

If white people are pleased, we are glad.  
If they are not, it doesn't matter. . . .  
We stand on top of the mountain free within ourselves.  
—LANGSTON HUGHES, "The Negro Artist and the  
Racial Mountain"

## Introduction

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Beginning in the 1930s and lasting into the 1950s, black Chicago experienced a cultural renaissance that rivaled and, some argue, exceeded the cultural outpouring in Harlem. The Black Chicago Renaissance, however, has yet to receive its full due. This volume addresses that neglect. The Black Chicago Renaissance was unparalleled in many respects. Like Harlem, Chicago had become a major destination for black southern migrants. Unlike Harlem, it was also an urban industrial center. This fact gave a unique working-class and internationalist perspective to the cultural work that would take place there.

The contributors to this Black Chicago Renaissance anthology analyze a dynamically prolific period of African American creativity in music, performance art, social science scholarship, and visual and literary artistic expression. Each author implicitly discusses forces that both distinguish and link the Black Chicago Renaissance to the Harlem Renaissance.<sup>1</sup> New scholarship, to which this volume contributes, suggests that we are better served and our understanding of black culture significantly enriched by placing its modern development in a national and international context and by probing the histories of multiple (sequential and overlapping—Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, Memphis) black renaissances.<sup>2</sup>

The "New Negro" consciousness with its roots in the generation born in the last and opening decades of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries respectively, replenished and watered by migration, and solidified into the creative force, the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s, was destined to reemerge significantly transformed in the 1930s as the Black Chicago Renaissance.<sup>3</sup> A younger generation built on the strengths of the previous generation of New Negroes and created a dynamic legacy distinctly Chicagoan. To be sure, there was considerable generational overlap, but it still begs an important question. Why was a Black Chicago Renaissance necessary or, for that matter, the cultural flowerings that arose in Indianapolis, Indiana, Memphis, Tennessee, and Los Angeles, California, to name only a few?

Speaking from a post-civil rights movement and a member of AfriCOBRA (1968 to the present) perspective, art historian Michael D. Harris suggests a starting point for considering the overarching question of why renaissances were important to African Americans in the first half of the twentieth century: "The momentum of over 150 years of derogatory images and characterizations flowed down on our heads with real consequences because white power enforced and depended on black racial identity. We reinvented our-

selves repeatedly to resist and frustrate the oppressive systems and representations that circumscribed us collectively, acting on the belief that we either became coproducers or might change the worldview by our actions. We re-presented ourselves to counter the other form of representation.” Black expressive cultural workers endeavored to produce “art that attempts to provide a double vision rather than a double consciousness,” and, Harris maintains, that “art imbued with that double vision locates itself in the center of an African American epistemology rather than on the periphery where definitions and contentions of race are found.”<sup>4</sup> An urgency radiated throughout the Black Chicago Renaissance, an urgency to create music, literature, paintings, radio programs, magazines, photography, comic strips, and films that expressed black humanity, beauty, self-possession, and black people’s essential contributions to not only the local geographical community but also to the development of global communities. In the 1920s, black Chicago commercial and cultural activity centered around Thirty-Fifth and State Streets. By the early 1930s, the commercial and social heart had moved to Forty-Seventh Street, and its intellectual and political heat radiated far beyond the borders of Chicago and the United States.

Black Chicagoans, both old settlers and new migrants, energetically engaged in the challenging work of community building, economic development, political engagement, and the production of a new expressive culture giving voice and form to their New Negro, urban/cosmopolitan identities.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, black cultural artists in music and dance and in visual and literary arts demonstrated cognizance of the centrality of race and sex in the distribution of power, the ways in which the social construction of both interacted to determine social privileges and exclusions. The challenge was to deconstruct racial categories and rid “blackness” of its negative symbolism and upend beliefs that held whiteness and maleness as the only authentic markers of American identity and citizenship. The creative agents of the Black Chicago Renaissance had their work cut out, the pieces arrayed, waiting to be fashioned into a new garment.

It is important to underscore that African Americans had been in Chicago since its founding in 1833. Indeed, an enduring source of pride to black citizens of the Windy City is the fact that a black man, Jean Baptiste Point DuSable, was its first settler.<sup>6</sup> By the

time of the Civil War, in 1861, the city’s black population numbered 955. Within twenty years, the city boasted the nation’s second-largest population, numbering 200,000 people, 6,480 of whom were African American.<sup>7</sup> World War I and southern economic decline combined with the rise in lynching violence to fuel the onset of the Great Migration and successive ebbs and flows of black southerners. The onset of the Great Depression for a brief period severely curtailed the flow of black migrants. The numbers began to increase after 1936.<sup>8</sup>

The two generations of Great Migration “New Negroes” who settled in Chicago gave added weight to the complex forces that spurred the rise of multiple artistic renaissances, or flowerings, of African American culture production. The influx of the migrants helped to fuel and shape the Black Chicago Renaissance of the 1930s through the first half of the 1950s. As southern migrants redefined themselves as urban and northern, they helped to propagate a dynamic, multifaceted, modern metropolitan culture.<sup>9</sup>

The Great Migration brought to Chicago a cadre of young black writers and artists. These include Richard Wright (1908–60), born near Roxie, Mississippi, moved to Chicago in 1927; Arna Bon-temps (1902–73), a native of New Orleans, migrated to California before landing in Chicago; Margaret Walker (1915–98), born in Birmingham, Alabama, was a 1934 graduate of Northwestern University; and Mahalia Jackson (1911–72), a great gospel singer, collaborated with composer Thomas A. Dorsey (1899–1993), born in New Orleans, who arrived in Chicago in 1927. A serial resident in the cultural capital of the nation’s heartland, poet Langston Hughes (1902–67), born in Joplin, Missouri, and a 1929 graduate of Lincoln University, used his literary talents, blues aesthetics, humor, and Jesse B. Semple comic strips published in the *Chicago Defender*, one of the nation’s most influential black weekly newspapers, to capture and convey with humor the hope, weariness, and excitement of the migrants. These men and women joined native Chicago-born black expressive-culture creators like Katherine Dunham (1909–2008), who attended Joliet Township Junior College before entering the University of Chicago.

All who contributed to the literary, cinematic, intellectual, and dance and music performing arts community in Chicago were at once captives and yet purveyors of Great Migration fever. The shifting terrain of black bodies fostered new urban geographies

and aspirations while molding self-affirming agency (or resistance) to white racial and political domination. Artists comprised the vanguard of the struggle to fashion new expressive sites for contesting racial, class, and gender hierarchies and reshaping public culture. They led the way in forcefully representing the humanity, work, and political agency of black citizens who moved from farms to factories and across regions better to seize greater freedom and equality of opportunity. In 1900, Chicago's black citizens numbered only 30,150 out of a population of 1,698,575, or 1.8 percent of the total. From 44,000 in 1910, the number of black residents reached over 250,000 by the mid-1930s. Langston Hughes's poem "One Way Ticket" bluntly but elegantly captures the motivations that had set the stage for early-twentieth-century black migration.

I am fed up  
 With Jim Crow Laws  
 People Who are Cruel  
 And Afraid  
 Who lynch and run,  
 Who are scared of me  
 And me of them.

I pick up my life  
 And take it away  
 On a one-way ticket—  
 Gone up North,  
 Gone West,  
 Gone!<sup>10</sup>

Moving north, however, did not automatically translate into becoming northern. The development of a sense of becoming and belonging in the black urban and northern freedom spaces, especially on the South Side of Chicago, was an evolutionary process more complicated than even Hughes's poem suggests. The ticket to the so-called promised land was never just a one-way journey. Many of the "gone" often returned to rural homes, if only for intermittent visits, or after death to be buried in a graveyard near the family church. Black southerners who did not move north made short and extended trips to visit friends and family in the north. In other words, migrants zigzagged between southern rural home bases and urban ones in northern towns and big cities. This fluid migration contributed to the southernization of the north, just as black migrants affected southern black perspectives. At its most fundamental level, the

movement of black people south to north and back again fostered a resiliency and determination to break mental shackles of subordination in both regions.<sup>11</sup>

Transformations in black consciousness and identity were also affected by major national and international events ranging from the Scottsboro Boys' infamous "rape" trials (1931) to Italy's invasion of Ethiopia (1935) and the "Double V" national campaign of African Americans during World War II, reflecting a grim determination to fight not only for freedom from fascism, Nazism, and colonialism abroad but also against legal segregation and social injustice at home.<sup>12</sup> Hughes's 1935 black poem "Call of Ethiopia," for example, exemplifies the interconnectedness of the local and national with a global awareness:

Ethiopia's free  
 Be like me  
 All of Africa,  
 Arise and be free!  
 All you black peoples  
 Be free! Be free!<sup>13</sup>

Black migration and socioeconomic mobility bracket the demographic shifts, identity and consciousness changes, and new urban community formations in the first half of the twentieth century. Black responses to white racial violence, ingrained negative representations, and constant stereotypical denigration provide one context for our collective interest in mounting explorations of the creative artistic fluorescence that occurred in the critical years, from 1930 to 1955, and the several interrelated themes that characterize and distinguish the Black Chicago Renaissance. Themes of class mobility and tensions within the black community, white violence and black resistance, hope and despair, and stirring debates over the purpose of black cultural creations form the backdrop connecting and framing the lives and deaths of two Chicago black males. Or queried another way, what do the *deaths* of two Chicago black boys and the responses provoked have in common? On July 27, 1919, the body of Eugene Williams was retrieved from the waters of Lake Michigan at the foot of Twenty-Ninth Street. A few days later, the deadliest race war in Chicago's history claimed the lives of thirty-eight men and women (twenty-three African Americans and fifteen white residents), with 537 injured. More black people would have died or suffered

injuries had it not been for a strong mobilization of black people determined to fight to keep white mobs from invading their neighborhoods. Still, it was the bloodiest conflagration in what James Weldon Johnson termed the “Red Summer of 1919.”

