



## Limited Options: Strategic Maneuverings in Himes's Harlem

Wendy W. Walters

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# Limited Options: Strategic Maneuverings in Himes's Harlem

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Chester Himes, an American author who in his lifetime never found a "place" in the American literary scene, set his novels written during French expatriation in the nostalgic milieu of a Harlem he half-created in his imagination. In fiction he was able to exercise a control over U.S. racial politics which he (like most people) could never exercise in life. Himes explained the pleasure of his nostalgic literary act to John A. Williams:

I was very happy writing these detective stories, especially the first one, when I began it. I wrote those stories with more pleasure than I wrote any of the other stories. And then when I got to the end and started my detectives shooting at some white people, I was the happiest. (qtd. in Williams 315)

Himes's detective novels allow him to control the site of nostalgia, briefly to imagine refashioning U.S. race relations and law enforcement practices. His own experiences as a black convict in Ohio State Prison inform his authorial imagination in these novels.<sup>1</sup> An emphasis present in the detective fiction, and Himes's other writings as well, is the necessity of physical safety for African Americans. Himes's two detectives, Coffin Ed Johnson and Grave Digger Jones, emerge as "the cops who should have been," the cops who could offer protection to the African American urban community. By analyzing two of Himes's detective novels, published in 1959 and 1969, we can chart the progress of these proposed heroes. In 1959 in *The Real Cool Killers* Himes constructs Coffin Ed and Grave Digger as viable folk heroes for the urban community.<sup>2</sup> But by *Blind Man with a Pistol* (1969) their effectiveness as heroes is undercut by the altered socio-political landscape of U.S. race relations.

## *The Real Cool Killers*: Coffin Ed and Grave Digger as Folk Heroes

Himes's second detective novel, *The Real Cool Killers*, opens with the blues lines "I'm gwine down to de river, / Set down on de ground. / If de blues overtake me, / I'll jump overboard and drown" (5). As a vernacular inscription, this epigram is well-suited to the themes of Himes's novel, which can be read as the ghetto's answer to white power. But the words of the blues lines imply a different and more pessimistic response to life in a racist society than the response suggested by the novel. My contention is that the characters in *The Real Cool Killers* employ specifically community-based, folk-heroic strategies of self-defense and

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Wendy W. Walters is a doctoral candidate in literature at the University of California, San Diego. Her dissertation, entitled "This Landscape of Her Identity": Themes of Home and Elsewhere among Writers of the African Diaspora," focuses on the writings of Chester Himes, Simon Njami, and Michelle Cliff. Ms. Walters would like to thank Sherley Anne Williams, George Lipsitz, Winnie Woodhull, and the editors at *AAJ* for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

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solidarity in the face of intrusive, dominating power structures embodied by white cops. In all of his detective novels, Himes sets up Harlem as particularly unreadable and mystifying, not only to white "visitors" and cops, but also to his two heroes, Coffin Ed and Grave Digger, and even local inhabitants. What varies is the degree to which Harlem mystifies the various characters, and it is the community insiders' special skill both in reading Harlem and in manipulating its unreadability which allows for their self-protecting solidarity. Most governmental systems of ordering and labeling urban reality are not applicable in Himes's Harlem. When Grave Digger questions a suspect to find out an address, the evasive response he gets is, " 'You don't never think 'bout where a gal lives in Harlem, 'les you goin' home with her. What do anybody's address mean up here?' " (115). The breakdown of the ability to rely on official locating practices functions in several ways in the novel. First, it completely baffles the white cops (especially chiefs and lieutenants) and renders them ineffectual. It allows Himes to project Coffin Ed and Grave Digger as powerful inside readers of an otherwise inscrutable milieu. And it enables the residents of Harlem to manipulate the particular codes which confound white cops, in the interest of self-protection. In *The Real Cool Killers* the white cops continually express their frustration in being unable to pin down a systematic way to decipher their surroundings. Their inability to make sense of their environment is directly linked to their preconceived racist stereotypes, as is seen in the exasperated statement of one white cop to another: " 'What's a name to these coons? They're always changing about' " (121).

The context which makes strategies of manipulation both necessary and successful is the historical presence of white law enforcement in black urban communities and the way this white presence has been seen by the residents

of these communities. John W. Roberts explains that "the tremendous amount of power vested in white law enforcement officers in the late nineteenth century caused many African Americans to view them as the embodiment of the 'law' and, by extension, white power" (197). Because these law officers were not community insiders, and only entered black neighborhoods for work, their knowledge of the territory was limited, and African Americans soon developed strategies for exploiting this white ignorance, ways of manipulating codes.

These strategies of evasion should be seen as subversive power exercised by the black Harlem residents of Himes's novels, in their manipulation of codes. This relative power is based in the underclass's superior knowledge of the minds of their oppressors. It should be readily apparent that this knowledge, coupled with behavior subversive of dominant power, calls to mind the qualities of the trickster hero of black folklore. Roberts explains that the trickster has the ability to step adeptly "inside his dupe's sense of reality and manipulate it through wit, guile, and deception to secure material rewards" (185). It is possible in a more current context to replace *material rewards* with *personal safety*. In the context of the black ghetto, safety from abusive white law enforcement becomes a most valued commodity. Sheikh, the leader of the teenage gang The Real Cool Moslems, becomes the trickster turned badman, outlaw hero. Sheikh's skill in reading white stereotypical assumptions about black behavior enables him to baffle the cops. When his gang members question the believability of the behavioral disguise Sheikh tells them to adopt, he answers,

