

Heroism And The Black Intellectual

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Heroism and the Black Intellectual

Before and after writing *Invisible Man*, novelist and essayist Ralph Ellison fought to secure a place as a black intellectual in a white-dominated society. In this sophisticated analysis of Ellison's cultural politics, Jerry Watts examines the ways in which black artists and thinkers attempt to establish creative intellectual spaces for themselves. Using Ellison as a case study, Watts makes important observations about the role of black intellectuals in America today. Watts argues that black intellectuals have had to navigate their way through a society that both denied them the resources, status, and encouragement available to their white peers and alienated them from the rest of their ethnic group. For Ellison to pursue meaningful intellectual activities in the face of this marginalization demanded creative heroism, a new social and artistic stance that challenges cultural stereotypes. For example, Ellison first created an artistic space for himself by associating with Communist party literary circles, which recognized the value of his writing long before the rest of society was open to his work. In addition, to avoid prescriptive white intellectual norms, Ellison developed his own ideology, which Watts terms the 'blues aesthetic.' Watts's ambitious study reveals a side of Ellison rarely acknowledged, blending careful criticism of art with a wholesale engagement with society.

Amiri Baraka

Amiri Baraka, formerly known as LeRoi Jones, became known as one of the most militant, anti-white black nationalists of the 1960s Black Power movement. An advocate of Black Cultural Nationalism, Baraka supported the rejection of all things white and western. He helped found and direct the influential Black Arts movement which sought to move black writers away from western aesthetic sensibilities and toward a more complete embrace of the black world. Except perhaps for James Baldwin, no single figure has had more of an impact on black intellectual and artistic life during the last forty years. In this groundbreaking and comprehensive study, the first to interweave Baraka's art and political activities, Jerry Watts takes us from his early immersion in the New York scene through the most dynamic period in the life and work of this controversial figure. Watts situates Baraka within the various worlds

through which he travelled including Beat Bohemia, Marxist-Leninism, and Black Nationalism. In the process, he convincingly demonstrates how the 25 years between Baraka's emergence in 1960 and his continued influence in the mid-1980s can also be read as a general commentary on the condition of black intellectuals during the same time. Continually using Baraka as the focal point for a broader analysis, Watts illustrates the link between Baraka's life and the lives of other black writers trying to realize their artistic ambitions, and contrasts him with other key political intellectuals of the time. In a chapter sure to prove controversial, Watts links Baraka's famous misogyny to an attempt to bury his own homosexual past. A work of extraordinary breadth, *Amira Baraka* is a powerful portrait of one man's lifework and the pivotal time it represents in African-American history. Informed by a wealth of original research, it fills a crucial gap in the lively literature on black thought and history and will continue to be a touchstone work for some time to come.

Black Intellectual Thought in Modern America

Contributions by Tunde Adeleke, Brian D. Behnken, Minkah Makalani, Benita Roth, Gregory D. Smithers, Simon Wendt, and Danielle L. Wiggins Black intellectualism has been misunderstood by the American public and by scholars for generations. Historically maligned by their peers and by the lay public as inauthentic or illegitimate, black intellectuals have found their work misused, ignored, or discarded. Black intellectuals have also been reductively placed into one or two main categories: they are usually deemed liberal or, less frequently, as conservative. The contributors to this volume explore several prominent intellectuals, from left-leaning leaders such as W. E. B. Du Bois to conservative intellectuals like Thomas Sowell, from well-known black feminists such as Patricia Hill Collins to Marxists like Claudia Jones, to underscore the variety of black intellectual thought in the United States. Contributors also situate the development of the lines of black intellectual thought within the broader history from which these trends emerged. The result gathers essays that offer entry into a host of rich intellectual traditions.

Crisis of the Black Intellectual

Detailing the evolution of black-intellectual discourse since the 1960s, this assessment points to a lack of ongoing discussion about the role of intellectuals--black or white--in our society and insists that the experience of black Americans is so complex it deserves the closest and most honest scrutiny possible from black writers and academics.