Thirty-five years after the killing of Eugene Williams on the banks of Lake Michigan, searchers retrieved the mutilated body of another black teenager, Emmett Louis Till (July 25, 1941–August 28, 1955), from the watery grave of Mississippi’s Tallahatchie River. His mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, made the courageous decision to open his casket at the Chicago funeral in order to let the world see what had been done to her son. She declared, “Let the world see what I’ve seen,” let the “whole nation . . . bear witness” to this crime.<sup>14</sup> The photographs of Till’s brutalized body appeared in *Jet Magazine* with its impressive half-million circulation.<sup>15</sup> The publication of the Till photographs marked a formative moment in the consciousness development of a generation of youths who would, beginning with the 1960 sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, destroy legal segregation and discrimination in the Jim Crow south.<sup>16</sup> Mamie recalled the warning she had given Emmett before he left Chicago to visit family in Mississippi: “I did warn him that he had a place down there that was a little bit different than Chicago. I told him that if anything happened, even though you think you’re perfectly within your right, for goodness sake take low. If necessary, get on your knees and beg apologies. Don’t cross anybody down there because Mississippi is not like Chicago. What you get away with here, you might not be able to do it there.”<sup>17</sup> Mamie’s warning to her son alludes to an array of important tangible realities and imaginative concerns that took hold in Chicago between Eugene Williams’s death and the eve of the departure of her son.

To be sure, the Black Chicago Renaissance had deep antecedents in the pre–World War I decades. Unlike the dozens of riots that erupted in the aftermath of the Great War in cities across the country during the crimson summer of 1919, black observers heralded the Chicago race riot as the most graphic illustration of the determination and willingness of first-wave African American migrants and descendants of old settlers to resist white violence in kind. A prominent black clubwoman community activist and a stalwart crusader of antilynching renown, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, had penned a premonitory article in the July 7, 1919, issue of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

With one Negro dead as a result of a race riot last week, another one very badly injured in the county hospital; with a half dozen attacks upon Negro children, and one on the Thirty-fifth Street car Tuesday, in which four white men beat one colored man . . . the bombing of Negro homes and the indifference of the public to these outrages. It is just such a situation as this which led up to the East St. Louis riot.<sup>18</sup>

Less than three weeks after Wells-Barnett detailed the origins of the East St. Louis riot, Eugene Williams made the fatal error of swimming across an imaginary line onto the “white side” of Twenty-Fifth Street Beach in Chicago.<sup>19</sup> Williams died from injuries sustained in the attack of white ruffians. Black Chicagoans fought back, rejecting the mantle of a bewildered, defeated, and disillusioned people. In the ensuing decades, they worked to shape a new sense of black identity and to create and secure autonomous spaces from which they proudly proclaimed their humanity and claimed rights to full citizenship and protection from violence and called for an end to economic exploitation and discrimination.

The “Red Summer of 1919” witnessed not only race riots over spatial geography as black people defended their citizenship rights but also an upsurge in labor struggles as white and black workers, on occasion, joined forces to challenge industrial capitalists’ refusal to pay them higher wages and make safer their working environments. In 1916, twelve thousand of the nearly fifty thousand workers in the Chicago stockyards were black people. The Great Steel Strike of 1919 involved approximately 365,000 workers in Gary, Indiana, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, including 7,000 unskilled black steelworkers in Pittsburgh. In Seattle, Washington, the Central Labor Council took over the city as 35,000 shipyard workers rejected postwar wage cuts. Although many labor unions refused to accept black members, there were enough instances of cross race collaboration and examples of shared working-class consciousness in the labor movement to give the big business–big government alliance cause to panic in spite of the corporate penchant for using black workers as strikebreakers.<sup>20</sup> It was Jamaican-born poet Claude McKay’s stirring poem “If We Must Die” that most poignantly captured the universalism inherent in the twin manifestations of labor radicalism and black insurgency.

If we must die, let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,

While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
Making their mock of our accursed lot,  
If we must die, O let us nobly die,  
So that our precious blood may not be shed  
In vain, then even the monsters we defy  
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!

O Kinsmen! We must meet the common foe!  
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one death blow!  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,  
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back.

The poem does not explicitly refer to race or labor. Nevertheless, African Americans claimed it as the encapsulation, or representation, of their ideological and on-the-ground struggles against racial oppression and economic exploitation. Many black Chicago intellectuals and cultural workers seamlessly conjoined involvement in radical leftist politics, membership in the Communist Party, and Marxist critiques of capitalism and imperialism with expressive cultural production. Horace Cayton, who had arrived in Chicago in 1931 to begin graduate study at the University of Chicago, declared that McKay's poem satisfied "a deep hunger in the hearts of more than a million Negroes in the postwar period."<sup>21</sup> In short, McKay's poem harnessed a complicated New Negro consciousness in Chicago that was as equally determined to secure economic opportunities as it was to create new cultural and aesthetic forms and to join artistic expression and radical political ideologies. According to historian Nikki Brown, in the 1920s a "wide array of black politics in the New Negro Movement focused on a few unifying objectives—ending segregation, securing voting rights, abolishing lynching and mob violence, reaffirming the legitimacy of black culture."<sup>22</sup> Black intellectuals engaged in sociological study under the tutelage of Robert Parks at the University of Chicago were embracing theories of race that abandoned assumptions of black inferiority. Scholars such as Charles Johnson and E. Franklin Frazier also focused on the significance of black migration and the consequences of social cultural changes, not only in the formation of theories of race relations and hierarchies but also in transformations in northern metropolises.<sup>23</sup>

In reaction to labor and racial upheavals, U.S. Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer and soon-to-be director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation J. Ed-

gar Hoover compiled a list of 450,000 "subversives," paying particular attention to prominent black activists. Chicago's Wells-Barnett was labeled dangerous. The condemnation of A. Philip Randolph was even more ominous. In 1917, Randolph and his friend Chandler Owen cofounded the *Messenger*, which they described as "the only magazine of scientific radicalism in the world published by Negroes" (my emphasis). The best-known labor leader of his generation, the radical New Negro Randolph was arrested briefly in 1919 for his activism. Already well known to justice department officials for his opposition to America's involvement in World War I, he was branded "the most dangerous Negro in America."<sup>24</sup>

A socialist and labor organizer, Randolph successfully spearheaded the formation of a black union of Pullman porters. In many urban, black communities, the porter, as one writer puts it, was "among the most revered and successful members of the community, he was a homeowner and civic leader who symbolized black success."<sup>25</sup> The single-largest employer of black people in the United States, the Pullman Company, during the 1920s employed more than twelve thousand black men as porters on Pullman railroad cars. According to historian Susan Hirsh, Pullman management forced black porters to rely on tips to support their families instead of paying them a decent wage. Thus "low base pay, extremely long hours, and lack of opportunities for advancement" frustrated their expectations for a better life for themselves and their families.<sup>26</sup> In 1925, a group of Chicago's Pullman Car Company workers met with Randolph in Harlem to organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP). They met there, instead of in Chicago, in order to protect themselves from repercussions of the Pullman Car Company. Randolph served as president, with Milton Webster as vice president. The BSCP's slogan, "Service not servitude," emphasized self-respect.<sup>27</sup> Thus, a decade before the burgeoning of the Black Chicago Renaissance, workers and activists, operating under a relentless white corporate gaze, moved strategically to create in private community spaces a means by which to protect their bodies and livelihoods while cultivating an independent race consciousness. Like Pullman porters, other members of the black working class were determined to distinguish service from servitude, to provide the former while fighting the latter. Unionization, albeit ambivalent, was an important aspect of the migrants' experience and adjustment

and in their efforts to survive and thrive in the destination cities of the Northeast and Midwest.<sup>28</sup>

The organization of the BSCP in 1925 came in the wake of the fierce determination of the U.S. Justice Department, backed by the resolve of corporate leaders in 1922, to crush black radicalism in the New Negro movement. The justice department's most notable success was the conviction, subsequent imprisonment, and eventual deportation of Marcus Garvey for fraudulent use of the mail to sell stock in the Universal Negro Improvement Association's (UNIA) Black Star Line. Clearly, Garvey's imprisonment and deportation dampened overt black radical nationalism. Nevertheless, a branch with approximately a thousand members continued to thrive in Chicago, where, due to the organizational activism of black women, impressive gains were made in electoral politics. In 1928, as a consequence of Wells-Barnett's successful mobilization of African American women members of the Alpha Suffrage Club, a Chicago politician, Oscar Stanton DePriest, won election to the U.S. House of Representatives, becoming the first black man from the north to serve in the Congress.<sup>29</sup> DePriest's election to a national office launched a striking and portentous resurgence of political engagement that would become even more pronounced during the era of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal as African Americans in Chicago and across the nation became increasingly adept in the use of the ballot to battle for their citizenship rights. In 1934, former Republican Arthur W. Mitchell joined the Democratic Party and succeeded DePriest in the House of Representatives.

