Introduction: On Coogler and Cole's *Black Panther* Film (2018): Global Perspectives, Reflections and Contexts for Educators

by

Marsha R. Robinson and Caryn Neumann

Ryan Coogler and Joe Robert Cole's film *Black Panther,* based on a character created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, opened in February 2018 to worldwide excitement. It drew incredibly enthusiastic crowds who often returned to see the film again, drawn by the positive representations of African men and women, as well as a solid story, fabulous costumes, and fun special effects. Eighteenth in the Marvel Cinematic Universe series of films, *Black Panther* ranked ninth in all-time worldwide earnings for the studio in less than six months.[1] Produced by Kevin Feige and David J. Grant, this Marvel Studios film made with a $200 million budget may be as significant in the near term in the United States as Alex Haley's *Roots* (1977) and it may have an unprecedented impact in global conversations about the complexities of slavery, colonialism, African diaspora relations, identity and the social, gender and economic transformations now taking place in the fifty-five nations of the African Union.

Before the *Roots* miniseries, few television shows in the United States featured mostly African American actors and role models for African American children were seen in situation comedies like *Good Times* (1974-1979) about an African American family living in a public housing high-rise apartment in Chicago or *The Jeffersons* (1975-1985) about a successful African American entrepreneur who moved his family to a high-rise luxury apartment in New York City. After school, African American children could read *Ebony Jr!* magazine. Those were scarce and precious media places in 1975, days when some African Americans would call family and friends to say, "There's one of us on TV now! Hurry before you miss them. Turn to channel…." While this was common for diaspora Africans in Western or Eastern nations, it is not common in nations like Senegal where it is rare to see a white person on television. The *Roots* mini-series disarmed any fantasies of benevolent slavery over its eight evenings of prime-time national television and it raised questions about the nations on the continent of Africa who exported people from beyond neighboring nations. We remembered the conversations that took place in schools and work places. As historians who lived through the *Roots* culture shock of 1977 and who see a similar moment happening this year, we wondered if we could gather enough immediate responses to the *Black Panther* to merit a special edition of a journal. We are grateful to our senior editor Itibari M. Zulu for opening this journal to help educators find resources and inspiration for lesson plans for the 2018-2019 academic year, and beyond.

This special edition of *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies* is an effort to capture the *Black Panther* moment as reflected upon by a diverse group of scholars who answered a call for papers issued March 6, 2018, and their essays and poems were due on May 15, which unknown to us in March, was the day that the Blu-ray disc version was released for purchase. We asked for submissions in poetry, prose or script from those willing to self-identify at least one factor of their own uniqueness as it informs their reflection on the film *Black Panther*, that diversity including factors like race, gender, sexuality, family status, continent, nationality, ethnicity, religion, age, language, scholarly rank, political persuasion, classroom audience and academic discipline. Authors were asked to anticipate questions, inspire and inform conversations in the classroom, in media or any place where youth and adults exchange ideas. We asked that they include references to resources to assist educators in preparing informed and quality discussions and assignments. Our diversity goal has been achieved and our contributors hail from several academic disciplines with varying degrees and years of expertise. Global diversity exceeded our hopes with authors identifying with or writing from Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Curaçao, Guyana, Jamaica, rural and urban communities in the north, south and coastal regions of the United States. We received proposals for more reflections than appear here. We selected reflections that provide different perspectives on the conversation topics that emerged from the responses. We are grateful to the eighteen authors whose reflections follow this introduction.

About the Film and the Marvel Comic Universe

The excitement that met the opening of *Black Panther* befitted a landmark in popular culture. Marvel comics fans looked for continuity in the comic book series that debuted in the 1960s. Bloggers and journalists began writing more than a year before the film was released. In the United States, the initial conversation centered on this being a superhero film directed and written by African Americans with an almost exclusively black cast and a budget to afford CGI. In the foreign press and increasingly in the United States, the conversation turned on the number of nations and cultures represented in the cast and the number of African languages used. From there, the conversations became more complex.