Characters of Blood

Across the centuries, the acts and arts of black heroism have inspired a provocative, experimental, and self-reflexive intellectual, political, and aesthetic tradition. In *Characters of Blood*, Celeste-Marie Bernier illuminates the ways in which six iconic men and women--Toussaint Louverture, Nathaniel Turner, Sengbe Pieh, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and Harriet Tubman--challenged the dominant conceptualizations of their histories and played a key role in the construction of an alternative visual and textual archive. While these figures have survived as symbolic touchstones, Bernier contends that scholars have yet to do justice to their complex bodies of work or their multifaceted lives. Adopting a comparative and transatlantic approach to her subjects' remarkable life stories, the author analyzes a wealth of creative work--from literature, drama, and art to public monuments, religious tracts, and historical narratives--to show how it represents enslaved heroism throughout the United States, Africa, and the Caribbean. In mapping this black diasporic tradition of resistance, Bernier intends not only to reveal the limitations and distortions on record but also to complicate the definitions of black heroism that have been restricted by ideological boundaries between heroic and anti-heroic sites and sights of struggle.

Harold Cruse's *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* Reconsidered

A collection of essays looking back at the influence of *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, first published 35 years ago.

The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual Reconsidered

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Examines whether cultural studies has been too dismissive of the tradition of literary-cultural criticism that preceded it

Cultural Conservatism, Political Liberalism

D.H. Melhem's clear introductions and frank interviews provide insight into the contemporary social and political consciousness of six acclaimed poets: Amiri Baraka, Gwendolyn Brooks, Jayne Cortez, Haki R. Madhubuti, Dudley Randall, and Sonia Sanchez. Since the 1960s, the poet hero has characterized a significant segment of Black American poetry. The six poets interviewed here have participated in and shaped the vanguard of this movement. Their poetry reflects the critical alternatives of African American life—separatism and integration, feminism and sexual identity, religion and spirituality, humanism and Marxism, nationalism and internationalism. They unite in their commitment to Black solidarity and advancement.

Heroism in the New Black Poetry

Houston A. Baker Jr. condemns black intellectuals who, he believes, have turned their backs on the tradition of racial activism in America. In their literature, speeches, and academic and public behavior, Baker identifies a "hungry generation" eager for power, respect, and money. Critiquing his own impoverished childhood in the "Little Africa" section of Louisville, Kentucky, Baker seeks to understand the shaping of this new public figure. He also revisits classical sites of African American literary and historical criticism and critique, and devotes chapters to the writing and thought of such black academic superstars as Cornel West, Michael Eric Dyson, and Henry Louis Gates Jr.; Hoover Institution senior fellow Shelby Steele; Yale law professor Stephen Carter; and Manhattan Institute fellow John McWhorter. Baker's provocative investigation into the disingenuous posturing of these and other individuals exposes what he deems to be a tragic betrayal of the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. He urges black intellectuals to reestablish both sacred and secular connections with local communities and rediscover the value of social responsibility. As Baker sees it, the mission of the black intellectual today is not to do great things but to do specific, racially based work that is in the interest of the black majority.

Betrayal

To study this transition from universalism to cultural particularism, Richard King focuses on the arguments of major thinkers, movements, and traditions of thought, attempting to construct a map of the ideological positions that were staked out and an intellectual history of this transition.

Race, Culture, and the Intellectuals, 1940–1970

Defiance of the law, uses of indirection, moral lapses, and bad habits are as much a part of the folk-transmitted biography of King as they are a part of writers' depictions of him in literary texts. Harris first demonstrates that during the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, when writers such as Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, and LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) were rising stars in African American poetry, King's philosophy of nonviolence was out of step with prevailing notions of militancy (Black Power), and their literature reflected that division. In the quieter times of the 1970s and 1980s and into the twenty-first century, however, treatments of King and his philosophy in African American literature changed. Writers who initially rejected him and nonviolence became ardent admirers and boosters, particularly in the years following his assassination. By the 1980s, many writers skeptical about King had reevaluated him and began to address him as a fallen hero.

Martin Luther King Jr., Heroism, and African American Literature

In *Hidden Heroism*, Robert Edgerton investigates the history of Afro-American participation in American wars, from the French and Indian War to the present. He argues that blacks in American society have long suffered from a "natural coward" stereotype that is implicit in the racism propagated from America's earliest days, and often intensified as blacks slowly received freedom in American society. For instance, blacks served admirably in various wars, returned home after their service to short-term recognition, and then soon found themselves even more seriously entrenched in a racist system because they were perceived as a threat to whites. This was true, Edgerton argues, until the Civil Rights movement and Vietnam, though the stereotypes have not been fully eradicated. In this book,

Edgerton provides an accessible and well-informed tour through this little-known, but significant aspect of race in American military history.