The years between 1930 and 1955 comprised the most productive and intense phase of the Black Chicago Renaissance. A desire to live freely in "the metropolis" continued to characterize the aspirations of migrants as second-wave Chicago migrants arrived during the depths of the Great Depression, the World War II emergency, the most repressive years of the Cold War, and at the advent of the modern civil rights movement. Against the backdrop of the economic devastation and the dire urgency of the depression, the 1930s and the 1940s witnessed a resurgence of black working-class political radicalism that was captured and reflected in the expressive visual and literary productions of Chicago Black Renaissance artists. Here, historian Adam Green's injunction is worth underscoring. Studying African American life and development of cultural institutions in Chicago,

Green emphasizes, "compels us to acknowledge that blacks did more than survive the twentieth-century city; they initiated and appropriated its core conventions, thereby revising their terms of engagement with American society."<sup>30</sup>

Interrelated themes of wholeness and mobility, poverty and despair, struggle and resistance, hope and joy radiated from canvasses, the stage and screen, and in the literary voices of Black Chicago Renaissance social realists who shared the radical race and class consciousness of the Popular Fronts of the U.S. Communist Party, with whom they worked closely when interests converged.<sup>31</sup> The artistic work of Langston Hughes, Charles White, Margaret T. Burroughs, Gwendolyn Brooks, Katherine Dunham, and others was inextricably linked to the basic fabric of everyday life of black citizens. It was but a thin line that separated the black cultural workers from politically engaged steel, meatpacking, industrial, and service workers, and even that line was porous. The first meeting of the National Negro Congress hosted by Chicago in February 1936 was exemplary in this regard. The congress brought together 817 delegates representing hundreds of organizations and labor unions. The opening session attracted 5,000 people who listened to keynote speakers address the goal of fighting against the "cultural retardation of the cultural life" of black people and pledge to advance black culture and support cultural workers, particularly those determined to destroy "demeaning and stereotypical images in the public arts."<sup>32</sup> The unique labor struggles and organizing in Chicago compelled a unique cultural renaissance. In his contribution to this volume, Erik Gellman shows, for example, how Charles White's early drawings and sketches capture the fusion of radical politics and the cultural imperative that effectively distinguish the Black Chicago Renaissance from its Harlem predecessor.

On February 13, 1943, Hughes introduced his fictional character Jesse B. Semple, who in many respects was the comic embodiment of the southern-rural and northern-urban fusion. As one biographer observes, Semple "came to represent Hughes own close identification with the worries, fears, and frustrations of the working-class black community." Hughes called Chicago "a Joe Louis town with a knockout punch in its steel mills and stockyards" and "a Katherine Dunham town, seductive, determined, theatrical and clever."<sup>33</sup> In his columns and in the Jesse B. Semple comic strip, Hughes took the Black Chicago

Renaissance to the everyday working people, and although his humor and insights may not have raised wages, they did raise black self-consciousness.<sup>34</sup> It is also important to note that the long-lasting comic strip *Bungleton Green*, created by photographer William A. Woodward and *Chicago Defender* cartoonist Leslie Rogers, was published in the newspaper from 1920 to 1968.

### **The Black Chicago Renaissance: Arts, Intuitions, Consciousness**

This anthology advances the larger project by focusing sustained attention to the myriad dimensions of black Chicago's cultural fluorescence from the eve of the Great Depression in the 1930s through the beginnings of the Cold War following World War II and into the emergent modern civil rights movement era of the mid-1950s.<sup>35</sup> By the mid-1930s, Chicago's black population numbered over a quarter of a million, making it the second-largest outside of Harlem. As geographer James Tyner writes, institutional neglect, legal restrictions, violence, and intimidation all contributed to "the concentration of African Americans in impoverished spaces."<sup>36</sup> In the pre-Chicago renaissance decades, the consignment of African Americans into intensely overcrowded, clearly demarcated, and/or de facto segregated spaces proved critical to the emergence of black entrepreneurial leaders who in turn became patrons of (high and vernacular) black expressive culture as well as important employers of black residents, and important political forces. Uniquely urban entrepreneurial developments such as the black beauty culture industry launched by women like Annie Malone and Madame C. J. Walker represented one facet of these interwoven strands. The beauty culture created economic opportunities for black women to own their own shops and to hire other women who otherwise would have been restricted to domestic service in white homes. As historian Tiffany Gill suggests, these new "beauty salon" urban sites became "one of the few places where black women felt safe to deal with intimate issues . . . and have their dignity restored, a political act in and of itself." Beauticians were considered "trustworthy . . . respected enough to help them make important political decisions."<sup>37</sup> Migrants treasured their increased leisure time and disposable incomes derived from working in a thriving internal service economy as well as in the city's industrial and manufacturing

sectors.<sup>38</sup> Over time, first- and second-wave black migrants shaped their communal public spaces into sites that supported new strategies and claims for social justice.

Chicago's black elites, artists, and workers, men and women and their families, all became cultural consumers, patrons, and agents in the conveyance, if not commoditization, of racial pride. They collectively invested themselves in the quest for self-affirmation and imbued each other and their communities with a sense of belonging, the determination to struggle, to stay, and to celebrate achievement in spite of racial discrimination. Indeed, overcrowded housing, restrictive covenants, few opportunities for economic advancement, low wages, inadequate health care, and limited access to higher education and professional training, the products of entrenched white supremacy, were eerie reminders of conscripted raced and classed spaces and hierarchies in Mississippi. Black Chicagoans, at least, had room for hope, for intellectual growth, freedom to engage in social activism and to espouse liberation politics. Moreover, the circumscribed or segregated housing and public spaces that fueled black entrepreneurialism simultaneously facilitated the creation and maintenance of black-controlled and black-managed social institutions ranging from Provident Hospital and Nurse Training School, the George Cleveland Hall Public Library, and the Regal Theater (1928–73) to the South Center Department Store and the Savoy Ballroom. Black Chicagoans found an impressive array of artistic, leisure, and social and religious institutions, and legitimate economic enterprises existed alongside well-organized underworld policy numbers (lotteries) rings.<sup>39</sup>

Whether transparent or opaque, all of the structures and institutions that black Chicagoans created and mobilized to engender autonomy and agency were grounded in the understanding that existing racial hierarchies were neither permanent nor unassailable and black complacency was unacceptable.<sup>40</sup> In sum, everyday black residents continually improvised a fluid, resistant urbanity. Within the circumscribed communal spaces of Chicago, the work of visual artists, dance choreographers, literary creators, and musicians helped to mold both recognition of the right to freedom and of the license to perform and elaborate its myriad meanings. From the wombs of this space emerged visual artists White and Burroughs; literary artists Hughes, Bon-

temps, Wright, and Brooks; and musicians, composers, singers and dance performers ranging from Dorsey and Dunham to Jackson and Muddy Waters. These artists countered the stereotypical negative images and estimation that prevailed outside of the “Black Metropolis.” In synchronic ways, the artistic community provided new representations of black humanity and articulated the pride, hope, humor, dreams, desires, frustrations, anger, and beauty in the lives of everyday black people.

The rich cultural productions of the Black Chicago Renaissance reflected the critical perspective essential to empowerment, hope, and change. It breached the Du Boisian “double consciousness” that echoed a lingering sense or feeling of not belonging or measuring up in the eyes of white America. Chicago native, dramatist Lorraine Hansberry, brilliantly captured these complexities. Her acclaimed award-winning play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, written in 1956, premiered on March 11, 1959, on Broadway (New York) and launched the modern era in black theater. Hansberry assessed and analyzed the reality of hegemonic racism, of black resistance to segregated housing covenants that circumscribed black mobility. She created, as Amiri Baraka observes, “an aesthetically powerful and politically advanced work of art . . . [and characters who were] crafted meticulously from living social material.”<sup>41</sup> About her play, Hansberry explained, “Not only is this a Negro family, specifically, definitely, and culturally, but it’s not even a New York family or a Southern Negro family. It is specifically a South Side Chicago family.” She insisted that “to create the universal, you must pay very great attention to the specific.”<sup>42</sup>

