

Coda

We hope these essays open doorways to discussions about history, rootedness, and literary ancestors, serving as an alternative way to explore liberation through a framework that welcomes all students into the conversation. Thus, we conclude *For Us, To Us, About Us* with this **Coda**, which includes a set of questions that serve as writing prompts or discussion starters.

Making Connections

1. In what ways do the essays in part I of this collection participate in the African American women's literary tradition?
2. The contributors in part one use she/her pronouns. How might gender impact approaches to the subjects of racial unrest and cultural transformation? To put it another way, speculate on several reasons why writers who use he/him pronouns are not featured in Part I. What gender politics may be unintentionally reinforced with this division?
3. In "The Echoes of History, a Personal Professional Meditation," Pickens writes that "people are encountering the structures of ableism for the first time" (Pickens 145). Define "ableism." How might an understanding of ableism and black disability epistemologies transform your thinking or approach to your academic disciplines, whether Africana studies, gender and sexuality studies, English, philosophy, psychology, or others?
4. In "Let's Keep It Funky: Reflections on Black Studies During the Black Lives Matter Uprising," Bolden remarks, "Black Studies therefore represented an extension of Black Panthers Party leaders' popular phrase 'Power to the people.' Whereas holding political offices and building financial institutions were both vital to the community, real people-power would also be manifested in youth development. Specifically, this would include classes, programs, teaching methods, political theories, and writings that reflected artistic tastes, learning styles, and political interests of the foot soldiers of the Black Studies Movement" (Bolden 192).

How does Bolden's comment that "this would include classes, programs, teaching methods, political theories, and writings that reflected artistic tastes, learning styles, and political interests of the foot soldiers" (Bolden 192) link back to arguments Green makes about Hip Hop music, young social activists, and the Black Lives Matter movement in "Views from the Bricks: Notes on Reading and Protest"?

5. In “Black Books and Dead Black Bodies: Twitter, Hashtags, and Antiracist Reading Lists,” the Ramsby brothers conclude their essay with the final thought: “Canonical figures like Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, and others are likely secure in college curriculums, yet emergent African American creative writers will likely struggle to gain wide, enduring readerships. In the aftermath of George Floyd, with large numbers of people seeking out books that describe racism, police brutality, and white privilege, it seems reader-consumers have preferred explanatory texts rather than artistic ones” (Ramsby and Ramsby 181). Compare their closing observation with the overall thesis posited in Bragg’s essay “We are Our Own Monuments, and We Can Be Theirs, Too.”
6. What can we learn from “Black Books and Dead Black Bodies: Twitter, Hashtags, and Antiracist Reading Lists” about conspicuous consumption and commodification? How do the essay’s findings critique the sell-ability of public displays of black death? What conclusions does the essay draw about the relationship between these anti-racist reading lists, reader-consumers, and Black death?
7. Why is looking at the history of Black resistance important for bolstering 21st-century Black liberation movements and engineering social change? What “archives of Black memory” (Carr 139) do you personally need to tap into?

Creating Interventions

1. Choose one essay from part II. Write a response letter highlighting the selected writer’s argument(s) and then providing ways these argument(s) can be extended.
2. You have been asked to write a letter to the co-editors about this special issue. What’s missing from the special issue? If you were to commission a “part two,” where would you like to see the issue go further? Write a response letter highlighting the overall issue’s main purpose and then providing ways these argument(s) can be expanded or broadened.
3. In her essay “Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation,” Toni Morrison writes that “it seems to me interesting to evaluate Black literature on what the writer does with the presence of an ancestor,” noting that ancestors “are not just parents, they are sort of timeless people.” Consider the essays in this volume. What does each essay “do” with—or in—the presence of an ancestor? Using Morrison’s words as a guide, evaluate the writers’ arguments based on their engagements with the ancestors.

Analyzing Styles

1. Identify the poetics (literary devices and strategies) in one essay of your choosing. For example, does the writer use imagery, simile, or metaphor? What are the effects of these literary devices, and how do they relate to the theme or meaning of the essay?
2. Parker's essay shifts between the first person ("I" and "my") and second person throughout, using the "dear reader" and an imaginary "you" as if giving instructions to someone—an unusual stylistic choice as personal essays usually stick with "I." How does Parker's shifting pronoun usage affect the message?
3. What does Carr mean when he uses the descriptor "Black Frankensteins" in his essay "Black Intellectuals, Black Archives, and a Second American Founding"? Who are the "Black Frankensteins," and what is Carr's attitude towards them? Consider Carr's word choice, "amputated," "sutured," "operating room," and "patient." Explain how Carr's use of medical language and imagery functions to support his essay's overall thesis.