectual History*, ed. Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 205–27.

2. Ellen Messer-Davidow, David R. Shumway, and David J. Sylvan, "Introduction: Disciplinary Ways of Knowing," in *Knowledges: Historical and Critical Studies in Disciplinarity*, ed. Ellen Messer-Davidow, David R. Shumway, and David J. Sylvan (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), 1.

3. "Ideals of life" is from W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," in *African-American Social and Political Thought, 1850–1920*, ed. Howard Brotz (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 2008), 485. "Unthinkable" and "framework of Western thought" are from Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 82.

4. Jennifer L. Morgan, "Archives and Histories of Racial Capitalism: An Afterword," *Social Text* 125 (December 2015): 153–61.

5. See William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Andrew Abbott, *Chaos of Disciplines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); and Tony Becher, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines* (Bristol, Pa.: Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press, 1989).

6. “Admissible and possible knowledges” is from Cedric Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning: Blacks and the Regimes of Race in American Theater and Film before World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), xi.

7. In discussing these issues, Jonathan Scott Holloway’s intellectual histories of Black thinkers during the Jim Crow era consistently frame race as an ever-present limit on their social and scholarly advancement, while concluding at the same time that racial discrimination in the imagination of these scholars was not necessarily the product of the philosophical foundations of Western knowledge. It appears that in his framing, Western knowledges possessed the potential to be made race-neutral and that Black scholars did not conceive of this complex of knowledge as inherently racial, but understood their mission as a concerted attempt to achieve recognition or make a contribution to their discipline in spite of their race and in most cases to bring an analysis of race discrimination to bear within these disciplines. Interestingly, Black studies is also projected as an extension of the tension between traditional Western knowledges and the desire for advocacy. See, particularly, Holloway and Keppel, “Introduction”; Jonathan Scott Holloway, *Confronting the Veil: Abram Harris Jr., E. Franklin Frazier, and Ralph Bunche, 1919–1941* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and Holloway, *Jim Crow Wisdom: Memory and Identity in Black America since 1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

8. Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*, xi. Following Neil Roberts’s insights, the refusal of acknowledgment is less concerning than disavowal, for the latter requires “a simultaneous *double* movement: an acknowledgement *and* a denial. By simultaneously acknowledging and denying an event, one does not silence its existence. Rather, one strategically locates an event and then rejects its relevance, knowing full well that it occurred.” Neil Roberts, *Freedom as Marronage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 29.

9. Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*, xii–xiii.

10. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 96.

11. *Ibid.*, 106.

12. Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 181–84. These works included Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944); C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938); W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Suppression of the African Slave-Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1896); Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Russel and Russel, 1935).

13. Peter James Hudson, “The Racist Dawn of Capitalism,” *Boston Review*, March–April 2016, 42.

14. On this debate, see Marc Parry, “Shackles and Dollars,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 8, 2016, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/ShacklesDollars/238598>. While Baptist and Sven Beckerts’s work do not deny the political saliency of their subject, they both tend to assume and realize the question of emancipation in liberal cloaks, which ultimately dismiss how racial slavery was rearticulated in the forms of exploitation that define the liberal traditions that followed it. Another contributor to the new histories, Walter Johnson, has discussed this question, as has Lisa Lowe. See Walter Johnson, “To Remake the World: Slavery, Capitalism, and Justice,” *Boston Review Forum 1: Race Capitalism Justice*, 2016, 11–31; Lisa Lowe, “History Hesitant,” *Social Text* 125 (December 2015): 85–107; Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2015), 3–12, 135–75. The texts that have been most consistently constituted as “the new history of capitalism” include Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014); and Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).