The hero of the film is King T'Challa/Black Panther (Chadwick Boseman) who struggles with villain Erik "Killmonger" Stevens (Michael B. Jordan) for control of the fictional African country of Wakanda. The film asks about our obligations to help our neighbors when doing so may pose an existential threat and a security risk. Wakandans used a rare metal, vibranium, to become the most technologically advanced and prosperous nation on the planet, but the Wakandans present themselves to the rest of the world as poor farmers. They use their technology to project a holographic image of a rainforest in order to shield their skyscrapers, flying cars and other advanced technology from outsiders. Much of the attraction of the film lies in the portrayal of an African superhero.

Black Panther is a product of 1960s politics, African imagery and science fiction. Creators Stan Lee and Jack Kirby (d. 1994), white New York City natives, responded to the era's demand for Black Power with a Black superhero. T'Challa first appeared in July 1966 in Marvel Comic's *Fantastic Four* series. Lee and Kirby showed Wakanda as an Afrofuturistic wonderland where African tradition and advanced scientific technology combine. It was initially portrayed as a country where hypermasculine men dominated,[2] in sharp contrast to the movie and to more recent versions of the comic book which give considerable space to powerful African women. The movie is a version of Afro-futurism, a genre that draws from social movements, technology, music, religion and literature. In the United States, it is linked with the Black Power and Black Arts movements of the 1960s but it also has roots in science fiction. According to Reynaldo Anderson, contemporary Afro-futurism of the kind seen in this movie connects the aesthetics of technology to an African humanist past.[3] We present reflections about such possibilities and realities in order to encourage and support related conversations about history and theory, spirituality, identity and community because the *Black Panther* film as Afro-futurism serves a powerful role of social criticism when it reflects current dystopias and displays possible utopias to which people around the world and of every ethnic identity may aspire.

Black Panther in Historical and Theoretical Context

The *Black Panther* film takes some people to a place they never knew existed—an African nation that governs itself, manages its own economy and defense, educates and cares for its people and others, and does so without European paternalism or mission trips. In this context, the film may speak more about the potential of the African Union (https://au.int/) and less about African diaspora relations. When speaking to a person who is just learning to see African nations as more than ground on which humanitarian crises and civil wars occur, one might mention to them that Nigeria has a National Space Research and Development Agency and that Ethiopia is developing satellite launching capacity. Regardless of ethnicity, age or skin color, their face often mirrors Agent Ross's shock during his first steps in Shuri's laboratory.

If the Wakandan skyline is a surprise or if one is surprised to see African people wearing designer clothing, take that person to the nearest computer. Show them skylines and congested highways from several cities across the continent. Show Morocco's Caftan Fashion show highlights or music videos. Through that computer, one can carry people through a conceptual canopy nurtured on mid-twentieth century neo-colonialism and racism into a reality about twenty-first century African nations that is rarely shown in United States' media. Wakanda's architecture reflects centuries of, and the current century of, trade in its fusion of Sahelian and southern markets and neighborhoods with skyscrapers like those of Harare, Addis Ababa, Dar es Salaam, Lagos (Nigeria) and a little bit of Kuala Lumpur, Angkor Wat and Jakarta. Consider that the opening battle was set in South Korea. This is a long way from President Kennedy's world.

Wakanda's cityscape mirrors the present reality and the promise of the African Union where reside one in seven humans who are potential customers and business partners. Dikeledi Mokoena, writing from a South African perspective, points to some disturbing distances surrounding the film: the relative distance of many people on the African continent who can afford the price of seeing the film; the distance of Wakandans from correcting the damage caused by colonialism; and the distance from valorizing the necessity of radicals in liberation movements. While the film "presents multiple variants of blackness, which is a good thing in the sense that it presents blackness as heterogeneous," Mokoena wants us to ponder who is acceptable, unacceptable, tolerable or backward, and the definitions that lead to such discernments. Marlene Allen comments on the power of science fiction and fantasy to inspire inventors to produce "videoconferencing, cell phones, helicopters, robots and tasers." When the social commentary function of science fiction and science fantasy is applied, "one can hope that these visions will also become reality for the futures of Black women." The character Shuri represents a process that is underway. In the United States, there are female African American astronauts: Mae Jemison, Stephanie Wilson, Joan Higginbotham, Yvonne Cagle, and Jeannette Epps. On the continent of Africa, female scientists include aerospace, aeronautical mechatronics engineers such as Bonolo Mpabanga, Sepelong Motloung, and Keziah Ntwiga. Esther Ngumbi published an essay that includes links to find more African women scientists who are role models for a new generation of scientists and women as CEOs of technology companies.[4] Pursuing this conversation about African women in STEM will lead to questions about who is considered African in African nations as one encounters the reality of African nations' heterogeneous populations, a diversity represented in the architecture of Wakanda's skyline.