"Hell, these is white cops. They believe spooks are crazy anyway. You and Sonny just act kind of simple-minded. They gonna swallow it like it's chocolate ice cream. They ain't going to do nothing but kick you in the ass and laugh like hell about how crazy spooks are. They gonna go home and tell their old ladies and everybody they see about two simpleminded

spooks up on the roof teaching pigeons how to fly at night all during the biggest dragnet they ever had in Harlem. You see if they don't." (52)

Sheikh banks on white inability to understand black behavior in addition to white racist assumptions about black intelligence. In this analysis he shows himself to be the more skilled reader of minds. In fact the cops who do confront the gang members on the roof are immediately unable to decipher even the physical scene, see only blackness and two "tarbabies," and the sergeant even reads the scene as a "voodoo" rite in a way that specifically emphasizes an intensely mystified othering of the African American subject. It is probably not irrelevant, however, that voodoo has been seen historically by the white community not only as mystifying or inexplicable but, by extension, *powerful*.<sup>3</sup> Roberts adds conjure to the trickster repertoire of means of deceiving and fooling those in power (206). The subversive power of this behavior can be seen in the white cops' baffled reaction and (correct) fear that they're being duped:

"Do you think all these colored people in this neighborhood know who Pickens and the Moslems are?"

"Sure they know. Every last one of them. Unless some other colored person turns Pickens in he'll never be found. They're laughing at us." (119)

Recalling the novel's epigram, the blues emerge again in an analogue with roots in folk sayings: "Got one mind for the white folks see, another mind I know is me."

If Sheikh and his quasi-criminal teenage gang of Real Cool Moslems are the trickster heroes of the novel's milieu, what role is played by Coffin Ed and Grave Digger, the two black police detectives on the Harlem beat? Indeed their position as black enforcers of white police domination has caused them to be misread as excessively violent towards "their own people" and in many ways more unapologetically complicit with the white power structure than I see them as being.

I would contest a common, and reductive, view of Grave Digger and Coffin Ed as expressed by Jay R. Berry in "Chester Himes and the Hard-Boiled Tradition": "Their cultural antecedents give them the moral authority that they exercise — from folk culture they are the 'bad niggers' in the tradition of Stackalee" (40).<sup>4</sup>

Central to any consideration of whether this is an accurate description of Coffin Ed and Grave Digger would be a study of the particular socio-cultural bases of the uses of the term *bad nigger*. Roberts's chapter "The Badman as Outlaw Hero" is a thorough, Afrocentric revision of previous folklore scholarship on black heroic figures, and Roberts criticizes the faulty equation made by many scholars between *bad nigger* and *badman*.<sup>5</sup>

During slavery, "bad niggers," originally a label given by whites, "sought through open defiance, violence, and confrontation to improve their lot in slavery regardless of the consequences of their actions for their own or the slave community's welfare" (Roberts 176). The "bad nigger" does *not* have moral authority either from the black community or the white power structure; he is viewed by both as dangerous. Roberts explains the Afrocentric view of the "bad nigger": "To African Americans, individuals who acted as 'bad niggers' in their communities were not heroes, but rather individuals whose characteristic behavior threatened their abilities to maintain the value that they placed on harmony and solidarity as a form of protection against the power of the law" (179). Coffin Ed and Grave Digger clearly do not fit this characterization, both because they care not for personal acquisitiveness and because their ultimate motivating force is based in community self-protection from an invading, threatening outside force—namely, white law enforcement. Contrary to the "bad nigger" stereotype, Coffin Ed and Grave Digger see the values of the black community as binding. In fact, Stackolee is a *badman*, celebrated by

African American folk heroic balladry, not a *bad nigger*, which Roberts points out was *not* the focus for heroic folktales. Roberts explains that the badmen celebrated by balladry were outlaw folk heroes "whose characteristic behaviors were perceived as justifiable retaliatory actions" against the white power structure (205). While Coffin Ed and Grave Digger possess some similarities to badmen heroes of legend, they are ultimately a different modern figuration of heroism in Himes's conceptualization of their role in *The Real Cool Killers*.

Grave Digger and Coffin Ed possess some badmen-like qualities, such as their often violent and unpredictable behavior. Their guns, like those of many badmen heroes, are extremely formidable symbolic images and very real instruments of destruction known by the whole community. At least one scene in each of Himes's detective novels introduces these guns. Here is a representative example from *The Real Cool Killers*:

Coffin Ed drew his pistol from its shoulder sling and spun the cylinder. Passing street light glinted from the long nickel-plated barrel of the special .38 revolver, and the five brass-jacketed bullets looked dead in the six chambers. (13)

Here the gun literally reflects the street, the life of the ghetto, and the gun's image repeats its power in the ghetto imagination when Choo-Choo, one of Sheikh's gang members, fantasizes, "What I'd rather have me is one of those hard-shooting long-barreled thirty-eights like Grave Digger and Coffin Ed have got. Them heaters can kill a rock" (49). Choo-Choo's hyperbolic description of the guns' power is tied to similarly legend-infused tales of Coffin Ed's and Grave Digger's own power, based on their quickness to use these infamous weapons. But Coffin Ed and Grave Digger play a very complex and multi-layered role in their negotiation of the city's white power structure and their relationship to the black community, and there is less ambivalence in their behavior than there is con-

scious manipulation and folk heroic maneuvering in a very tight space of operation. Traditional badmen are outlaws, and Coffin Ed and Grave Digger operate within the law and attempt to control outlaws. Thus, they cannot correctly be seen only as badmen heroes.