15. Importantly, this hostility was described as a tendency in liberal historiography by Cedric Robinson forty years after Eric Williams’s *Slavery and Capitalism*: “The impulse which is adumbrated in the varied critical reactions to *Capitalism and Slavery* is not (as Curtin, Davis and O’Brien have suggested) ‘guilt.’ It concerns the ideological imperatives of the present historical moment, rather than any obligation to the past. It has to do with the constructions of an acceptable discursive reality for a world-system in which the relationship between the Western metropolises and non-Western peoples is one of continuing a deepening exploitation. The ‘urgency’ of the matter has to do with the necessity of *reconstituting* the rationale of an increasingly brutal and visible domination in a post-imperialist era. This has required both a reconceptualization of the character of capitalist society and of the identity of non-Western peoples” (italics in the original). Cedric J. Robinson, “Capitalism, Slavery, and Bourgeois Historiography,” *History Workshop Journal* 23, no. 1 (1987): 135. Arguably this discursive project continues, with historians offering challenges to the interpretation of the new history of capitalism that both resituates Williams and seeks to undermine the strength of the thesis advanced by the newer approaches. See James Oakes, “Capitalism and Slavery and the Civil War,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 89 (Spring 2016): 195–220.

16. Aldon D. Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 3–4.

17. Morris’s analysis deftly underscores Du Bois’s challenge to normative considerations of race then present in America. While he argues that his “constructionist” approach has roots in his training in Berlin with the German school of historical economics, he never truly explains how both Du Bois’s and the American approach could constitute founding traditions in the discipline, even as he details the eventual impact the former would have upon the sociology of race (a “subdiscipline” that emerged much later). See Morris, *Scholar Denied*, 19–54. Julian Go’s review of Morris’s work appears to suggest that the ultimate conclusion one could draw is that the

discipline of sociology might rewrite its founding not simply to include Du Bois as an ethical correction, but as an epistemological one. Sociology must be crafted upon an entirely different episteme. Du Bois's school must replace Park's in the conception of the discipline. This call, a radical one indeed, would if enacted fundamentally shape the discipline to render it unintelligible to its other founders and adherents. If successful, would it still be appropriate to call the project by the same name? Does the rejection of a founding tradition and articulation of a new episteme require the creation of a new discipline? See Julian Go, "The Case for Scholarly Reparations," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, January 11, 2016, <http://berkeleyjournal.org/2016/01/the-case-for-scholarly-reparations/>, as well as Reiland Rabaka, *Against Epistemic Apartheid: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2010). Patricia Hill Collins's critique of Morris's project originates from a slightly different concern, arguing that Du Bois's ostracization from the sociological fraternity was necessary to advance his intellectual work. Her perspective suggests, quite convincingly, that Du Bois's acceptance within that field might have required his acquiescence to its norms rather than the radical project he ended up developing. See Patricia Hill Collins, "Du Bois's Contested Legacy," *Ethnic and Racial Studies Review* 39 (2016): 1398–406.

18. Written in 1905, the essay argues that the search for natural laws in sociology buried the reality that human movements are often products of "Chance." Morris explores this essay and ultimately concludes that it preceded the challenge of Robert Merton, who, in 1949, sought to build social reality on theories of "the middle range" between abstraction and empirical certainty. See Morris, *Scholar Denied*, 29; Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: Free Press, 1949). This conclusion, however, does not convince us that it could constitute the founding logic of sociology. In fact, it proves the opposite. On empiricism in sociology amid the shifts to which Merton contributed, see Roger Bannister, "Sociology," in *The Modern Social Sciences*, ed. Theodore Porter and Dorothy Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 329–53; Lynn McDonald, *The Early Origins of the Social Sciences* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993). These foundations and origins prompt us to consider whether sociology as presently constituted is capable of recentering itself upon Du Bois's approach to the study of social problems demonstrated in "Sociology Hesitant" as well as in his "The Study of Negro Problems" written seven years earlier. We might ask what connections exist between Du Bois's theoretical ruminations and his insistence that social knowledge be framed to advance a concept of political liberation. But just as well, we might ask what its limits were in producing that very possibility. See W. E. B. Du Bois, "Sociology Hesitant," *boundary 2* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 37–44; Du Bois, "The Study of Negro Problems," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 2 (January 1898): 1–23.