Still, three points about the processes of innovation and evolution of black cultural hybridism require elaboration fully to appreciate the complexity of the Black Chicago Renaissance. The decades-long, multiphased Great Migration, a process and ideology that kept black bodies in motion, also inhibited or thwarted impulses that would have contained black cultural expressions and formations. The migration of rural or “folkloric” southerners to the urban northern metropolises was complicated by the fact that the migrants and their children often engaged in reverse migration. To wit, in their frequent visitations or commutes back and forth between the old and the new locations, serial migrants infused respective sites with cultural accoutrements of the other. In short, Chicago received continu-

ous replenishment of black, southern folkways, idiomatic expressions, musical sounds, religiosity, desires, gestures, and, of course, food, all things that cross-pollinated sites of origin and destination. Indeed, the cultivation of a blended or hybrid culture was at once uniquely urban north and fundamentally fettered to the black rural-urban south.<sup>43</sup> Black Chicago Renaissance musical, dance, theater, visual, and literary artists and intellectuals and social activists looked backward not only to Africa and Caribbean inflections for ingredients with which to construct cosmopolitan imaginings and goals to fuel new black consciousness journeys and resistance to racial oppression and dehumanization but also to the south. The migrants had to, as did Wright, Bontemps, Dunham, and others, return and leave and return, again, back home in order to make life in Chicago seem and feel closer to freedom. As historian Davarian Baldwin argues, “the black metropolis [w]as both a built environment and . . . an ideal.”<sup>44</sup>

Second, when returning to origination sites, reverse migrants carried back a range of accoutrements both real and imagined. They carried consumer items that hinted of a more expansive freedom and the possibility of escape from white oppression, segregation, and violence. Urban New Negroes shared lexical inventions (new words), fresh tastes, stylish clothing, and a mixture of musical innovations and popular dance moves with southern relatives and friends. As impossible as it no doubt was for serial two-way migrants to divest their bodies and minds of every politically progressive idea or desire before they arrived back home, it was equally as difficult for Chicago’s black citizens to ignore or remain oblivious to world affairs. It was, however, their fresh boldness in challenging notions of white supremacy and black inferiority that proved the fault line or, as Mamie Till had warned, that enabled black people to do and say and get away with in Chicago what when practiced in Mississippi “got you killed.”

Third, renaissances were promoted. In the *Chicago Defender*, as sociologist E. Franklin Frazier points out, Chicago had “the largest Negro newspaper in the country.”<sup>45</sup> The paper became the primary publishing vehicle for the cultivation and promotion of the Black Chicago Renaissance as well as a source for international news and perspective. Even in the midst of the Great Depression when most black Americans were struggling to survive, the *Chicago Defender* provided coverage of national and international events,

including travelogues by black Chicagoans. One of the most riveting was the travelogue of attorney Patrick B. Prescott Jr. and his educator wife, Annabel Carey (daughter of Bishop Archibald J. Carey of the Woodlawn AME Church), to select western European capitals in 1934. The *Defender* published the fifteen articles and, as independent scholar Hilary Mac Austin points out, exulted over its coverage of the “Grand Tour,” claiming that it did so “for the benefit of those readers of the *Chicago Defender* who desire a glimpse of Europe as it is today. It is in keeping with this paper’s policy to give its readers the best.” The Prescotts joined poet Hughes in sharing their impressions and travel experiences with readers of the *Chicago Defender*.<sup>46</sup> Hughes spent 1932 in the Soviet Union. On November 21, 1942, Hughes’s column, “Here to Yonder,” appeared. The column explored topics of significance and interest not only to the local black Chicagoans but also to the broader national black community.

It is important to note that from the outset, refined, learned, and economically established members of the Chicago black professional and entrepreneurial class supported black visual artists. Thus, in myriad ways, in addition to the grants received from white philanthropist Julian Rosenwald, who also supported black artists and intellectuals, the black community was heavily invested in cultural production more so than evident at first blush. In 1923, William Farrow and Charles Dawson founded the Chicago Art League at the YMCA on Wabash Avenue. The Chicago Art League and the South Side Community Art Center, founded by Burroughs, provided exhibition space and opportunities to showcase and distribute black art and their creations. Material support came from black workers, “old settlers,” and leaders in the black enclave economy, that is, heads of the “policy” or “numbers” syndicate. The politically protected black “policy kings” acquired a measure of respectability by contributing substantial sums to community charities as well as to cultural institutions. In other words, patrons of the Black Chicago Renaissance ranged from Jesse Binga, founder of the Binga Bank, to number runners.<sup>47</sup> To be sure, funds from the New Deal’s Work Progress Administration (WPA) significantly assisted creative literary and performance artists, and the WPA provided relief to thousands of unemployed workers.<sup>48</sup> Still, black Chicago visual arts that appealed across class lines reflected positive constructions of the black people

and simultaneously underscored the imperative of community to fight oppressive hegemonic paradigms that alleged black social, intellectual, commercial, and cultural incapacity.

These then are some of the themes, individuals, and creative productions that characterize the Black Chicago Renaissance. To be sure, for many black migrants, the dream of reaching a promised land in the urban north was not only deferred but also never achieved. For some, the changes required proved too daunting and the excesses of urban life too destructive. The emergence of social science scholarship, especially with the 1945 publication of *Black Metropolis*, a sociological classic written by St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, brought a new level of sophistication to the study of the class stratifications evident within the racially segregated neighborhoods.<sup>49</sup> This scholarship makes clear that a sense of belonging and the creation of black urban identities took time to develop for residents of Chicago’s South Side. The arts in all their representations proved invaluable to the process by providing neutral ground for bridging class divisions. Importantly, the passionate engagement in radical politics by visual and literary artists, the rising tide of black working-class radical racial consciousness, and the institution-building activism of community black women and men also shaped the content and reach of the Black Chicago Renaissance.

Artists such as Archibald J. Motley, White, Burroughs, and Elizabeth Catlett exemplified this meeting of purpose. Motley (1891–1981) was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and attended the Chicago Art Institute from 1914 to 1919. In 1926, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship to study and paint in Paris and in 1928 won the Harmon Foundation’s Gold Medal for his portrait *Octoroon Girl* (1925). While serving as a visiting faculty member at Howard University, Motley executed one of his best-known paintings, *Saturday Night* (1935). Motley was arguably one of the more celebrated visual artists in Chicago in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> His career spanned the decades preceding and following the Chicago renaissance. His biographer, Wendy Greenhouse, describes him as an artist who “matured during the Jazz Age, in contrast to the next generation of artists, social realists who emerged in the era of the Great Depression to tackle in their art weighty themes of social injustice and individual despair.”<sup>51</sup> At the end of his life, Motley reflected on his objectives as an artist: “The thing I was trying to do was trying to get their [Afri-

can Americans] interest in culture, in art. I planned that by putting them in the paintings themselves, making them part of my own work so that they could see themselves as they were. . . . I've always wanted to paint my people just the way they are."<sup>52</sup>

Chicago's "native son," visual artist Charles White (1918–79), also played a key role in the dialogue concerning the usefulness of black art and scholarship in the struggle to forge strong relationships between liberation politics and cultural production. Historian Erik S. Gellman offers a detailed portrait of the ways in which White conveyed his solidarity with the black working class and other politically radical groups during his years in Chicago. Both White and Horace Cayton in his work as a WPA Illinois administrator created art and produced scholarship that reflected their understandings of the complex lives of working-class black people and communicated their own political beliefs as advocates of transformational social activism.<sup>53</sup>

In 1940, White completed a mural for the Chicago Public Library, *Five Great American Negroes*, and later provided illustrations and graphics to *New Masses*, the *Worker*, and *Masses and Mainstream*. According to James Porter, White's "vivid pictorial symbols" were "altogether free of false or distorted ideas or shallow and dubious emotion."<sup>54</sup> White was motivated by a desire, as he wrote, "to get my work before common, ordinary people . . . for my work to portray them better, and to be rich and meaningful to them. . . . Art should take its place as one of the necessities of life, like good clothing and shelter."<sup>55</sup> For a brief time, White shared his art and politics with his wife, the talented sculptor and printmaker Elizabeth Catlett. She was born in 1915 in Washington, D.C., studied at Howard University (1931–35), and taught briefly in the public schools in Durham, North Carolina, before entering the University of Iowa to earn a master of fine arts degree. Catlett joined friend and fellow artist Burroughs to study sculpture at the Art Institute of Chicago and lithography at the South Side Community Art Center that Burroughs founded and maintained with support from the WPA.<sup>56</sup>

Burroughs remained in Chicago and beginning in the 1930s developed and sustained numerous creative arts and educational institutions, one of which is now the DuSable Museum of African American History. The desire to connect art to the lives of ordinary people propelled the establishment of an array of critical social spaces and institutions ranging from

the South Side Community Art Center, the Cleveland Hall Library, the South Side Writers' Group, formed in 1936 by Wright, to art galleries, union halls, theaters, journals, newspapers, publishing houses, and radio programs that nurtured and expanded the reach of the Black Chicago Renaissance. As John McCluskey Jr. indicates, it was out of the South Side Writers' Group that Wright's powerful 1937 manifesto, "Blueprint for Negro Writing," emerged.<sup>57</sup>

Like Burroughs, and White, Catlett possessed a passionate commitment to creating art that countered derogatory stereotypes of African Americans. She worked to substitute positive and more meaningful representations that would raise black consciousness, nurture pride and self-affirmation, and yet fan desires for greater freedom and social justice. Catlett's work was included in the 1940 Chicago American Negro Exposition, where she won first prize for her limestone sculpture *Negro Mother and Child*, which had been her master's thesis. In 1942, White and Catlett moved to New York City. Their marriage did not survive. Catlett, who later relocated permanently in Mexico, described her reasons for creating art: "I have always wanted my art to service my people—to reflect us, to relate to us, to stimulate us, to make us aware of our potential. . . . You can't make a statement if you don't speak the language. . . . We have to create an art for liberation and for life."<sup>58</sup> In the 1960s, Catlett became an outspoken supporter of the Black-Power movement and its visual arts equivalent, the Black Arts movement. She repeated her injunction that art should express "racial identity, communicate with the black community, and participate in struggles for social, political, and economic equality."<sup>59</sup>