The question of who is considered African in African nations goes to the heart of the relationship between residents of African nations and descendents of forced and voluntary migrants from Africa, one of the contentions in the film *Black Panther*. In her exploration of two generations of Wakandan princes responding to the situation of those in the African diaspora, especially in the United States, Makeba Lavan asks, to whom does Wakanda belong? She draws upon the writings of William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, James Baldwin and Malcolm X for a twentieth-century African American perspective as she ponders the utopia/dystopia symbolism of the Wakanda Outreach Center in Oakland as an answer to the princes' dilemma. Délice Williams uses three theses to unpack the dilemma from a South American perspective in order to define Blackness as a process rather than a genome. When reading her assertion that Erik "Killmonger" Stevens is the only Black character developed in the film, consider the undefined ethnicity of his girlfriend Linda, played by Brazilian actress/singer/songwriter Nabiyah Be, for her character could be from the Pacific Islands, an Indian Ocean society, a European or American society.[5] Also consider that there is a myth in the continent that African Americans in the United States are criminals to be avoided, a stereotype that some migrants and refugees from Africa say is supported in their first days in the US by television dramas and evening news stories. Is this myth also reinforced by the children on the Oakland playground at the end of the movie in addition to Linda and Erik Stevens? There is much to unpack in Williams' first thesis that "Wakandans are not Black—at least not at first."

Black Panther stirs more controversies in some transatlantic diaspora eddies. Florencia V. Cornet reminds us that the United States did not produce the first Black Panther hero when the Black Panther Party formed. She also reminds us that Wakanda represents African diaspora communities that achieved progress and advanced beyond the challenges of the slave trade and colonialism, presenting Curaçao as an example. Footballer Ergilio "Pantera Negra" Hato (1926-2013) was one of a generation of athletes from Curaçao whose loyalty to nation was great.[6] Rosemary A. Onyango reverses the direction of the conversation by pointing to a void in the film: the positive contributions of diaspora intellectuals to African independence and the formation of the Organization of African States. Wakanda, she argues, represents a distillation of Pan-Africanists' vision for their future and for our present era. These intellectuals include W. E. B. Du Bois and his wife Shirley Graham, Marcus Garvey and his serial monogamous wives Amy Jacques and Amy Ashwood, Kwame Nkrumah, Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm X. A lesson plan including Onyando's essay can include a biography of Kwame Nkrumah who graduated in 1942 from the first HBCU in the United States, Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, and later from the University of Pennsylvania before moving to Harlem in New York City and then London, England. He converted the Pan-Africanists' vision into independence for Ghana, was a signatory to the Organization of African Unity and attended 1955 Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung, Indonesia. The lesson can turn to Peter Ndaita' s reflection on the process of becoming Black in the United States, a process he names quadruple-consciousness because it involves a social matrix more complex than WEB Du Bois's double-consciousness. The film *Black Panther,* observes Ndaita, presents African languages in a way that is not an impediment. One ask students to consider treating quadruple-consciousness as a metaphorical vibranium suit of a different cut and appropriate for navigating a bi-cultural experience.

One of the murkier conversations inspired by the film *Black Panther* is that of social class division and unity. Robert La Rue points to challenges of teaching the film because doing so requires establishing a great deal of context about race relations and about the nuances of African American history. He points to the conflict between those who attain privileged, elite status and those who did not. While the film juxtaposes Wakanda and Oakland, California, there was an era from the sixteenth through the early twentieth century in which ruling elites and wealthy families of color made individual choices about how they would use their power to advance the less privileged majority. Examples of these nuances include *noblesse oblige*, Pan-Africanism, and the Progressivism exemplified by the motto of members of the National Association of Colored Women (established in 1896) who expressed it so eloquently as "Lifting as We Climb." Derek C. Catsam carries the discussion to the juxtaposition of Ulysses Klaue and Everett Ross. Catsam reflects on some of the responses in social and news media to the film from the Alternative Right (Alt-Right) which is a twenty-first century version of white supremacy or white nationalism. In doing so, he makes explicit some of the dynamics packed into the words "oppression" and "discrimination" throughout this special edition. As characters in the film make decisions about how they will function in the world as it is or as they once perceived it, they come face to face with their values.