19. The resistance to Morris's work revolves around many tensions, not least the inability to see Du Bois as a theorist, which ironically is what inspired Morris to write the book after a conversation with Lewis Coser while still a graduate student. See Morris, *Scholar Denied*, xv. For other examples of this resistance see Go, "Case for Scholarly Reparations"; Martin Bulmer, "A Singular Scholar and Writer in a Profoundly Racist World," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39 (2016): 1385–90. On "liberation

capital,” see Morris, *Scholar Denied*, 187–94. It is important to connect Du Bois’s relationship to the advancement of knowledge to the sites of its production as well as its political inspirations. Du Bois consistently saw HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities) as a site of such work, despite their many challenges. See Du Bois, “Study of Negro Problems,” 22–23, and his discussion of his project in *The Autobiography of W. E. B. Du Bois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of Its First Century* (New York: International, 1968), 308–21.

20. Lewis R. Gordon, *Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times* (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm, 2006), 8.

21. *Ibid.* (italics in the original).

22. Here are Gordon’s ideas quoted at length: “Disciplinary decadence, as we have seen, is the process of critical decay within a field or discipline. In such instances, the proponent ontologizes his disciplines far beyond its scope. Thus, a decadent scientist criticizes the humanities for not being scientific; a decadent literary scholar criticizes scientists and social scientists for not being literary or textual; a decadent social scientist sins in two directions—by criticizing either the humanities for not being social scientific or social science for not being scientific in accord with, say, physics, or biology. And, of course, the decadent historian criticizes all for not being historical; the decadent philosopher criticizes all for not being philosophical. The public dimension of evidence is here subordinated by the discipline or fields functioning, literally, as the world. Thus, although another discipline or field may offer evidence to the contrary, it could, literally, be ignored simply on the basis of not being the point of view of one’s discipline or field.” *Ibid.*, 33.

23. Vincent Harding, “The Vocation of the Black Scholar and the Struggles of the Black Community,” in *Education and Black Struggle: Notes from the Colonized World*, ed. Institute of the Black World (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Educational Review, 1974), 24.

24. Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 316.

25. Chuck Morse, “Capitalism, Marxism, and the Black Radical Tradition: An Interview with Cedric Robinson,” *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory* 3 (Spring 1999): 8.

26. James E. Turner, in calling Black studies “reconstructive,” meant that “Black Studies represents a disillusionment and critique of ‘certified knowledge,’ and the historical currents of disillusionment with the mainstream are also a current of progressive contribution towards a more adequate social analysis and public policy. . . . If the reconstruction method, is itself, a workable procedure we have in Black Studies a way of arriving at new theory. Black Studies is a conceptual paradigm that principally tells us, like other academic discourse, what counts as a fact and what problems of explanation exist.” Elsewhere in this article, Turner argues that Black studies through reconstruction is fundamentally about renaming the world. See James E. Turner, “Foreword: Africana Studies and Epistemology: A Discourse in the Sociology of Knowledge,” in *The Next Decade: Theoretical and Research Issues in Africana Studies*, ed. Turner (Ithaca, N.Y.: Africana Studies and Research Center, 1984), xvii–xviii; for renaming, see *ibid.*, xi.

27. See, for instance, Roderick A. Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 180–208.

28. Harding, "Vocation of the Black Scholar," 24.

29. Ibid. On the question of interdisciplinarity and Black studies, see James Stewart, "Riddles, Rhythms, and Rhymes: Toward an Understanding of Methodological Issues and Possibilities in Black/Africana Studies," in *Ethnic Studies Research: Approaches and Perspectives*, ed. Timothy Fong (Lanham, M.D.: AltaMira Press, 2008), 179–217, and his seminal "Reaching for Higher Ground: Toward an Understanding of Black/Africana Studies," in *The African American Studies Reader*, ed. Nathaniel Norment Jr. (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), 420–37. On the disciplinarity of interdisciplinarity, see Abbott, *Chaos of Disciplines*, 131–36.