Hidden Heroism

First published in 1967 in the wake of race riots and integration fears, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* is an indispensable history and urgent critique of the black left from the Harlem Renaissance through the black arts movement.

The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual

The Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture is the first comprehensive reference book to provide multidisciplinary coverage of the field of black cultural production in Britain. The publication is of particular value because despite attracting growing academic interest in recent years, this field is still often subject to critical and institutional neglect. For the purpose of the Companion, the term 'black' is used to signify African, Caribbean and South Asian ethnicities, while at the same time addressing the debates concerning notions of black Britishness and cultural identity. This single volume Companion covers seven intersecting areas of black British cultural production since 1970: writing, music, visual and plastic arts, performance works, film and cinema, fashion and design, and intellectual life. With entries on distinguished practitioners, key intellectuals, seminal organizations and concepts, as well as popular cultural forms and local activities, the Companion is packed with information and suggestions for further reading, as well as offering a wide lens on the events and issues that have shaped the cultural interactions and productions of black Britain over the last thirty years. With a range of specialist advisors and contributors, this work promises to be an invaluable sourcebook for students, researchers and academics interested in exploring the diverse, complex and exciting field of black cultural forms in postcolonial Britain.

Companion to Contemporary Black British Culture

In his groundbreaking new book Charles Pete Banner-Haley explores the history of African American intellectualism and reveals the efforts of black intellectuals in the ongoing struggle against racism, showing how they have responded to Jim Crow segregation, violence against black Americans, and the more subtle racism of the postintegration age. Banner-Haley asserts that African American intellectuals—including academicians, social critics, activists, and writers—serve to generate debate, policy, and change, acting as a moral force to persuade Americans to acknowledge their history of slavery and racism, become more inclusive and accepting of humanity, and take responsibility for social justice. Other topics addressed in this insightful study include the disconnection over time between black intellectuals and the masses for which they speak; the ways African American intellectuals identify themselves in relation to the larger black community, America as a whole, and the rest of the world; how black intellectuals have gained legitimacy in American society and have accrued moral capital, especially in the area of civil rights; and how that moral capital has been expended. Among the influential figures covered in the book are W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, Richard Wright, James Weldon Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier, Ralph Bunche, Oliver C. Cox, George S. Schuyler, Zora Neale Hurston, Martin Luther King, Jr., Jesse Jackson, Cornel West, Toni Morrison, bell hooks, Charles Johnson, and Barack Obama. African American intellectuals, as Banner-Haley makes clear, run the political gamut from liberal to conservative. He discusses the emergence of black conservatism, with its accompanying questions about affirmative action, government intervention on behalf of African Americans, and the notion of a color-blind society. He also looks at how popular music—particularly rap and hip-hop—television, movies, cartoons, and other media have functioned as arenas for investigating questions of identity, exploring whether African American intellectuals can also be authentically black. A concluding discussion of the so-called browning of America, and the subsequent rise in visibility and influence of black intellectuals culminates with the historic election of President Barack Obama, an African American intellectual who has made significant contributions to American society through his books, articles, and speeches. Banner-Haley ponders what Obama's election will mean for the future of race relations and black intellectualism in America.

From Du Bois to Obama

Uncertain Empire examines the idea of the Cold War and its application to the writing of American history.

Uncertain Empire

AcknowledgmentsIntroduction: Black Power RevisitedEddie S. Glaude Jr.1. The Paradox of the African American RebellionCornel West2. Black Particularity ReconsideredAdolph L. Reed Jr.3. Stormy Weather: Reconstructing Black (Inter)Nationalism in the Cold War EraRobin D. G. Kelley4. Reflecting Black: Zimbabwe and U.S. Black NationalismGerald Horne5. Conflict and Chorus: Reconsidering Toni Cade's *The Black Woman: An Anthology*Farah Jasmine Griffin6. Africa on My Mind: Gender, Counter Discourse, and African American NationalismE. Frances White7. Standing in for the State: Black Nationalism and "Writing" the Black SubjectWahneema Lubiano8. Nationalism and Social Division in Black Arts Poetry of the 1960sPhillip Brian Harper9. "Black Is Back, and It's Bound to Sell!": Nationalist Desire and the Production of Black Popular CultureS. Craig Watkins10. After The Fire Next Time: James Baldwin's Postconsensus Double BindWill Walker11. Theses on Black NationalismJeffrey StoutList of ContributorsIndex Copyright © Libri GmbH. All rights reserved.