It is necessary to acknowledge their brutality, but not without also seeing it as a "natural" part of the general, cartoon-like excessive violence of Himes's detective fiction as a whole. For Coffin Ed and Grave Digger, violence, or its threat (which is effective due to community knowledge of the pair's capacity to do actual violence), is what enables them to get informants to talk. As cops, Coffin Ed and Grave Digger have official *sanction* from the white police department to be excessively brutal. This caveat removes the traditional prohibition against police brutality, which in many cases is only nominal anyway. But this particular nod from their white superiors functions differently for the white cops than it does for Coffin Ed and Grave Digger. For as the chief says to Grave Digger, "You know Harlem, you know where you have to go, who to see . . . I don't give a goddamn how many heads you crack; I'll back you up" (44). Thus, their license for brutality is based on the police department's utter reliance on them as skilled readers of Harlem's behavioral and linguistic codes.

This reliance is very much like that placed on black slave drivers during slavery. Roberts tells us that, "in the black slave driver, the masters, *from their point of view*, had an individual who could be held responsible when enslaved Africans violated the rules of the system and whose loyalty could be counted on" (50; italics added). While this is what plantation owners (and the white police force) *think* they are getting in a black slave driver, the actual allegiance of the black cops is elsewhere. Hence, during slavery a body of folklore emerged celebrating the driver as trickster hero, portraying "John as a talented and skillful exploiter of his

exploitation by Old Master, his dupe or foil in most of the tales" (53). The split between white perceptions of black behavior and black loyalty and the realities of that behavior and loyalty is central to an understanding of the ways that Coffin Ed and Grave Digger function as *protectors* within their community. I draw these parallels to folk culture both to locate Coffin Ed and Grave Digger within this tradition of African American folk-heroic creation, and to mark out their differences from existing or previous heroes. I see them as neither the *bad niggers* nor the *bad-men* of folklore, but instead embodiments of a complex yet idealistic image of protection in the ghetto.

*The Real Cool Killers* opens with the murder of a white man, a "visitor" to Harlem. This fact brings the white cops to Harlem in full racist force: "'Rope off this whole goddamned area,' the sergeant said. 'Don't let anybody out. We want a Harlem-dressed Zulu. Killed a white man. . . . Pick up all suspicious persons'" (22). When white power in the form of armed white police officers invades the ghetto, every black person becomes a potential suspect, a potential scapegoat. And because the crime is the murder of a white man, every black person becomes a potential victim of lynching by the white mob. Himes specifically suggests this potential, again in his return to the blues, when he describes the white cops' intrusive presence swarming over the neighborhood:

[The white chief of police] turned and pointed toward a tenement building across the street. It looked indescribably ugly in the glare of a dozen powerful spotlights. Uniformed police stood on the roof, others were coming and going through the entrance; still others stuck their heads out of front windows to shout to other cops in the street. The other front windows were jammed with colored faces, looking like clusters of strange purple fruit in the stark white light. (41)

It is essential here to relate Himes's imagery of "colored faces" to its vernacular and literary black antecedents, specifically Billie Holiday and Jean

Toomer, in contrast to previous critical interpretations which have aligned Himes's imagery with European painters and writers.<sup>6</sup> When we look to Jean Toomer's "Song of the Son" as a precursor for Himes's language we open up Himes's writing to the powerful allusions to slavery which enrich his meaning.<sup>7</sup> The last two stanzas of Toomer's poem from *Cane* read:

O Negro slaves, dark purple ripened  
plums  
Squeezed, and bursting in the pine-  
wood air,  
Passing, before they stripped the old  
tree bare  
One plum was saved for me, one seed  
becomes

An everlasting song, a singing tree,  
Caroling softly souls of slavery,  
What they were, and what they are to me,  
Caroling softly souls of slavery. (21)

The words of Toomer's poem—"squeezed, and bursting"—suggest the violence of slavery, the pressure of exploitation; and these images resonate with the condition of impoverished blacks in modern U.S. urban ghettos.

Billie Holiday's famous blues song "Strange Fruit" articulates the image of lynching even more overtly, in a way that is crucial to Himes's own description of the relationship of white law enforcement to the black community. Her musical version of a poem by Lewis Allan, recorded 20 April 1939, has potent resonance in black culture:

Southern trees bear a strange fruit:  
Blood on the leaves, and blood at the  
root.  
Black bodies swinging in the Southern  
breeze;  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.  
Pastoral scene of the gallant South:  
The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth.  
Scent of magnolia, sweet and fresh;  
Then the sudden smell of burning  
flesh.  
Here is a fruit for the crows to pluck;  
For the rain to gather, for the wind to suck;  
For the sun to rot, for the tree to drop.  
Here is a strange and bitter crop.

When seen in the context of politicized African American poetic antecedents, Himes's linguistic imagery is allowed to signify upon this verbal tradition. Singing to an urban New York audi-

ence at Cafe Society in Greenwich Village in 1939 Billie Holiday contextualizes Southern racism and oppression for the Northern audience as relevant to them. Himes uses the same metaphors for lynching as the pine-scented, squeezed-plum imagery of "Song of the Son," but substitutes for the pastoral vision of "Strange Fruit" the modern, signally urban, decaying tenement flooded with police spotlights and surrounded by uniformed white cops—perhaps urban equivalents of hooded Southern embodiments of white power. Allowing Himes's voice to resonate among Holiday's and Toomer's historicizes a critique of Southern racism by bringing it to a Northern urban context and showing the way that lynch mob "law enforcement" is replicated in the modern ghetto when a white is presumed murdered by a black.