A few migrant writers, of course, were already accomplished by the time they settled in Chicago. They were determined and eager to embrace the city, none more so than Arna Bontemps (1902–73). Bontemps was an outspoken critic of the charge that Chicago's Black Renaissance was a pallid imitation of the Harlem Renaissance, boldly asserting, "The Depression put an end to the dream world of renaissance Harlem and scattered the band of poets and painters, sculptors, scholars and singers who had in six exciting years made a generation of Americans aware of unnoticed and hitherto undervalued creative talent among Negroes." Chicago, he insisted, was not only the successor to the Harlem Renaissance but also could claim its own unique lineage, power, and pur-

pose. The emergence of Chicago's Black Renaissance represented "a second awakening, less gaudy but closer to realities" that was "already in prospect. . . . One way or the other, Harlem got its renaissance in the middle twenties, centering around the *Opportunity* contests and the Fifth Avenue Awards Dinners. . . . Ten years later Chicago reenacted it on WPA without finger bowls but with increased power."<sup>60</sup>

Born in Louisiana to Paul Bismark Bontemps, a bricklayer, and Maria Carolina Pembroke, a schoolteacher, Bontemps completed college and began his adult migration from Los Angeles, California, to Harlem, where he became friends with and a collaborator of Hughes. He also knew Claude McKay, W. E. B. Du Bois, and James Weldon Johnson. As the Depression woes worsened, Bontemps, with his wife and six children, left Harlem to teach at a junior college in Huntsville, Alabama. In 1931, he published his first novel, *God Sends Sunday*. The following year, he collaborated with Hughes to publish the first of his numerous children's books, *Popo and Fifina*, a travel book that featured the lives of a brother and sister in Haiti. By this time, the Scottsboro trials were underway, and Bontemps pulled up stakes and returned home to California. He continued writing, and shortly before the publication of his best-known work in 1936, *Black Thunder*, a story of Gabriel Prosser's 1800 slave rebellion near Richmond, Virginia, he moved to Chicago where he found employment with the WPA's Illinois Writers' Project.

In Chicago, Bontemps met Wright and joined the South Side Writers' Group, which Wright founded in 1936 to offer critical and moral support to black writers. The group included poet Margaret Walker, playwright Theodore Ward, and many younger poets who would perfect their talents as they learned from the pioneers of black Chicago poets. Bontemps's own writing was influenced by his association with this cadre of fledgling writers. After 1935, his novels and short stories reflected a more militant restlessness and a revolutionary spirit. Evident in *Black Thunder*, this sensibility became even more pronounced in his last novel, *Drums at Dusk* (1939), a treatment of the Haitian revolution and its leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture (1746–1803), which he completed with support from a Rosenwald Fellowship. After earning a master's degree in library science from the University of Chicago in 1943, Bontemps accepted a position as head librarian at Fisk University, a post he relinquished in 1964. His writings from the 1940s

onward focus on children's books, poetry, and biographies for teenage readers.<sup>61</sup>

Revolutionary work in radio and music also occurred in Chicago, which early on had become a center both for recording and performing music. On November 3, 1929, *The All Negro Hour* debuted on Chicago radio station WSBC, marking the launch of the black radio industry. Founder Jack L. Cooper created the program to display the variety of talents and religious convictions within the black community and thus undermine the negative mainstream radio stereotypical treatments of black life and culture. Unable to thrive in a Depression economy, Cooper sought and received support from two prominent Bronzeville or South Side black-community businessmen, Robert A. Cole and Fred W. Lewing, owners of the Metropolitan Funeral Systems Association.<sup>62</sup> In 1931, Cooper added an innovative new program, *The All Negro Children's Hour*, promoting self-esteem among the youngest residents of Bronzeville. As black music became a profitable commodity, influential black disc jockeys like Al Benson (Arthur B. Leaner) appeared on the radio in Chicago. A migrant from Mississippi, by the end of the 1940s Benson was hosting shows on three radio stations. He became such a celebrity that readers of the *Chicago Defender* voted him the "mayor of Bronzeville." Diverse artists from gospel singer Mahalia Jackson to bluesman Muddy Waters attracted loyal fans who listened to them on Benson's programs.<sup>63</sup>

Inarguably, Chicago was most noted for being the home of one of radio's most popular programs during the 1930s, *The Amos 'n' Andy Show*. Although two white performers (Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden) played the leading roles, they carefully ingratiated themselves into Chicago's black community, making regular appearances at Bud Billiken parades and at the Regal Theater. By the 1940s, black audiences had become less enthralled with the show; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Robert L. Vann, editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and others protested the show's minstrel ambience of mispronounced words, garbled grammar, and characterizations of black women as bossy and black men as clownish. A subsequent television version of the broadcast would feature black actors in the title roles. Alvin Childress became Amos, and Spencer Williams Jr. played Andy. Tim Moore assumed the role of the Kingfish of the Mystic Knights of the Sea Lodge, and Johnny Lee portrayed the lawyer Algonquin J. Calhoun.

A much more progressive-thinking Chicago scriptwriter and producer developed projects and a series of positive programs that engendered pride and educated African Americans about their history and contributions to the struggles for freedom and justice. Between 1948 and 1950, Richard Durham's *Destination Freedom* hit the airwaves. It was a serious radio program that marked a radical departure from *The Amos 'n' Andy Show*. *Destination Freedom* broadcast a black perspective on politics, culture, and history, one that was uniquely suited for a northern urban audience. Chicago was a destination. *Destination Freedom* provided the historical facts and context that black Chicagoans needed to continue forging a more empowering and assertive modern identity. Innovative programs of this nature facilitated local radio's ability to open lines of communication between white and black citizens and to initiate conversations about race within the black community. Durham helped in the fashioning of oppositional consciousness by reminding black Chicagoans of the exploits of black freedom fighters across the long decades of slavery, emancipation, and reconstruction. In one show, Durham used the powerful words of Wells-Barnett to demonstrate the intertwined nature of racial violence and economic oppression. "The real motive behind all lynching was not the 'moral' issue pretended—but underneath it was a matter of murder for money and jobs," Wells had declared.<sup>64</sup>

A multitude of individuals and key structures institutionalized the Black Chicago Renaissance. Cultural centers and museums, libraries and schools, parades and paintings, murals and sculptures, and music and radio along with film and dance ensured Chicago's long reign as an important site, incubator, and exporter of a modern black culture across the nation and globally. Performance theatricals and silent films, especially the creative filmmaking of Oscar Devereau Micheaux (1884–1951), and the establishment of theatrical palaces and movie houses comprised critical components of the renaissance. Born in Metropolis, Illinois, Micheaux worked as a Pullman Car porter and a ranch operator in the west before settling in Chicago. In 1918, he launched what would become a remarkable career as the nation's premier black filmmaker. The following year, he completed the film *Within Our Gates*, exploring themes of lynching, sex, and race. It opened in 1920 at Chicago's Vendome Theater. In 1925, Micheaux cast Paul Robeson in his first film appearance, *Body*

*and Soul*. Between 1919 and 1948, the prolific Micheaux produced over forty feature-length films. The race films expanded the range of representations of black men and women, while boldly exploring semi-private topics of interest to modern black urbanites. He probed deeply into black inner life and dissected the tensions in interracial relationships from a New Negro prospective. To attract more black theatergoers, he adroitly deployed the frequent controversy that erupted over his graphic treatment of lynching, rape, corruption in the church, and passing. His films facilitated the commercial survival of an independent network of black owned-and-operated movie houses across the country. Micheaux exported his New Negro metropolitan identity and the modern representations of the race directly to his people.<sup>65</sup>

Along with making movies, innovative Chicagoans also helped to create modern black dance. To be sure, dance has always been an integral part of African American life and culture. In 1931, the New Negro Art Theater Dance Company, cofounded by Edna Buy and Hemsley Winfield, performed the first "Negro Dance Recital in America." In that same year, Katherine Dunham (1909–2006) founded the Negro Dance Group in Chicago, which garnered financial support from the WPA. As Dunham recalled, "Black Dancers were not allowed to take classes in studios in the '30s. I started a school because there was no place for blacks to study dance. I was the first to open the way for black dancers and I was the first to form a black dance company." Trained in anthropology, Dunham studied African-based ritual dance in the Caribbean. In 1940, following her relocation to New York, she renamed the company the Katherine Dunham Dance Company. Dunham was also motivated by the desire to create unique dance performances: "I felt a new form was needed for black people to be able to appear in any theater in the world and be accepted and exciting. One of the prerequisites of art is uniqueness."<sup>66</sup>