Black Panther is about Understanding Africa before and after the Colonial Interlude

A few minutes into the movie, after T'Challa, Nkoye and General Okoye complete a mission to rescue girls and a boy child soldier from a group similar to Boko Haram or the Lord's Resistance Army, T'Challa remarks just before his spacecraft breaks through the projected forest canopy holograph into the capital of Wakanda, "This never gets old." Historians know that it never feels old when one breaks through the artificial social constructs that aim to separate African diaspora people from each other, from the fifty-five nations of the African Union and from the one human family.

One of the concepts that this film breaks through on the way to telling a human story is the time construct bounded by 1441 when the first human from Africa was sold in the new transatlantic slave market in Lagos, Portugal. The mythical nation of Wakanda is located in the Great Rift Valley. According to historians William Leo Hansberry, Joel Augustus Rogers and Joseph E. Harris, and as confirmed by paleontologists and anthropologists, Africans from those mountain highlands expanded eastward to India, the Malay Peninsula, Oceania and South America, northward to the Caspian coast, the Adriatic nations, Iberia and the pre-Roman British Isles, and westward across the Atlantic as explorers, merchants, conquistadors, slaves and as this century's new arrivals in the Americas. If one treats the arc of the transatlantic slave trade as a veil, one can arrive at a conceptually hidden world of prehistoric, classical, medieval and modern diaspora history. Diving like T'Challa in his spaceship into the universe of African diaspora history that renders slavery and colonization into a mere binary star system by comparison, indeed, never gets old.

Since Ancient Egypt, Carthage, the Almoravid Empire, Ashanti, Baganda and Abyssinia, the strongest empires in Africa have been variations of African matriarchy wherein the king rules with the female triad of the Queen Mother who can depose him, the Queen Sister who manages the economy and owns title to the nation's land, and the Queen-Wife who is consort and advisor.[7] This is the triad who brought T'Challa back from near death. This is the triad who makes him strong because he listens to them. The empower each other. African matriarchies conquered land in Europe and Asia. No African patriarchy has ever done this.[8] Erik worked with Linda, foil to Shuri in terms of technology and also to Nakia as alternative queen. Nakia sees herself as a woman who "would make a great queen because I am so stubborn." Linda was a submissive woman, as taught throughout the diaspora, and her submission was her death warrant. Erik carried his expectation that women submit to him into Wakanda, manhandling the high priestess, poised to kill Shuri, and killing one of the Dora Milaje. Erik's misogyny would have cost him Wakanda's culture, technology and military power. The only way to destroy a matriarchy is to implode it with patriarchy.[9] Killmonger did what many Western nations and Asian nations have done in the past by introducing patriarchy. African matriarchy is not about gender dominance. *Black Panther* is a rare film because it shows that African matriarchy is about vibrant gender synergy.

6

African matriarchy is only one of the many cultural features woven into the *Black Panther* film by its authors, artists and actors. Bennie W. Baker writes of Wakanda as a fantastic reflection of the dreams of those active in 1966 African and African diaspora independence and civil rights movements. "Africa could have been what Wakanda was created to be," he writes, if the era of the massive export of African people had never happened. The context on this point, as others, is complex. The export of people went to the west, to the north and to the east. Depopulation and relocation interrupted the education system in Africa, argues Baker. Fortunately, in the current and previous generation, the pace of restoring knowledge and literacy has increased exponentially. The African Union created the Pan African University to increase the capacity for teaching, collaborative research, master's and doctoral programs in five thematic areas: water, energy and climate change (University of Tlemcen); life and earth sciences (University of Ibadan); basic sciences, technology and innovation (Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology); governance, humanities and social sciences (University of Yaoundé); and space sciences (South Africa).[10] Baker's essay focuses us on a change in who defines the dream of utopian Wakanda and who has the power to normalize high-tech economies.