Is It Nation Time?

Inspiring and amazing stories that showcase 150 black heroes and heroines.

African-American Heroes & Heroines

The Routledge Handbook of the Vietnamese Diaspora presents a comprehensive overview and analysis of Vietnamese migrations and diasporas, including the post-1975 diaspora, one of the most significant and highly visible diasporas of the late twentieth century. This handbook delves into the processes of Vietnamese migration and highlights the variety of Vietnamese diasporic journeys, trajectories and communities as well as the richness and depth of Vietnamese diasporic literary and cultural production. The contributions across the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, literary studies, film studies and cultural studies point to the diversity of approaches relating to scholarship on Vietnamese diasporas. The handbook is structured in five parts: Colonial legacies Refugees, histories and communities Migrant workers, international students and mobilities Literary and cultural production Diasporas and negotiations Offering multiple cutting-edge interpretations, representations and reconstructions of diaspora and the diasporic experience, this first reference work of the Vietnamese diaspora will be an invaluable tool for students and researchers in the fields of Asian Studies, Asian American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Refugee Studies, Transnational Studies and Migration and Diaspora Studies.

Routledge Handbook of the Vietnamese Diaspora

Fifty-one essays by writers such as Langston Hughes, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, and Zora Neale Hurston, as well as critics and academics such as Henry Louis Gates, Jr. examine the central texts and arguments in African American literary theory from the 1920s through the present. Contributions are organized chronologically beginning with the rise of a black aesthetic criticism, through the Black Arts Movement, feminism, structuralism and poststructuralism, queer theory, and cultural studies. Annotation copyrighted by Book News Inc., Portland, OR

African American Literary Theory

For over a century, the idea that African Americans are psychologically damaged has played an important role in discussions of race. In this provocative work, Daryl Michael Scott argues that damage imagery has been the product of liberals and conservative

Contempt and Pity

A comprehensive introduction to novelist and critic Ralph Ellison and his masterpiece *Invisible Man*.

The Cambridge Companion to Ralph Ellison

An A to Z presentation of over 400 articles on African American politics and notable people, from the abolitionist movement to Whitney Young.

Encyclopedia of African American Politics

This A-to-Z volume examines the role of African Americans in the political process from the early days of the American Revolution to the present. Focusing on basic political ideas, court cases, laws, concepts, ideologies, institutions, and political processes, this book covers all facets of African Americans in

American government. Written by a nationally renowned scholar in the field, the Encyclopedia of African-American Politics, Third Edition will enlighten readers to the struggles and triumphs of African Americans in the American political system. Entries include: Abolitionist Movement African immigrants Barack Obama Black Lives Matter Black Panther Party Civil Rights Act of 1964 Emancipation Proclamation "Forty Acres and a Mule" Freedmen's Bureau Hurricane Katrina Institutional racism Integrationism Juneteenth Lynching Malcolm X Million Man March Raphael Warnock

Encyclopedia of African-American Politics, Third Edition

Prior to the 1960s, when African Americans had little access to formal political power, black popular culture was commonly seen as a means of forging community and effecting political change. But as Richard Iton shows, despite the changes politics, black artists have continued to play a significant role in the making of critical social spaces.

In Search of the Black Fantastic

In July 1964, after a decade of intense media focus on civil rights protest in the Jim Crow South, a riot in Harlem abruptly shifted attention to the urban crisis embroiling America's northern cities. On the Corner revisits the volatile moment when African American intellectuals were thrust into the spotlight as indigenous interpreters of black urban life to white America, and when black urban communities became the chief objects of black intellectuals' perceived social obligations. Daniel Matlin explores how the psychologist Kenneth B. Clark, the literary author and activist Amiri Baraka, and the visual artist Romare Bearden each wrestled with the opportunities and dilemmas of their heightened public stature. Amid an often fractious interdisciplinary debate, black intellectuals furnished sharply contrasting representations of black urban life and vied to establish their authority as indigenous interpreters. In time, however, Clark, Baraka, and Bearden each concluded that acting as interpreters for white America placed dangerous constraints on black intellectual practice. On the Corner reveals how the condition of entry into the public sphere for African American intellectuals in the post-civil rights era has been confinement to what Clark called "the topic that is reserved for blacks."