True to the lynch mob mentality, the white cops are looking for *any* "Harlem-dressed Zulu" who can "hang" for the crime. But no criminal appears apprehendable, and the police chief is in danger of losing face before the white press. The master has been duped; he's caught unable to read the signs, solve the mystery, and appease the mob with a lynching. So he must get his hands on a black body quickly. Sonny Pickens becomes the scapegoat for the chief, who says, "We haven't got anybody to work on but him and it's just his black ass" (43). Obviously here Pickens's black ass is much less valuable in the cops' mentality than the white ass of Galen, the murdered man. And this essential unequivalence cannot be balanced. In the racial economy of 1959 one dead black ass does not equal one dead white ass—an unequal economy of bodies that becomes the central issue of Himes's detective fiction.

The Harlem milieu in which Coffin Ed and Grave Digger operate as detectives is one marked by the proliferation of (what they consider) *minor* vices like prostitution, the numbers racket, other forms of gambling, and small-scale robbery. For the most part Coffin Ed and Grave Digger allow these activities to flourish, and even develop a somewhat symbiotic relationship with their participants, who become key informers for them, people who will talk because they desire to continue operating without hassles from the law. In this way Harlem's underworld becomes part of the inner network which enables Ed's and Digger's investigative work. Historically, as institutionalized economic oppression became a more dominant factor of impoverished black urban life, such illegal activities were often a necessary part of the system by which the

ghetto could continue to exist (in both the positive and the negative senses implied by such an existence). Roberts explains that

... the relative absence of the [white] "law" in black neighborhoods allowed for the creation of a socio-cultural environment in which certain types of illegal activities involved relatively little risk to personal well-being from the "law" while enhancing the potential for extraordinary economic gain at its expense. In addition the pervasiveness of destructive material and physical conditions in the black community attributed to the power of the "law" over the lives of African Americans created an atmosphere in which social restraints against certain types of actions which violated the law were greatly diminished. (198)

But Roberts also importantly acknowledges that such behaviors were only accepted until they "threatened the solidarity and harmony of communal life in ways that created the *potential of external intervention*" (199; italics added). The danger of external intervention is the propelling force behind

**Himes's political philosophizing moves from an assertion of defensive violence to an aggressive violence, yet all within the construct of making the U.S. ultimately a safer place for blacks.**

Coffin Ed's and Grave Digger's protective strategies.

The two detectives' roles are made complex when white people come to Harlem to support its vices, buy its citizens' bodies. When some white people in a Harlem bar question Grave Digger's "tough" police language, his response is, "I'm just a cop, if you white people insist on coming up to Harlem where you force colored people to live in vice-and-crime ridden slums, it's my job to see that you are safe" (65). Digger's comment here is essential in several ways, the most obvious of which being that it names the invidious complicity of white socioeconomic oppression and white participation in exploitative vice. Additionally, his comment, and others like it throughout the detective novels, implies that his job is to protect *white people*. But Digger and Ed are much more skillful readers of the particular politics of violence and law enforcement in the black ghetto, and their ultimate aim is the protection of *black people*, and especially black community security. In fact, their success in meeting this goal can be measured in part by the fact that their deeper motives are not recognized by the police force. They know that the best way to ensure the security of black bodies is by keeping the lynch mobs at bay, a goal they seek to accomplish by what may seem like a circuitous means—protecting the singular white body in Harlem. As we have seen, *one* white death in Harlem brings the cops *en masse* to the area, with unquenchable lynching fervor; one white stiff ends up equaling four black corpses and one maimed black body.

If Coffin Ed and Grave Digger use violence in their questioning procedures, their goal is to solve crimes so that white cops stay out. The complexity of Coffin Ed and Grave Digger as heroes rests in this double-edged quality of their behavior: Their violence is both directed at members of their community and used as a force to prevent the more uncontrollable violence of lynch mobs. John Cawelti, writing on

"hard-boiled" detective fiction, considers that "the action of legitimized violence . . . resolves tensions between the anarchy of individualistic impulses and the communal ideas of law and order by making the individual's violent action an ultimate defense of the community against the threat of anarchy" (142). In their protection of the community against the anarchic forces of white law enforcement, Coffin Ed and Grave Digger are complex black heroic figures. Possessing some of the traits of the trickster, badman, and slave driver, they stand apart from all these.

Asked in a 1970 interview in *Le Monde* by Michel Fabre whether his black detectives are traitors to their race, Himes brought out an important issue which has special bearing on *The Real Cool Killers*:

Cerceuil et Fossoyeur seraient des traîtres à leur race s'ils étaient les personnages réalistes. Ce qui n'est pas le cas: ils représentent le type de policier qui *devrait* exister, celui qui vit dans la communauté, la connaît bien et fait respecter la loi de façon humaine. Je crois en eux. Je les ai créés: deux personnages qui seraient les ennemis des Noirs dans la réalité, mais que j'ai voulu sympathique. (20)<sup>8</sup>

(Coffin Ed and Grave Digger would be traitors to their race if they were realistic characters. This is not the case: They represent the type of cop who *should* exist, who lives in the community, knows it well, and enforces respect for the law in a humane way. I believe in them. I created them: two people who would be enemies of Blacks in reality, but whom I intended to be sympathetic.)