The *Black Panther* film grapples with the balance between the power to make technology universally available and the moral will to do so. Torin Dru Alexander gives us a gateway into religious diversity on the continent of Africa, opening a discussion about the antiquity and continuity of the thirty-thousand-year-old African diaspora in the Indian Ocean as he unpacks several religious traditions incorporated in the film. He spotlights the significance of M'Baku calling upon Hanuman during a battle scene. Hanuman is a Hindu deity who led the monkey army and in whose heart reside Lord Rama and Mother Sita.[11] Too often, discourse in the Atlantic Ocean diaspora assumes a false homogeneity about blackness that overlooks the continuous presence of Asian in Africa. Okello Wilson's essay can continue a conversation about the aesthetics of the body. He takes the basic formula for kinetic energy in the Black Panther's vibranium suit and turns it into a political formula for transforming the negative energies of racism and oppression into constructive energy for the purpose of survival with agency. Much oppressive ideology is built on the concept, as articulated by Wilson, "that it is easier to believe that Black bodies are magical than it is to see, acknowledge, or honor their humanity." His argument can be applied to questions about perceived magic by Ku Klux Klansmen at a lynching or by those in Africa who harm members of the albinism community because they are perceived as having magical bodies. Lleuella Morris takes us further into the conversation about spirituality. Positioning herself as a traditional Christian as she comments on African spiritism, Morris explores the appeal to many people of the Marvel comics universe's inclusion of many spiritual traditions. She reminds us that Black Panther and Wakanda are not just for Black people, or people born on the African continent, or people whose ancestors are part of the more recent African diasporas. What is the relationship of technology, morality, spirituality and spirit possession that frames the decisions this present generation will make for the survival of the human family?

King T'Challa and Prince N'Jadaka struggled with questions of their place in the one human family, a question faced by real people every day. Raquel Baker in her essay offers Afro-pessimism as one of the counterweights to balance the euphoria that some feel after their first viewing of *Black Panther*. "Like Afro-futurism, Afro-pessimism is also an aesthetic and a critical frame, one that posits blackness as a form of social death." N'Jobu's and N'Jadaka/Killmonger's fates are thorns that irritate the will for unity and optimism among continental and diaspora Africans. In her poem, Baker engages many dynamics that some individuals feel as they grapple with their own version of T'Challa's questions: belonging, identity, humanity, location, oppression, dehumanization, subjectivity. Diana Forry explains the appeal of the Marvel comic universe because it is a conceptual utopia about the human condition and the hopes of many individuals that humans can indeed transcend the challenges we face from who have given up being humane. She explains how Erik "Killmonger" Stevens' pain about being rejected and about his struggle with his identity, a topic discussed in other essays as double-consciousness, touches people who feel othered based on melanin, nationality, language and/or sexuality. Accepting one's distinctiveness and one's uniqueness is a common thread in the Marvel comic universe.

The *Black Panther* film is one of the Marvel Comic Universe series of action films and many people who enjoy these films for the visual effects are introduced to African art for the first time. Professor D. E. Wynter's expertise as a career director and producer of films informs her reflection on costume designer Ruth Carter's achievement in visualizing the diversity and unity of African Union cultures and nations. Wynter, a first-generation Jamaican-American, helps us understand costume and war dance as performing the same function as history books and museums. All create public memory by "cultural processing toward reunification, mutual understanding and transcendent ideals." How one distributes this kind of public memory and culture-making is the topic of Ayodeji Boluwatife Aiyesimoju's essay on the cinema industry in Sub-Saharan Africa. Aiyesimoju uses his conversation about films made there for African audiences to engage us in topics about the diaspora concept of Afrocentricity and continental practices of Afro-complementary films. *Black Panther* shows cross-over can happen and he suggests that African film producers consider moving beyond their own imagined borders that may isolate and hide them from a global audience, much as Wakanda hid from the world. He creates a context with a brief history of the cinema industry in Nollywood/Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Algeria and elsewhere. If one wishes to teach this as a diaspora phenomenon by connecting to African American history in the United States, one can introduce the history of what were called "race films" in the first half of the twentieth century. Oscar Micheaux (1884-1951) was one of the creators of this film genre of films made by, acted by, and made for African Americans.[12]