Dunham was never one to hold her tongue or to acquiesce in the face of injustice. Her art ushered in a new way for black people to express their talent and desires for freedom, but she was equally adept in speaking and acting her protest politics. In the early 1940s, Dunham denounced discrimination following a dance performance in Louisville, Kentucky. "We are glad we have made you happy," she announced to the audience. "We hope you have enjoyed us. This is the last time I shall play Louisville because

the management refuses to let people like us sit by people like you. Maybe after the war we shall have democracy and I can return.” Not only was Dunham a gifted pioneer in dance who laid a firm choreographic foundation for future generations but she also simultaneously underscored the responsibility and obligation to the community that the black artist had to combat racism.<sup>67</sup>

Dunham’s position was in keeping with that of Hughes, who, at the end of the Black Chicago Renaissance, penned a propitious mobility poem, “Brotherly Love: A Little Letter to the White Citizens Councils of the South.” “Brotherly Love” anticipated and illuminated radical changes occurring in black oppositional consciousness, from the start of the Great Migration to the beginnings of the modern civil rights movement:

So long, *so long* a time you’ve been calling  
Me *all* kinds of names, pushing me down—  
I been swimming with my head deep under water,  
And you wished I would stay under till I drown.  
But I didn’t! I’m still swimming! Now you’re mad  
Because I won’t ride in the back end of your bus.<sup>68</sup>

### III: The Essays: Brief Description

#### Part I. Black Chicago: History, Culture, and Community

Christopher Robert Reed in “African American Cultural Expression in Chicago before the Renaissance: The Performing, Visual and Literary Arts, 1893–1933” examines the local historical context of the Black Chicago Renaissance. He delineates the existence of a layered class structure within the black community and underscores the importance and the complicated tradition of support of the arts by elite black and later members of the black entrepreneurial and professional middle class. Black patronage, for both aesthetic and exploitative reasons, served an important function in providing space for creative expression and means for its distribution and commoditization. Further, Reed’s essay is a response to the claims made by social scientists Charles S. Johnson and E. Franklin Frazier. In 1923, Johnson declared that Chicago’s “intellectual life has numerous excuses for not existing.” In 1929, Fraser echoed Johnson’s assertion, insisting, “Chicago has no intelligentsia.” Reed documents the existence and work of a black intelligentsia in Chicago from the 1920s throughout

the era of the Black Chicago Renaissance as a critical, though often ignored, intervention.

In “The Negro Renaissance: Harlem and Chicago Flowerings,” Samuel A. Floyd Jr., citing Tony Martin, argues that the “Negro Renaissance” in Harlem (1917–35) and Chicago (1935–50) was “spawned by Pan-Africanism, which posits the belief that black people all over the world share an origin and a heritage, that the welfare of black people everywhere is inexorably linked, and that the cultural products of blacks everywhere should express their particular fundamental beliefs.” Floyd describes the quandary of renaissance artists, intellectuals, and entertainers who drew inspiration from the vernacular yet professed allegiance to the styles and tone of high or modern culture. Poet Hughes was a figurative link connecting the two renaissances. Floyd notes that the black arts manifesto of Hughes’s generational cohort exemplifies the refusal of these artists and intellectuals to accept the hierarchical oppositional distinction between high (middle class, northern, urban) and low (folk, spiritual, rural). Hughes and the creative artists in Chicago carved a bold new position of cultural hybridism and individual agency that reflected the ideology of an emergent generation of New Negroes determined, as Hughes wrote, to “build temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how. We stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.”

Clovis E. Semmes’s essay describes the literal “temples” built in Chicago for the performance, display, and consumption of popular culture, examining their significance to the development and dissemination of black culture. In “The Problem of Race and Chicago’s Great Tivoli Theater,” Semmes historicizes the building of “the great palace theaters” of the early twentieth century, paying particular attention to real-life racial politics. Inspired by the architectural designs of the Chateau de Versailles, the Tivoli Theater was located in Washington Park with its 85 percent white population. The theater, originally built in 1921 for white neighborhood residents, employed a number of black men and women in service capacities. Due to gradual demographic shifts, Tivoli Theater management pursued a policy of separate seating for audiences for the live performances (stage shows in black parlance) and film exhibitions. Semmes notes that the large, elaborate, ornate theaters, including the Regal Theater, which was the black counterpart to the Tivoli Theater, “sought to sell the feel of being upper class while giving access to all classes.”

In 1928, the owners of the Tivoli opened in Bronzeville a vast entertainment complex that included the Regal Theater (which predated New York's Apollo Theater), the Savoy Ballroom, and the South Center Department Store. Semmes, in tracing the history of these "theatrical palaces," shows how middle-class black Chicagoans fought segregation imposed by cultural entrepreneurs and the transition of Tivoli across the decades until the Regal closed in the late 1960s. The Regal Theater, Semmes has argued, was for forty years "the most prominent Black-oriented theater in Chicago and, arguably, at various times, the most significant black-oriented theater in the country." The "Tivoli Theater, born to service a white market while maintaining white racial hegemony, died in the service of a black community while catering to the sensibilities of black entertainment culture in the civil rights era."<sup>69</sup>

Hilary Mac Austin, in "The *Defender* Brings You the World: The Grand European Tour of Patrick B. Prescott Jr.," follows the European journey of Prescott and his wife as chronicled in the pages of the *Chicago Defender* in 1934, showing simultaneously how the paper facilitated the nationalization of African Americans in the United States and opened windows onto international experiences and events. Identities are relational, and the process of becoming metropolitan required not only local consciousness but international awareness. The prominent black Chicago couple wrote the last series of travel reports published in the *Chicago Defender*. In terms of identity formation, the trek of black southerners to Chicago during the 1920s was as complicated a process and practice as it must have been to leave the known confines of the United States to find meaning and fresh experiences in European capitals during the 1930s. Following the European journey of the Prescotts, Mac Austin points out what they saw and what escaped their notice at a time of momentous political changes in Germany, France, and England.

## Part II. Black Chicago's Renaissance: Culture, Consciousness, Politics, and Place

Richard Wright and Gwendolyn Brooks, perhaps the two most famous literary figures of the Black Chicago Renaissance, shared a common struggle to discern a new black consciousness in the physical and metaphoric spaces of Chicago's South Side streets. Elizabeth Schlabach examines the poetic and pho-

tographic *12 Million Black Voices* of Wright and Edwin Rosskam as well as Wright's last novel, *The Outsider*, to show how he depicted the confining realities of the kitchenette apartment as well as the segregated, overcrowded city pavement of black neighborhoods. Schlabach then compares Wright's attempt to define and defy these urban realities to poet Gwendolyn Brooks's *Street in Bronzeville* and *Maud Martha* that similarly elucidated the boundaries of racial proscription as well as the intense material deprivation of African Americans. Both authors wanted to portray how black people transcended their environment through dignified resilience, but, as Schlabach concludes, Brooks found a less destructive way out of the suspension "between two planes of existence." While Wright saw "death" or the need for rebirth as the route to what he termed "an honest and frontal vision," Brooks's female characters resisted "racial exile through the triumph of simplicity."

John McCluskey Jr. examines the significance of the timing of Richard Wright's "Blueprint for Writing" and its applications to his nonfiction work, specifically his early journalism and work as a journal editor. The essay places Wright's piece among the earliest in an international flurry of black diaspora manifestoes articulating generational and language disruptions. This is especially the case for Haitian and other francophone writers whom Wright would join in Paris by 1947. In their attempt to resist American oppression and French colonialism, nearly all called upon a return to embrace folklore, traditional expressive culture, and the complexity of their own history. Thus, Wright internationalizes the Chicago impulses coursing through the literary thought of his generation throughout the African diaspora.

David T. Bailey places the black intellectual Horace Cayton into the vibrant community of Chicago's South Side during the Depression and World War II era. This chapter details the myriad of research projects undertaken by Cayton in Chicago, including his labor scholarship and journalism, Cayton-Warner and WPA projects, and ultimately his crowning achievement: the coauthored 1945 *Black Metropolis*. In charting this flurry of activity, Bailey shows how Cayton never felt satisfied with his position in the black elite and the Chicago School of Sociology. To broaden his activities among working people and artists, Cayton managed the Parkway Community House that he fashioned into a central hub for the black

arts movement. The programs, protest meetings, and cultural events at the Parkway House—as well as the lavish parties there where artists, intellectuals, and “shadies” mingled—reflected the gregarious personality of Cayton, who crossed boundaries of class, race, and respectability. But Cayton’s desire to broadly and deeply engage the world, Bailey concludes, ultimately led to his inability to survive in any of these social and cultural communities.

Jeffrey Helgeson reexamines the 1940 American Negro Exposition in Chicago, the first black-organized world’s fair that sought to showcase these African American artists on a national stage. In so doing, he delineates the diversity of voices and competing visions of racial progress that defined the character of the Black Chicago Renaissance. Historians have described the exposition as a failure; the event did not attract mass audiences, and it did not create a broader public debate about the meanings of black identity, legacies of slavery, or contemporary discrimination in the United States. Yet, by examining the exposition as presented, rather than what it failed to be, Helgeson uncovers important and sometimes surprising influences on the fair’s messages. This chapter concludes that the local black elite and New Deal officials unintentionally opened public space for critical assessments of the persistence of racial exclusion in the paintings of artists like Charles White and in the poems of Margaret Walker. The official organizers of the exposition may have marginalized black artists’ role in the exhibition, but these artists nonetheless articulated a class-based critique of U.S. racial politics that emphasized the injustices of racism and the contributions of black Americans to American history.