Himes's statement is confusing in that it champions yet denies realism. When Fabre asks whether Coffin Ed and Grave Digger are traitors, he is speaking of their characters, not "real" black cops in general. Yet Himes does not respond *directly* to this question to discuss his *portrayal* of the cops, but instead hypothesizes that "real" black cops would be traitors. I take Himes to mean that Coffin Ed and Grave Digger are ideal types, that "real" cops who are black are necessarily traitors to their race, but that these two are sym-

pathetic, that their allegiance is above all to their community.

In his 1963 article written for *Présence Africaine* entitled "Harlem ou le cancer de l'Amérique," Himes identifies the social milieu which grounds the necessity for heroes like Coffin Ed and Grave Digger. He outlines the series of American race riots in ghettos around the country, especially Harlem and Detroit. The result of a Detroit riot in which many blacks are killed by white police is that, "en consequence, Harlem fut submergée de policiers blancs qui portaient de lourdes matraques et patrouillaient dans les rues à cheval ou à motocyclette. Les incidents succédèrent aux incidents" (55). ("Consequently, Harlem was flooded with white policemen who carried heavy bludgeons and patrolled the streets on horseback or motorcycles. There was one incident after another.") Coffin Ed and Grave Digger, then, are created in the hope of preventing this abusive presence from invading black neighborhoods. They can be seen as artful strategizers of legal politics whose perhaps imperfect methodology of protecting one white body (their overt, white-perceived purpose) has as its goal the effective prevention of a general lynching of black bodies. While such a goal was possible to articulate in the U.S. racial environment of 1959, it was not possible to realize. Coffin Ed and Grave Digger cannot fully prevent the lynching, and innocent black citizens are killed. Ten years later, with the publication of *Blind Man With a Pistol*, Coffin Ed's and Grave Digger's strategic methodology is much less plausible even to articulate and becomes, in fact, absurd.

### ***Blind Man with a Pistol: Riots and Revolutions***

A friend of mine, Phil Lomax, told me this story about a blind man with a pistol shooting at a man who had slapped him on a subway train and killing an innocent bystander peacefully reading his newspaper across the aisle and I

thought, damn right, sounds just like today's news, riots in the ghettos, war in Vietnam, masochistic doings in the Middle East. And then I thought of some of our loudmouthed leaders urging our vulnerable soul brothers on to getting themselves killed, and thought further that all unorganized violence is like a blind man with a pistol. (Himes, Preface to *Blind Man With a Pistol*)

**I**n the ten-year span between the publication of *The Real Cool Killers* and *Blind Man With a Pistol* race relations in the U.S. had become even more volatile as white power cemented itself further. The assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X had violently demonstrated U.S. institutional response to powerful black heroes. In his chapter "Sixties' Social Movements, the Literary Establishment, and the Production of the Afro-American Text," W. Lawrence Hogue explains that the increasing economic disparity between blacks and whites led to riots and rebellions across the nation, and the civil rights and black power struggles which "continued to undermine and bring into question the authority and legitimacy of the dominant ideological apparatus" (50). Coffin Ed and Grave Digger, by virtue (or fault) of their connection to this apparatus, would also meet with challenges to their previously unquestioned authority. The nationalist impulse in the black community in the 1960s saw white power as centralized and therefore fightable. Thus, in any conceptualization of two distinct sides, Coffin Ed and Grave Digger were now seen as on the wrong one.

As his preface shows, during his expatriation in Europe, Himes remained closely aware of both internal and international U.S. politics and ideology. Given the social circumstances outlined by Hogue, the creation and function of Coffin Ed and Grave Digger as ideal heroic solutions and community protectors become entirely implausible for Himes. White power and white law enforcement domination is so entrenched, and its control over the ghetto so pervasive, that the

smaller scale heroism of a Coffin Ed or Grave Digger becomes ineffectual. *Blind Man*, as Himes's last completed detective novel set in Harlem, charts this landscape and demonstrates this collapse. The removal of a protective capacity in turn leads to widespread random violence throughout Harlem, a situation which allows Himes to bring forth his long-held criticisms of unorganized violence.

While *Blind Man* is less a detective story than any of Himes's previous detective fiction, there is the premise of a mystery within the novel. Like *The Real Cool Killers*, it involves a white man who lives outside Harlem, comes there to buy a black body for sex, and ends up dead on the street. As *Blind Man* progresses it becomes obvious that, if Ed's and Digger's former heroic strategies were ever viable ones, they can no longer succeed, for in 1969 the urban scene is very different from that in 1959. The corruption of the police force, previously alluded to, now works to circumscribe Ed's and Digger's behavior. Predictably, the dead white man on the street brings on the white cops in full force, and Grave Digger and Coffin Ed try futilely to protect the citizens from the ensuing lynch mob. At the scene of the crime Grave Digger says to Coffin Ed,

"I just wish these mother-rapers wouldn't come up here and get themselves killed, for whatever reason."

... Coffin Ed turned on [the crowd of black onlookers] and shouted suddenly, "You people better get the hell away from here before the white cops come in, or they'll run all your asses in."

There was a sound of nervous movement, like frightened cattle in the dark, then a voice said belligerently, "Run whose ass in? I lives here!"