Conclusion: *Black Panther* is not the Black Panther Party

In 1975, while Alex Haley was polishing his book *Roots: the Saga of an American Family*, the Black Panther Party Ministry of Information produced *The Black Panther* newspaper in Oakland, California, and it was no less global in content than Wakanda's skyline. The August 18, 1975, edition contained an article about Elaine Brown and the Los Angeles Black Panther Party providing free breakfasts to seventy-five children on a regular basis. There were articles about the Polynesian Panther Party of New Zealand and the Maori Land Rights movement, Mobutu's Zaire and the revolution, Samora Machel and the celebration of independence in Mozambique, Palestinians soldiers clashing with Israeli ones in Nablus, Sekou Toure and the Republic of Guinea, a development loan from the Arab-African Bank for Sudan, the series of resolutions adopted at the Organization of African Unity ahead of a United Nations session, food and textile industry decisions made at the Council of Ministers of the Caribbean Community, and even information about a United States plan that targeted South Korean President Syngman Rhee.[13] Unlike Wakanda's kings, the Black Panther Party was not hiding from the world.

Perhaps N'Jobu had a subscription to *The Black Panther* newspaper when he lived in Oakland, California. Maybe this newspaper awakened the prince from Wakanda to the myth or even a falsehood of the social construct about division between continental Africa and persons of African descent in the diaspora. He certainly would have learned that the stereotype about African Americans held by some new African Americans was another falsehood. When history, theory, spirituality, identity, community, fiction and the Marvel comic universe combine, complex conversations happen. We thank Ryan Coogler, Joe Robert Cole, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Kevin Feige, David J. Grant, Ruth Carter, and all the people associated with the *Black Panther* film for creating a global cultural moment the likes of which have not been seen since Alex Haley's 1977 film *Roots*.

Marsha R. Robinson and Caryn E. Neumann
July 2018

Notes

---

[1] N. A., "Black Panther," Box Office Mojo, Http://www.boxofficemoojo.com/movies/"Page=main&id=marvel2017.htm (Accessed June 23, 2018).

[2] Adilifli Nama, *Super Black: American Pop Culture and Black Superheroes* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011), 43.

[3] Reynaldo Anderson, "Critical Afrofuturism: a Case Study in Visual Rhetoric, Sequential Art, and Postapocalyptic Black Identity," in *The Blacker the Ink: Constructions of Black Identity in Comics and Sequential Art*, edited by Frances Gateward and John Jennings (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 178-182.

[4] To create a STEM lesson plan about African women scientists, one might assign Esther Ngumbi's article, "I Didn't Think There Were Many African Women Scientists. Then I Checked Twitter." (https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/02/11/583628387/i-didnt-think-there-were-many-african-women-scientists-then-i-checked-twitter). Ngumbi listed STEM organizations: "The African Institute for Mathematical Sciences, African Women in Science and Engineering, Levers in Heels, The Exploratory, African Women in Agricultural Research and Development and AfroScientric."

[5] There was some pre-release speculation that Killmonger's assistant would be the Marvel character Nightshade. Instead, the character is named "Linda" according to Nabiyah Be's website (www.nabiyahbe.com), to IMDb (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1825683/fullcredits, and a news release from Pace University where she studied. (www.pace.edu/news-release/pace-school-performing-arts-acting-alumna-bahiyah-be-makes-her-film-debut-in-black-panther) February 2, 2018. Ms. Be won a 2018 Drama Desk Award for her work in *School Girls; of the African Mean Girls*.

[6] For teaching materials about Ergilio Hato, see www.sportmuseumcuracao.com/ergilio/.