By exploring the early career of Chicago-born painter Charles White, Erik S. Gellman argues that the artistic production of a cadre of young black artists became intricately intertwined with protest politics during the 1930s. As a young man, White educated himself in the history of African Americans by discovering books like *The New Negro*, the definitive collection of the Harlem Renaissance, and by joining the Arts Craft Guild, where White and his cohort taught each other new painting techniques and held their own exhibitions. These painters developed as artists by identifying with and existing among the laboring people of Chicago and by pushing to expand the boundaries of American democracy. They embraced interracial labor unions, not just for other

workers but also for them to powerfully demand inclusion in the government’s Illinois Arts Project of the WPA as well as to create and run the South Side Community Arts Center, which became the central space of black community engagement with art and culture after its 1940 opening. All the while, White’s paintings and murals “for the people” emphasized the dignity of black workers as well as the previously obscured history of African Americans who had militantly resisted slavery and other forms of oppression. Thus, Gellman contends, rather than becoming junior partners in art as well as politics to their white, working-class colleagues, African American artists like White came to represent the vanguard of the cultural movement among workers in the 1930s, making Chicago’s South Side the center of the black arts movement as well as a cultural magnet for all American artists.

### Part III. Visual Art and Artists in the Black Chicago Renaissance

In the closing section of this anthology, Chicago artist and scholar Murry N. DePillars explores the history of black visual arts in Chicago and highlights the distinctive influence of the Art Institute of Chicago, formed in 1879 (relocated in 1893 to its present site, Michigan Avenue and Adams Street), in the emergence of a black visual artistic tradition. In the opening decades of the twentieth century, the Art Institute of Chicago was one of a handful of arts schools that admitted black Americans. Among the earliest black students to attend the school was figurative painter Lottie E. Wilson (née Moss) of Niles, Michigan, who created the famous picture of Abraham Lincoln and Sojourner Truth that appeared on the cover of the NAACP’s *Crisis* in August 1915. William Edouard Scott (1884–1964), born in Indianapolis, Indiana, attended the Art Institute from 1904 to 1907 and won acclaim from 1912 to 1914 in Paris, where Henry Ossawa Tanner served as his mentor. In 1927, Scott received the Harmon Foundation’s gold medal for his work as a muralist. He was commissioned to paint more than seventy murals, thirty for the Chicago Park District and approximately forty for Chicago churches, including one in 1943 for Pilgrim Baptist Church. According to DePillars, Scott was the “dean of African American Art” in Chicago.

## Notes

1. For notable examples of their scholarship, see St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1945); Abram Harris, *The Negro as Capitalist: A Study of Banking and Business* (Glouster, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1936).

2. R. J. Smith, *The Great Black Way: L.A. in the 1940s and the Lost African American Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Public Affairs, 2006).

3. Anthony M. Platt, *E. Franklin Frazier Reconsidered* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 11. Platt reminds us that the generation of New Negroes born in the last decade of the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries included the following prominent men: E. Franklin Frazier (b. 1894), Charles Johnson (b. 1893), A. Philip Randolph (b. 1889), Elijah Muhammad (b. 1897), Marcus Garvey (b. 1887), Claude McKay (b. 1890), Paul Robeson (b. 1898), Arna Bontemps (b. 1902), Langston Hughes (b. 1902), and Richard Wright (b. 1908).

4. Michael D. Harris, *Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 9. AfriCO-BRA stands for African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists.

5. Robert E. Weems Jr., *Black Business in the Black Metropolis: The Chicago Metropolitan Assurance Company, 1925–1985* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 8. Carole Marks, *Farewell—We're Good and Gone: The Great Black Migration* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 1–19. Carole Marks persuasively argues that the early waves of black southern migrants into the urban north were more often than not skilled workers, landed people who had sold their farms, or entrepreneurs who sought greater economic opportunity.

6. Christopher Robert Reed, *Black Chicago's First Century, Vol. 1, 1833–1900* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005), 4. Reed points out that DuSable settled in what would become Chicago in the 1770s. The continuous flow of migrants across the generations into Illinois and specifically Chicago led sociologist Charles S. Johnson to describe it as the “Mecca of the Migrant Mob.” Quoted in Reed, *Black Chicago's First Century*, 40.

7. Reed, *Black Chicago's First Century*, 111, 229–30. Historian Kevin J. Mumford reminds us that the actual number of black migrants represented a small percentage of the total northern metropolitan populations but that it was “the sudden surge in their numbers” that caused alarm in non-black groups. Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xviii, 180. Thus, by the 1930s and 1940s, at the height of the Black Chicago Renaissance, “the nightly parade of wealthy and various whites traveling to Harlem” was not replicated in South Side Chicago. Mumford, *Interzones*, 180.

8. Adam Green, *Selling the Race: Culture, Community, and Black Chicago, 1940–1955* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 10. In his important contribution to the history of the Black Chicago Renaissance, Green reorients attention away from the traditional

approach to the study of black Chicago that focuses on examining the processes African Americans employed to facilitate adjustment to the urban centers to which they migrated. Rather, Green asks, how did African Americans transform the modern city upon arrival? The essays produced for this anthology approach both questions but with the primary objective being to explain how African Americans through their expressive cultural production and political agency defined themselves and resisted imposed representations of their humanity. Creative artists, intellectuals, political organizers, and members of the working poor and aspiring middle class struggled in the new political economy of the Windy City to secure living and breathing transformative space in spite of an often hostile and deadly environment.

9. Richard Wright injects a caveat in the migration saga by noting that the numbers of black migrants into Chicago actually declined during the early 1930s. In a December 11, 1935, report, Wright notes that the rate of in-migration increased between 1927 and 1930 from 163,800 to 233,930; however, between 1930 and 1935, the number grew by less than 3,000, from 233,903 to 235,000 African Americans in Chicago. Wright, “Ethnographical Aspect of Chicago's Black Belt,” folder 1, box 53, Illinois Writers Project, Vivian Harsh Manuscript Archive, Carter G. Woodson Library, Chicago, Illinois. Wright does not explain the reasons for the decline in black migration but notes, significantly, that because “the Negro has ceased to invade Chicago in great numbers, . . . a measure of relative stability has been attained. The decline of migration has tempered the anxiety of the whites.” Wright, “Ethnological Aspect,” 9. See also documents included in Malaika Adero, ed., *Up South: Stories, Studies, and Letters of This Century's Black Migrations* (New York: New Press, 1993), xiii. Historian Ira Berlin observes, “Whatever their liabilities, ghettos became the destinations of thousands of black Southerners, many of whom knew little of Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, or New York but knew all about the South Side, Paradise Valley, Little Africa, or Harlem.” Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Viking, 2010), 183–84. Clearly, due to the demographic concentrations, by the time of the Black Chicago Renaissance, the South Side had become a site of emerging black political power.

10. Langston Hughes, “One-Way Ticket,” in *Selected Poems by Langston Hughes* (New York: Knopf, 1948); Farah Jasmine Griffin, “Who Set You Flowin’?: The African-Migration Narrative” (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 45. Griffin writes, “In the creative imagination of black literary and visual artists, the systematic forms of violence enacted upon black bodies is a primary cause for their choosing to leave the South.” See etching, Albert A. Smith, “The Reason,” *Crisis*, May 1921, included in Griffin, “Who Set You Flowin’?” 17; Barbara Foley, *Spectres of 1919: Class and Nation in the Making of the New Negro* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 28. According to historian Crystal Feimster, between 1880 and 1930, approximately 130 black women lost their lives to lynch mobs in the south. *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 159–61.