"All right," Coffin Ed said resignedly. "Don't say I didn't warn you." (35)

While Coffin Ed and Grave Digger are still following their earlier strategy of protecting Harlem citizens from the anarchic wrath of white law enforcement, the scene has changed. The unidentified belligerent voice who con-

tests Coffin Ed's demands and who asserts his rights as a resident is the voice of a new generation which does not automatically respect either Ed's and Digger's authority or the intimidating practices of the white cops. Ed's answer back to the voice is "resigned," a new way to describe Ed's and Digger's behavior in a crowd.

The breakdown of Ed's and Digger's uncontested heroic authority originates from two different directions. Primarily, their behavior is curtailed by the white cops who run the force. But also, this new, more militant generation of Harlem citizens has no respect for "the law" in any form. Confronting some young kids threatening another kid with violence because he is too chicken to stone the white cops, Coffin Ed and Grave Digger are neither automatically recognized nor feared. One kid challenges the once formidably terrifying Coffin Ed:

"You scared of whitey. You ain't nothing but shit."

"When I was your age I'da got slapped in the mouth for telling a grown man that."

"You slap us, we waste you." ...

"We're the law," Coffin Ed said to forestall any more argument. Six pairs of round white-rimmed eyes stared at them *accusingly*.

"Then you on whitey's side." ...

"Go on home," Grave Digger said, pushing them away, ignoring flashing knife blades. "Go home and grow up. You'll find out there ain't any other side." (140; italics added)

Here Coffin Ed and Grave Digger express their recognition of the pervasiveness of white power. Whitey's side is the ruling paradigm, and they do not see the nationalist moment as viable, the opponent as fightable. The younger generation of Harlem citizens, however, represents a popularized version of nationalism, which Himes's novel will ultimately critique. They at this point possess the impulse of anger toward white power, the refusal to tolerate further oppression, but they lack the organization of purpose which Himes sees as essential to revolutionary efficacy.

Himes now depicts his former heroes as laughable. Throughout the novel they are frequently described in clown-like imagery: "They looked like two idiots standing in the glare of the blazing car, one in his coat, shirt and tie, and purple shorts above gartered sox and big feet, and the other in shirt-sleeves and empty shoulder holster with his pistol stuck in his belt" (141-142). Their former possibly heroic stance, Himes's ideal creation of the cops who "devoit exister," is no longer even a viable part of the cultural imagination. Their role has been fully obviated.

Harlem, however, is still a mystified space of illogic to the white cops and to outsiders. The confused anger on the part of whites who can't understand black Harlem linguistic play ends up leading to violence in more than one scene in the novel. Toward the absurdly random end of the novel, a misunderstanding between subway riders is exacerbated by this phenomenon: "The big white man thought they were talking about him in a secret language known only to soul people. He reddened with rage" (183). Because the white cops also fear this "secret language" they still rely on Coffin Ed's and Grave Digger's interpretive police skills, however cursory this reliance may be.

In one scene the white cops who have basically taken charge of the investigation of the white man's murder are accompanied by Ed and Digger, following the blood trail to a tenement's basement room:

The blood trail ended at the green door.

"Come out of there," the sergeant said.

No one answered.

He turned the knob and pushed the door and it opened inward so silently and easily he almost fell into the opening before he could train his light. Inside was a black dark void.

Grave Digger and Coffin Ed flattened themselves against the walls on each side of the alley and their big long-barreled .38 revolvers came glinting into their hands.

"What the hell!" the sergeant exclaimed, startled.

His assistants ducked.

"This is Harlem," Coffin Ed grated and Grave Digger elaborated:  
"We don't trust doors that open." (60)

Here Ed and Digger are their old selves, acting in tandem, keenly reading the visual clues of the environment they know by heart. But despite their obviously superior knowledge they are not allowed to act alone, they are not allowed to *investigate*. Coffin Ed's and Grave Digger's skills in interpreting the Harlem environment lead them too close to uncovering embarrassing connections to Harlem's vice industry on the part of the white power structure, and the deeper levels of corruption and complicity within the police force. Therefore Captain Brice and Lieutenant Anderson curtail their activity.

As Brice tells them to leave the investigation to the D.A.'s homicide bureau he asks,

"What do you think you two precinct detectives can uncover that they can't?"

"That very reason. It's our precinct. We might learn something that wouldn't mean a damn thing to them." (95)

This fact, Ed's and Digger's heightened ability to decode their environment, is what makes them successful investigators and therefore what now makes them threatening to the white police force with something to hide. Ed and Digger, over a twelve-year development as characters, have lost any earlier optimistic idealism:

The two black detectives looked at one another. Their short-cropped hair was salted with gray and they were thicker around their middles. Their faces bore the lumps and scars they had collected in the enforcement of law in Harlem. Now after twelve years as first-grade precinct detectives they hadn't been promoted. Their raises in salaries hadn't kept up with the rise of the cost of living. They hadn't finished paying for their houses. Their private cars had been bought on credit. And yet they hadn't taken a dime in bribes. Their entire careers as cops had been one long period of turmoil. When they weren't taking lumps from the thugs, they were taking lumps from the commissioners. Now they were curtailed in their own duties. And they didn't expect it to change. (97)

Thus, while Coffin Ed and Grave Digger may have begun the series with the heroic potential of ideal figures, the further institutionalization of discrimination throughout U.S. society has rendered them ineffectual. Not only has white power cemented its position, but it also acts to prevent any public discovery of its complicitous actions.