[7] African matriarchy is not the version feared by Herodotus and it is not an inversion of patriarchy. Rather, African matriarchy is a sharing of power by the genders in societies where the motherhood function is not seen as a mental disability as is the case in patriarchies where men also happen to fear women. For an introduction to the concept, see Cheikh Anta Diop, *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: the Domains of Matriarchy and of Patriarchy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Karnak House, 1997); Ifi Amadiume, *Re-inventing Africa: Matriarchy, Religion, and Culture* (London: Zed Books, 2001); Barbara S. Lesko, "Women's Monumental Mark on Ancient Egypt," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 54, no. 1 (March 1991): 4-15; Susan Geiger, Nakanyike Musisi, and Jean Marie Allman, eds., *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Oyeronke Oyewumi, ed., African Gender Studies: Theoretical Questions and Conceptual Issues (Houndmills, Basingstoke, England: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

[8] Marsha R. Robinson, "Gender Wars: Patriarchy, Matriarchy and Conflicts," in *War and Peace in Africa*, edited by Toyin Falola and Raphael Chijioke Njoku (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2010), 101-128.

[9] Marsha R. Robinson, *Matriarchy, Patriarchy and Imperial Security in Africa: Explaining Riots in Europe and Violence in Africa* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012).

[10] https://pau-au.net/. Centers for research excellence exist in many countries across the continent of Africa under several multinational organizational superstructures or sponsored by national governments. The Association of African Universities in partnership with the World Bank Group has centers of excellence in eight nations in West Africa and Central Africa. https://ace/aau/org/our-achievements/. Similar centers of excellence exist in the East Africa and Southern Africa under the ACE II Inter-University Council for East Africa. www.ace2.iucea.org/.

[11] An introduction to Hanuman to understand the significance of the conflict that Alexander notes can be found at www.bhagavatam-katha.com/ramayana-story-hanuman-and-the-pearl-necklace-of-mother-sita/. A broader context for Alexander's essay can explore Hindi, Tamil and Bangladeshi film industries for projecting a false homogeneity about melanin levels. If one wishes to present this discussion to students, one can compare some of the buildings in the skyline of Wakanda's capital city to buildings like the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur or to the spires of Angkor Wat and then proceed to films. Aamir Khan and Mansoor Khan's *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India*, directed by Ashutosh Gowarikar (2001), contains a musical segment around the song "Chale Chalo" in which the benefit of ethnic and racial unity to empower India is clear enough that subtitles are not needed in the classroom.

[12] Micheaux, who was a homestead-owning farmer in South Dakota before turning to literature and the film industry, was born in Metropolis, Illinois. Metropolis is the name of a major city in the DC Comics Universe featuring Superman and Bat Man characters among others.

[13]*The Black Panther*, 13, no. 26: 1-26 (August 18, 1975). *The Black Panther* newspaper is available through the Alexander Street Press *Black Thought and Culture* database. See also *The Black Panthers Project,* an on-line resource housed at Columbia University which contains interviews with many prominent members of the party. For a description of the project, see https://www.loc.gov/folklife/civilrights/survey/view_collection.php?col_id=1042. For a secondary source, or Judson L. Jeffries' edited volume *On the Ground: the Black Panther Party in Communities across America* brings the history of the party in the western half of the United States while his other edited volume on the party, *Comrades: a Local History of the Black Panther Party,* covers the eastern half of the country.

Marsha R. Robinson, PhD, is a Visiting Assistant Professor of World History in the Department of Humanities and Creative Arts at Miami University (Ohio) where she is affiliated with the Department of History and with the Department of Global and Intercultural Studies. Focused on the intersection of gender, economics and imperialism in world history, she is the author of *Disobedient Histories in Ancient and Modern Times: Regionalism, Governance, War and Peace* (2018),   *Matriarchy, Patriarchy and Imperial Security in Africa* (2012), and the editor of three volumes.

Caryn E. Neumann, PhD, is an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary and Communication Studies at Miami University (Ohio). She is an affiliate in History; Black World Studies; and Women, Gender, and Sexuality. Neumann teaches a course on Comics in American Culture and has published several articles pertaining to women in comics in the *Journal of Fandom Studies, Aging Heroes: Portrayals in Popular Culture,* and *Heroines of Comic Books and Literature: Portrayals in Comic Books and Literature.* She has also held several offices in the Midwest Popular Culture Association.

12