11. Laurie B. Green, *Battling the Plantation Mentality: Memphis and the Black Freedom Struggle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 5. Green describes the “plantation mentality” as a framing concept for a narrative of resistance and the construction of a “counter-hegemony” political discourse about democracy, justice, equality, and freedom.
12. Dan Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1970, with new introduction, 2007); William R. Scott, *The Sons of Sheba’s Race: African Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935–1941* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993). See discussion of Chicago-based aviator John C. Robinson, “The Brown Condor,” in Scott, *Sons of Sheba’s Race*, 69–80; William H. Harris, *Keeping the Faith: A. Philip Randolph, Milton P. Webster, and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, 1925–1937* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977); Beth Tompkins Bates, *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).
13. Langston Hughes, “Call of Ethiopia,” *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life* 13, no. 9 (September 1935): 276, in Scott, *Sons of Sheba’s Race*, 1.
14. Mamie Till-Mobley and Christopher Benson, *Death of Innocence: The Story of the Hate Crime That Changed America* (New York: Random, 2003), 139.
15. A. Green, *Selling the Race*, 16, 179–82. Green moves beyond interpreting Till’s lynching and the publication of the photographs of his mutilated body as an iconic episode in black pain. He argues that the response to the Till lynching in Chicago “offered an agonized statement of collective racial will, one illuminating an African American sense of self as comradeship that occupied a shared place and time.” *Selling the Race*, 182. Twenty-five years later, in 1969, black Chicago would once again mourn the wrongful death of a young black man, the assassination of Fred Hampton. Jeffrey Haas, *The Assassination of Fred Hampton: How the FBI and the Chicago Police Murdered a Black Panther* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010).
16. Clenora Hudson-Weems, *Emmett Till: The Sacrificial Lamb of the Civil Rights Movement* (Troy, Mich.: Bedford, 1994), 29–30. For a discussion of culture and black identity formations, see Roy Eyerman, “Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 60–111.
17. Mamie Till-Mobley, quoted in Hudson-Weems, *Emmett Till*, 335.
18. Wanda A. Hendricks, *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 340.
19. William Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Atheneum, 1974), 3–8.
20. Foley, *Spectres of 1919*, 9.
21. Horace Cayton, “Ideological Forces in the Work of Negro Writers,” in *Anger and Beyond: The Negro Writer in the United States*, ed. Herbert Hill (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 43.
22. Nikki Brown, *Private Politics and Public Voices: Black Women’s Activism from World War I to the New Deal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 115; Foley, *Spectres of 1919*, 13.
23. Vernon J. Williams Jr., *The Social Sciences and Theories of Race* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 63–66; Timuel D. Black, *Bridges of Memory. Chicago’s Second Generation of Black Migration* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007). Williams argues, “Confronted with the evidence of black progress [in the wake of the Great Migration to urban areas] the leading sociologists found it exceedingly difficult to reconcile that empirically verifiable evidence with theories of black inferiority.” *Social Sciences*, 66.
24. *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*, ed. Cary D. Wintz and Paul Finkelman (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1026.
25. R. J. Smith, *Great Black Way*, 5.
26. Susan Eleanor Hirsch, *After the Strike: A Century of Labor Struggle at Pullman* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 121.
27. *Ibid.*, 121–24.
28. James R. Grossman, “The White Man’s Union: Great Migration and the Resonance of Race and Class in Chicago, 1916–1922,” in *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender*, ed. Joe W. Trotter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 83–105; James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).
29. Dianne M. Pinderhughes, *Race and Ethnicity in Chicago Politics: A Reexamination of Pluralist Theory* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 95–96; Hendricks, *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest*, 111.
30. A. Green, *Selling the Race*, 6–7.
31. Steven A. Reich, “The Great Migration and the Literary Imagination,” *Journal of the Historical Society* 19, no. 1 (March 2009): 87–128.
32. Bill V. Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African-American Cultural Politics, 1935–46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 3.
33. Hughes quoted in *Langston Hughes and the Chicago Defender*, ed. Christopher C. DeSantis (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995), 238–40. Langston Hughes, June 11, 1949, “From the International House, Bronzeville Seems Far Far Away.”
34. DeSantis, *Langston Hughes and the Chicago Defender*, 14–15.
35. A. Green, *Selling the Race*. Green notes that due to the ubiquity of the Harlem Renaissance, “previous attempts to account for cultural innovation in Black Chicago have often transplanted the [Harlem] Renaissance template there, down to matching lists of awards cycles, patronage structures, and parlor festivities. This sense of historical derivation helps explain why . . . arguments that Chicago provides a landmark seat of black creativity have yet to take root in recent African-American cultural history.” 4.
36. James A. Tyner, “Urban Revolutions and the Spaces of Black Radicalism,” in *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, ed. Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods (Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2007), 220, 218–32.

37. Tiffany M. Gill, *Beauty Shop Politics: African American Women's Activism in the Beauty Industry* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 136.
38. A. Green, *Selling the Race*. See R. J. Smith on Los Angeles's Bronzeville, "a black space carved out in the heart of the city, and it was created not from segregation but from black entrepreneurialism" following the internment of American Japanese citizens. *Great White Way*, 140–53.
39. Clovis E. Semmes, *The Regal Theater and Black Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 1–14. For a probing and illuminating study of African American religious practices and institutions in Chicago, see Wallace Best, *Passionately Human, No Less Divine: Religion in Culture in Black Chicago, 1915–1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Wallace Best, "The South and the City: Black Southern Migrants, Storefront Churches, and the Rise of an African American Diaspora," in *Repositioning North American Migration: New Positions in Modern Continental Migration* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2005), 302–25. Best argues that the upheaval, dislocation, and relocation that defined the Great Migration encouraged black religious people (especially women) to restructure the content and contour of their programmatic initiatives, worship patterns, cultural innovations, and liturgical practices in Chicago. Best, importantly, underscores the point that while the overwhelming majority of members of the black churches were women, gender conventions dictated that few would acquire ministerial authority.
40. Anne Meis Knupfer, *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 2–6. Knupfer reminds us of the expansive meanings and manifestations of culture: "Culture also refers to how people make meaning from their lives and create identities for themselves and future generations." 2.
41. Amiri Baraka, "A Critical Reevaluation: A Raisin in the Sun's Enduring Passion," in Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, ed. Robert Nemiroff, expanded twenty-fifth anniversary ed. (New York: New American Library, 1987), 10, 9–20; Richard Iton, *In Search of the Black Fantastic: Politics and Popular Culture in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 63–68.
42. Robert J. Blakley with Marcus Shepard, *Earl B. Dickinson: A Voice for Freedom and Equality* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 101–2. See chapter 5, "The Fight against Racially Restrictive Covenants," for coverage of the case *Hansberry v. Lee* (1940) that laid the groundwork for *Shelley v. Kramer* (1948), in which the U. S. Supreme Court outlawed restrictive covenants. 91–110.
43. Marks, *Farewell*, 158–62. Marks offers an insightful critique of the positive and negative benefits of return migration.
44. Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 51.
45. E. Franklin Frazier, "Chicago: A Cross-Section of Negro Life," *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life* 7, March 1929, 73.
46. DeSantis, *Langston Hughes and the Chicago Defender*. In 1942 Langston Hughes wrote a weekly column for the *Chicago Defender*.
47. Christopher Robert Reed, *The Chicago NAACP and the Rise of Black Professional Leadership, 1910–1966* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 59–62.
48. Arvarh E. Strickland, *History of the Chicago Urban League* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 109–10.
49. Vernon J. Williams Jr., *The Social Sciences and Theories of Race* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 95. See Williams for a detailed discussion of the life and career of one of Chicago's earliest black social scientists, Monroe Nathan Work. 93–119.
50. Michael D. Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 152–78. Motley explained himself, "In my paintings, I have tried to paint the Negro as I have seen him and as I feel him, in myself without adding or detracting, just being frankly honest." Harris, *Colored Pictures*, 169.
51. Wendy Greenhouse, "Motley's Chicago Context, 1890–1940," in *The Art of Archibald J. Motley, Jr.* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1991), 34, 33–63.
52. Archibald Motley, quoted in Jontyle Theresa Robinson and Wendy Greenhouse, *The Art of Archibald J. Motley, Jr.* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1991), 34.
53. Bill V. Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African American Cultural Politics, 1935–46* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999). Mullen provides a detailed examination of the evolution of the American Negro Labor Congress, founded in 1925, to the opening session in 1936 of the newly established Nation Negro Congress. 3–6.
54. James Porter, quoted in Samella Lewis, *African American Art and Artists* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 132.
55. Charles White, quoted in Mullen, *Popular Fronts*, 192.
56. Lisa E. Farrington, *Creating Their Own Image: The History of African-American Women Artists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 118–25.
57. Mullen, *Popular Fronts*, 27; Richard Wright, "Blueprint for Negro Writing," *New Challenge*, Fall 1934, 53–62.
58. Elizabeth Catlett, quoted in Lewis, *African American Art and Artists*, 134–35.
59. Catlett, quoted in Farrington, *Creating Their Own Image*, 126.
60. Arna Bontemps, "Famous WPA Authors," *Negro Digest* (June 1950): 46–47; Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harold, *The African-American Odyssey*, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson, 2009), 518.
61. Robert E. Fleming, "Arna Wendell Bontemps," in *African American National Biography*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1:480–82.
62. Weems, *Black Business in the Black Metropolis*, 57.
63. A. Green, *Selling the Race*, 86; Michael W. Harris, *The Rise of Gospel Blues: The Music of Thomas Andrew Dorsey in the Urban Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
64. Barbara Dianne Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: Radio, War,*

and the Politics of Race, 1938–1948 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 264–70.

65. Pearl Bowser, Jane Gaines, and Charles Musser, *Oscar Micheaux and His Circle: African-American Filmmaking and Race Cinema of the Silent Era* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Jacqueline Najuma Stewart, *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

66. “Katherine Dunham: A Talk with the Matriarch of Black Dance in America,” interview by Cheryl Jarvis, in *‘Ain’t But a Place’: An Anthology of African American Writings about St. Louis*, ed. Gerald Early (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1998), 351.

67. Susan Manning, *Modern Dance, Negro Dance: Race in Motion*

(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); Katherine Dunham, *A Touch of Innocence* (London: Cassell, 1960); Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold, *The African-American Odyssey: Combined Volume* (2009), 524.

68. Langston Hughes, “Brother Love: A Little Letter to the White Citizens Councils of the South,” in *Burning All Illusions: Writings from The Nation on Race*, ed. Paula J. Giddings (New York: Thunder Mouth Press, 2002), 83.

69. Clovis E. Semmes, *The Regal Theater and Black Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 2–3. The Regal complex included the Savoy Ballroom and the South Center Department Store.