

# Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain



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著者:Kate A. Baldwin

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Examining the significant influence of the Soviet Union on the work of four major African American authors - and on twentieth-century American debates about race - "Beyond the Color Line and the Iron Curtain" remaps black modernism, revealing the importance of the Soviet experience in the formation of a black transnationalism. Langston Hughes, W. E. B. Du Bois, Claude McKay, and Paul Robeson each lived or traveled extensively in the Soviet Union between the 1920s and the 1960s - and each reflected on Communism and Soviet life in works that have been largely unavailable, overlooked, or understudied. Kate Baldwin takes up these writings, as well as considerable material from Soviet sources - including articles in "Pravda" and "Ogonek", political cartoons, Russian translations of unpublished manuscripts now lost, and mistranslations of major texts - to consider how these writers influenced and were influenced by both Soviet and American culture. Her work demonstrates how the construction of a new Soviet citizen attracted African Americans to the Soviet Union, where they could explore a national identity putatively free of class, gender, and racial biases. While Hughes and McKay later renounced their affiliations with the Soviet Union, Baldwin shows how, in different ways, both Hughes and McKay, as well as Du Bois and Robeson, used their encounters with the U. S. S. R. and Soviet models to

rethink the exclusionary practices of citizenship and national belonging in the U. S., and to move toward an internationalism that was a dynamic mix of anti-racism, anti-colonialism, social democracy, and international socialism. Recovering what Baldwin terms the 'Soviet archive of Black America', this book forces a rereading of some of the most important African American writers, and of the transnational circuits of black modernism.

作者介绍:

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