Coffin Ed's and Grave Digger's previously folk-heroic strategies for maintaining community security have become absurd. Even as they attempt to pursue their original investigation of the white man's death, they are now aware of this absurdity and identify its racial basis. Astute readers of police force ideology, Ed and Digger clearly see, and state, the racial politics behind the restraint placed on them. When Anderson denies them access to what they know is a key suspect, Grave Digger responds,

"Listen, Lieutenant. This mother-raping white man gets himself killed on our beat chasing black sissies and you want us to whitewash the investigation."

Anderson's face got pink. "No, I don't want you to whitewash the investigation," he denied. "I just don't want you raking up manure for the stink."

"We got you; white men don't stink." (111)

Coffin Ed's and Grave Digger's initial strategies fail as their political consciousness rises. The more they know about the inner workings of the white-run police force, the more clearly they realize that the premise of their role as detectives or investigators is flawed and ineffectual at its base.

As increasingly politically conscious readers of their racist U.S. environment, Coffin Ed and Grave Digger are quite able to name the culprit. What they cannot do is apprehend "him." During the course of *Blind Man* Harlem has been the scene of several riots, and the white cops have given Grave Digger and Coffin Ed the task of finding out who is the cause of these seemingly inexplicable riots—a particularly conservative and palliative version of

law enforcement so commonly practiced by the white cops. In a crucial confrontation with Lieutenant Anderson toward the end of *Blind Man*, Ed and Digger point the blame at the unapprehendable criminal they have been chasing their whole careers. In this key scene they are so mentally attuned to one another they speak in a close call-and-response pattern that frustrates Anderson, who exclaims,

"All right, all right! I take it you know who started the riot."

"Some folks call him by one name, some another," Coffin Ed said.

"Some call him lack of respect for law and order, some lack of opportunity, some the teachings of the Bible, some the sins of their fathers," Grave Digger expounded. "Some call him ignorance, some poverty, some rebellion. Me and Ed look at him with compassion. We're victims."

"Victims of what?" Anderson asked foolishly.

"Victims of your skin," Coffin Ed shouted brutally, his own patchwork of grafted black skin twitching with passion.

Anderson's skin turned blood red. (153-54)

Ed and Digger are quite clear here on the balance of law and order on their beat: While the rioters may be black citizens, the instigator, the criminal responsible, is the white racism which causes poverty, ignorance, the hypocrisy of religion, etc. Their own alignment is clearly, as it has ever been, on the side of the victims.

Himes's writing here is at its resonant best as he focuses on the twitching patchwork of Ed's grafted skin. As any reader of the detective novels knows, Ed's face was scarred early in the series by an acid-throwing hoodlum. It is thus a sort of narrative reflection of the violence borne by these two would-be protectors and defenders against white lynch mob law enforcement, as are the other scars and marks which attest to Ed's and Digger's life work. But the pastiche of skin on Ed's face can also be seen as an aspect of the arbitrariness and absurdity of race as a determining category, of blackness as a social construct. By calling attention to the "grafted on" nature of Ed's black-

ness, and juxtaposing it to Anderson's white, then red face, Himes implicitly questions the absoluteness of race as a category, especially as so obviously resorted to by the white police force. In his 1969 interview with John A. Williams Himes historicizes this discussion of the "cause" of U.S. race riots:

... this whole problem in America, as I see it, developed from the fact that the slaves were freed and that there was no legislation of any sort to make it possible for them to live . . . . What is it that they have in heaven—milk and honey? That some poor nigger could go and live on nothing. Just to proclaim emancipation was not enough. You can't eat it; it doesn't keep the cold weather out. (346)

Himes makes a similar statement in an italicized "Interlude" in *Blind Man*, where Grave Digger and Coffin Ed name Lincoln as the instigator of the riots: " 'He hadn't ought to have freed us if he didn't want to make provisions to feed us' " (135). Here Ed and Digger clearly provide Anderson with the singular culprit so doggedly desired by the police force, but of course he cannot be apprehended, and further, if he were, he couldn't be convicted—because he's white. Says Coffin Ed, " 'Never was a white man convicted as long as he plead good intentions' " (135).

*Blind Man* ends with less resolution than any of Himes's previous detective novels, a point noted by many critics as Himes's ultimate stretching of detective fiction's generic limits. A. Robert Lee writes, "*Blind Man With a Pistol*, especially, approaches antic nightmare, a pageant of violence and unresolved plot-ends which, true to the illogic of a dream, careens into a last chapter of senseless riot" (103). Coffin Ed and Grave Digger are reduced to the inanity of shooting at rats fleeing a burning tenement. These are crucial aspects of Himes's own longstanding political philosophies about both "senseless riot" and the absurdity of racism. Himes would write in *The Crisis* as early as 1944,

The first step backward is riots. Riots are not revolutions . . . . Riots are tumultuous disturbances of the public peace by unlawful assemblies of three or more persons in the execution of private objects—such as race hatreds. . . . Riots between white and black occur for only one reason: Negro Americans are firmly convinced that they have no access to any physical protection which they do not provide for themselves. It is a well-known and established fact that this conviction is rooted in history: Negroes in fact do not have any protection from physical injury inflicted by whites other than that which they provide for themselves. It is a rather deadly joke among Negroes (especially since the Detroit riots) that the first thing to do in case of a race riot is not to call the police but to shoot them . . . . "Man, what you mean call the police; them the people gonna kill you." (174)

Fourteen years before the publication of *The Real Cool Killers* Himes stated the relationship of white law enforcement to the black community. It is important to see the discourse of protection running throughout Himes's writings, even at this early stage.