On the Corner

In the wake of the Kennedy era, a new kind of ethnic hero emerged within African-American popular culture. Stepping out from all walks of life, these pop heroes symbolized both the breadth and the centrality of the Black Power message. In this fascinating book, Van Deburg explores how this heroic came to epitomize a grand and empowering vision. 30 halftones.

Black Camelot

Maps the changing conditions of black political practice and experience from Emancipation to Obama with excursions into the Jim Crow era, Black Power radicalism, and the Reagan revolt. This book includes essays that define historically and conceptually discrete problems affecting black Americans.

Renewing Black Intellectual History

African-American writer Richard Wright (1908–1960) was celebrated during the early 1940s for his searing autobiography (Black Boy) and fiction (Native Son). By 1947 he felt so unwelcome in his homeland that he exiled himself and his family in Paris. But his writings changed American culture forever, and today they are mainstays of literature and composition classes. He and his works are also the subjects of numerous critical essays and commentaries by contemporary writers. This volume presents a comprehensive annotated bibliography of those essays, books, and articles from 1983 through 2003. Arranged alphabetically by author within years are some 8,320 entries ranging from unpublished dissertations to book-length studies of African American literature and literary criticism. Also included as an appendix are addenda to the author's earlier bibliography covering the years from 1934 through 1982. This is the exhaustive reference for serious students of Richard Wright and his critics.

Richard Wright

Activist, international statesman, reluctant black leader, scholar, icon, father and husband, Ralph Bunche is one of the most complicated and fascinating figures in the history of twentieth-century America. Bunche played a central role in shaping international relations from the 1940s through the

1960s, first as chief of the Africa section of the Office of Strategic Services and then as part of the State Department group working to establish the United Nations. After moving to the U.N. as Director of Trusteeship, he became the first black Nobel Laureate in 1950 and was subsequently named Undersecretary of the U.N. For nearly a decade, he was the most celebrated contemporary African American both domestically and abroad. Today he is virtually forgotten. Charles Henry's penetrating biography counters this historical tragedy, recapturing the essence of Bunche's service to America and the world. Moreover, Henry ably demonstrates how Bunche's rise and fall as a public symbol tells us as much about America as it does about Bunche. His iconic status, like that of other prominent, mainstream black figures like Colin Powell, required a constant struggle over the relative importance of his racial identity and his national identity. Henry's biography shines as both the recovered story of a classic American, and as a case study in the racial politics of public service.

Ralph Bunche

In the wake of the Kennedy era, a new kind of ethnic hero emerged within African-American popular culture. Uniquely suited to the times, burgeoning pop icons projected the values and beliefs of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, and reflected both the possibility and the actuality of a rapidly changing American landscape. In *Black Camelot*, William Van Deburg examines the dynamic rise of these new black champions, the social and historical contexts in which they flourished, and their powerful impact on the African-American community. "Van Deburg manages the enviable feat of writing with flair within a standardized academic framework, covering politics, social issues and entertainment with equal aplomb."—Jonathan Pearl, *Jazz Times* "[A] fascinating, thorough account of how African-American icons of the 1960s and '70s have changed the course of American history. . . . An in-depth, even-tempered analysis. . . . Van Deburg's witty, lively and always grounded style entertains while it instructs."—*Publishers Weekly*

Black Camelot

Essays by Owen E. Brady, Kelly C. Connelly, Juan F. Elices, Keith Hughes, Derek C. Maus, Jerrilyn McGregory, Laura Quinn, Francesca Canadé Sautman, Daniel Stein, Lisa B. Thompson, Terrence Tucker, and Albert U. Turner, Jr. In *Finding a Way Home*, thirteen essays by scholars from four countries trace Walter Mosley's distinctive approach to representing African American responses to the feeling of homelessness in an inhospitable America. Mosley (b. 1952) writes frequently of characters trying to construct an idea of home and wrest a sense of dignity, belonging, and hope from cultural and communal resources. These essays examine Mosley's queries about the meaning of "home" in various social and historical contexts. Essayists consider the concept—whether it be material, social, cultural, or virtual—in all three of Mosley's detective/crime fiction series (*Easy Rawlins*, *Socrates Fortlow*, and *Fearless Jones*), his three books of speculative fiction, two of his "literary" novels (*RL's Dream*, *The Man in My Basement*), and in his recent social and political nonfiction. Essays here explore Mosley's modes of expression, his testing of the limitations of genre, his political engagement in prose, his utopian/dystopian analyses, and his uses of parody and vernacular culture. *Finding a Way Home* provides rich discussions, explaining the development of Mosley's work.