30. On this conception of Black studies, see Greg Carr, "Toward an Intellectual History of Africana Studies: Genealogy and Normative Theory," in Norment, *African American Studies Reader*, 438–52; Carr, "What Black Studies Is Not: Moving from Crisis to Liberation in Africana Intellectual Work," *Socialism and Democracy* 25 (March 2011): 178–91.

31. See the contributions to Messer-Davidow, Shumway, and Sylvan, *Knowledges*.

32. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Henry A. Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014); Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (Chicago: Zone Books, 2015), 175–200.

33. Gordon, *Disciplinary Decadence*, 1–12.

34. Robin D. G. Kelley, "Lecture One: Mike Brown's Body: Meditations on Race, and Democracy," (Lecture, Toni Morrison Lectures, Princeton University, April 13, 2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10bMkRRWeHE&t=2012s>.

35. On this question, see Lowe, "History Hesitant," 89–91; Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents*, 40–41.

36. "The African became the more enduring 'domestic enemy,' and consequently the object around which a more specific, particular, and exclusive conception of humanity was molded. The 'Negro,' that is the color black, was both a negation of African and a unity of opposition to white. The construct of Negro, unlike the terms 'African,' 'Moor,' or 'Ethiophe' suggested no situatedness in time, that is history, or space, that is ethno- or politico-geography." Robinson, *Black Marxism*, 81.

37. See Robin D. G. Kelley, foreword to Robinson, *Black Marxism*, xi–xxvi, and the recent *Black Perspectives* roundtable on the text, ed. Paul C. Hebert, 2016, <http://www.aaihs.org/tag/black-marxism/>.

38. Robin D. G. Kelley, "Cedric J. Robinson: The Making of a Black Radical Intellectual," *Counterpunch*, June 17, 2016, par. 1, <https://www.counterpunch.org/author/robin-kelley>. See also Darryl C. Thomas, "The Black Radical Tradition—Theory and Practice: Black Studies and the Scholarship of Cedric Robinson," *Race and Class* 47 (October 2005): 1–22.

39. Erica R. Edwards, foreword to *The Terms of Order: Political Science and the Myth of Leadership*, by Cedric J. Robinson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), xix.

40. Ibid., xvii.

41. Ibid.

42. Cedric Robinson, "Notes Toward a 'Native' Theory of History," *Review 4* (Summer 1980): 46.
43. *Ibid.*, 48.
44. Edwards, foreword, xxx.
45. Robinson, *Terms of Order*, 215.
46. See *ibid.*, 9–26.
47. *Ibid.*, 6.
48. *Ibid.*, 155.
49. *Ibid.*, 184–85.
50. Edwards, foreword, xix.
51. Robinson, *Terms of Order*, 188–89.
52. *Ibid.*, 197–98.
53. *Ibid.*, 215.
54. "The black creative intellectual does not make music, as it were, and should not try, but he/she can 'play.' What, then, is his/her 'instrument'?" Hortense Spillers, "The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Post-Date," *boundary 2* 21 (Fall 1994): 94.
55. *Ibid.*, 114; Sylvia Wynter, "Black Studies Manifesto," *Forum N.H.I.* 1 (Fall 1994): 3–11. On the question of the exclusions and silences of Black studies and of gender, body politics, and the production of knowledge, see inter alia, Ferguson, *Reorder of Things*, 110–31; Vivian Gordon, *Black Women, Feminism, and Black Liberation: Which Way?* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1991); Oyeronke Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Gender Discourses* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
56. Gordon, *Disciplinary Decadence*, 73.
57. Carr, "Toward an Intellectual Genealogy," 439–40.
58. Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents*, 41.
59. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Minor Compositions, 2013), 28.
60. See Robin D. G. Kelley, "Black Study, Black Struggle," *Boston Review* 42 (March–April 2016), 17, for more recent examples of undercommons spaces.