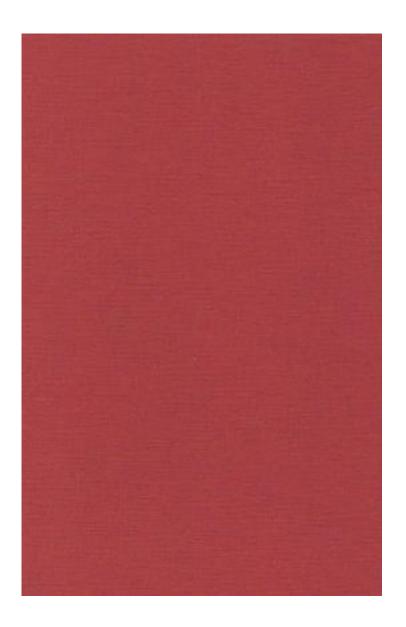
## Black Fascisms



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In this provocative new book, Mark Christian Thompson addresses the startling fact that many African American intellectuals in the 1930s sympathized with fascism, seeing in its ideology a means of envisioning new modes of African American political resistance. Thompson surveys the work and thought of several authors and asserts that their sometimes positive reaction to generic European fascism, and its transformation into black fascism, is crucial to any understanding of Depression-era African American literary culture. The book considers the high regard that "Back to Africa" advocate Marcus Garvey expressed for fascist dictators and explores the common ground he shared with George Schuyler and Claude McKay, writers with whom Garvey is generally thought to be at odds. Thompson reveals how fascism informed a rejection of Marxism by McKay--as well as by Arna Bontemps, whose "Drums at Dusk" depicts communism as antithetical to any black revolution. A similarly authoritarian stance is examined in the work of Zora Neale Hurston, where the striving for a fascist sovereignty presents itself as highly critical of Nazism while nonetheless sharing many of its tenets. The book concludes with an investigation of Richard Wright's "The Outsider" and its murderous protagonist, Cross Damon, who articulates fascist drives already present, if latent, in "Native Son"'s Bigger Thomas. Unencumbered by the historical or biblical references of the earlier work, Damon personifies the essence of black fascism. Taking on a subject generally ignored or denied in African American cultural and literary studies, "Black Fascisms" seeks not only to question the prominence of the Left in the political thought of a generation of writers but to change how we view African American literature in general. Encompassing political theory, cultural studies, critical theory, and historicism, the book will challenge readers in numerous fields, providing a new model for thinking about the political and transpational in African American culture and shedding new light on our understanding of fascism between the wars.

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