Finding a Way Home

The Evidence of Things Not Said employs the rich essays of James Baldwin to interrogate the politics of race in American democracy. Lawrie Balfour advances the political discussion of Baldwin's work, and regards him as a powerful political thinker whose work deserves full consideration. Baldwin's essays challenge appeals to race-blindness and formal but empty guarantees of equality and freedom. They undermine white presumptions of racial innocence and simultaneously refute theories of persecution that define African Americans solely as innocent victims. Unsettling fixed categories, Baldwin's essays construct a theory of race consciousness that captures the effects of racial identity in everyday experience. Balfour persuasively reads Baldwin's work alongside that of W. E. B. Du Bois to accentuate how double consciousness works differently on either side of the color line. She contends that the allusiveness and incompleteness of Baldwin's essays sustains the tension between general claims about American racial history and the singularity of individual experiences. *The Evidence of Things Not Said* establishes Baldwin's contributions to democratic theory and situates him as an indispensable voice in contemporary debates about racial injustice.

The Evidence of Things Not Said

The Black Press progresses chronologically from abolitionist newspapers to today's Internet and reveals how the black press's content and its very form changed with evolving historical conditions in America.

The Black Press

Despite the plethora of writing about jazz, little attention has been paid to what musicians themselves wrote and said about their practice. An implicit division of labor has emerged where, for the most part, black artists invent and play music while white writers provide the commentary. Eric Porter overturns this tendency in his creative intellectual history of African American musicians. He foregrounds the often-ignored ideas of these artists, analyzing them in the context of meanings circulating around jazz, as well as in relationship to broader currents in African American thought. Porter examines several crucial moments in the history of jazz: the formative years of the 1920s and 1930s; the emergence of bebop; the political and experimental projects of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s; and the debates surrounding Jazz at Lincoln Center under the direction of Wynton Marsalis. Louis Armstrong, Anthony Braxton, Marion Brown, Duke Ellington, W.C. Handy, Yusef Lateef, Abbey Lincoln, Charles Mingus, Archie Shepp, Wadada Leo Smith, Mary Lou Williams, and Reggie Workman also feature prominently in this book. The wealth of information Porter uncovers shows how these musicians have expressed themselves in print; actively shaped the institutional structures through which the music is created, distributed, and consumed, and how they aligned themselves with other artists and activists, and how they were influenced by forces of class and gender. *What Is This Thing Called Jazz?* challenges interpretive orthodoxies by showing how much black jazz musicians have struggled against both the racism of the dominant culture and the prescriptive definitions of racial authenticity propagated by the music's supporters, both white and black.

What Is This Thing Called Jazz?

He explores how these novels and other texts confront national discourse and strive, though with inconclusive results, to open America up to new subject positions by offering alternatives to the dominant ideology." "Douglas finds contemporary intellectual and political life, against the backdrop of a mythology enshrined in proclamations, pledges, and public documents, to be impoverished by the pervasive use of clichés, which he identifies as figures of speech that stimulate emotion or action while shortcircuiting reflection. In its extreme clichéd form, the American Dream consists of nothing more than advertising slogans and popular culture images; yet these pronouncements retain a powerful hold on the will and imagination of U.S. citizens."

Reciting America

"Explores the theories of democratic individualism articulated in the works of the American transcendentalist writer Ralph Waldo Emerson, pragmatic philosophers William James and John Dewey, and African-American novelist and essayist Ralph Ellison"--

Reconstructing Individualism

"As Cotkin shows, not only did Americans readily take to existentialism, but they were already heirs to a rich tradition of thinkers - from Jonathan Edwards and Herman Melville to Emily Dickinson and William James - who had wrestled with the problems of existence and the contingency of the world long before Sartre and his colleagues. After introducing the concept of an American existential tradition, Cotkin examines how formal existentialism first arrived in America in the 1930s through discussion of Kierkegaard and the early vogue among New York intellectuals for the works of Sartre, Beauvoir, and Camus.

Existential America