Himes, who throughout his life was against random violence (as opposed to planned revolution), critiques the chaotic, riotous violence which erupts in Harlem at the end of *Blind Man*. In his 1970 *Le Monde* interview with Michel Fabre, Himes explains the genesis of *Blind Man*:

Il y a plusieurs années, de nombreuses émeutes ont éclaté en Amérique, suivies d'émeutes spontanées après l'assassinat de Martin Luther King et de batailles entre les Panthères noires et la police. J'ai pensé que toute cette violence inorganisée que les Noirs déchainent en Amérique n'était rien d'autre que des coups de feu tirés à l'aveuglette, et j'ai intitulé mon roman *Blind Man with a Pistol*. Tel était mon commentaire sur l'inefficacité de ce type de violence. (21)

(Several years ago, numerous riots erupted in America followed by spontaneous riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King and battles between the Black Panthers and the police. I thought that all this unorganized violence that the Blacks unleashed in America was nothing other than shots fired blindly, and I titled my novel *Blind Man With a Pistol*. Such was my commentary on the inefficacy of this type of violence.)

While Himes had since at least 1944 seen unorganized, riotous violence as ineffective, it is important to trace out his "call" for successful planned revolution.<sup>9</sup> Edward Margolies, in his article "Experiences of the Black Expatriate Writer: Chester Himes," quotes from the English transcript of Himes's *Le Monde* interview:

I realized that subconsciously that was the point I had been trying to make in [*Blind Man*]. . . . I think there should be violence . . . because I do not believe that anything else is ever going to improve the situation of the black man in America except violence. I don't think it would have to be great shattering and shocking violence. If the blacks were organized and if they could resist and fight injustice in an organized fashion in America, I think that might be enough. Yes, I believe this sincerely. (427)

In his representation of chaos and the inefficacies of splintered popular nationalisms at the novel's close, Himes maintains a consistency with his views about the need for a more systematic form of revolution as a means of opposing white power. This need for violent revolution is a common line of thought in Himes's writings, not only occasioned by particular events of the Sixties, but present within his political ideology since (or before) his 1944 *Crisis* article "Negro Martyrs Are Needed." The title of the article points us toward the role of a single martyr in the revolutionary cause, and Himes's short story "Prediction" (1969)—as well as the prefigurings of his final detective novel set in the U.S., *Plan B*.<sup>10</sup>

It is possible to see Himes's philosophies about the need for organized violence as in some ways an inverted economy of bodies, bearing in mind his earlier idealized construction of Coffin Ed and Grave Digger as protectors of one white body in order ultimately to protect many black bodies. What happens in the economy of "Prediction" and "Negro Martyrs Are Needed" is an ideologically revolutionary inversion: One black body is martyred in the interest of creating more

white corpses. In his 1944 article Himes states, "The first and fundamental convictions of the political tactician fighting for the human rights of the people are: (1) Progress can be brought about only by revolution; (2) Revolutions can be started only by incidents; (3) incidents can be created only by Martyrs" (159). Himes specifically counterposes this idea of a *planned* incident by a martyr to what he sees as more random, spontaneous rioting, which he condemns as ineffectual and based in self-interest, as opposed to race betterment. Twenty-five years later he would tell John A. Williams,

Even individually, if you give one black one high-powered repeating rifle and he wanted to shoot it into a mob of twenty thousand or more white people, there are a number of people he could destroy. Now, in my book [the uncompleted *Plan B*], all of these blacks who shoot are destroyed. They not only are destroyed, they're blown apart; even the buildings they're shooting from are destroyed, and quite often the white community suffers fifty or more deaths itself by destroying one black man. (311)

There is a distinct contrast, which we should not ignore, between Himes's comments to John A. Williams, fellow black American writer, and Michel Fabre, white French literary critic. Though both interviews were given at about the same time, Himes's divergent expressions of revolutionary ideology reveal both ambiguities in his own thought as well as alterations for his perceived audiences. To Fabre he states (assures?) that "great shattering and shocking violence" is not necessary. Blacks should just use violence "to resist and fight injustice in an organized fashion" (427). His words here seem like platitudes, as he implies a specific and localized enemy who could be systematically resisted. The author of *Blind Man*, however, knows that there is no such singular enemy. The act of shooting a repeating rifle into a crowd of twenty thousand, as Himes describes to Williams, is fairly "shattering and shocking violence." And the portrayal

of this act in "Prediction" emphasizes the graphic nature of the violence. While the philosophy of limited black deaths in order to produce larger numbers of white deaths seems a reversal of the economy of bodies in the discourse of *protection* articulated in the detective novels, the ideological basis understands white behavioral motivation in the same way. The white reaction to black violence against whites is one that crushes anything in its path. This is simply a more advanced stage of the lynch mob reactivity of law enforcement behavior as seen throughout the detective novels. In Himes's 1969 short story, appropriately titled "Prediction," this crushing white reaction is disembodied in the form of a tank with a brain.

The story, which would become chapter 21 of *Plan B*, opens with an all-white police parade "headed north up the main street of the big city" (281). Instead of the precisely locatable, named Harlem geography of the detective novels, the incidents of "Prediction" and *Plan B* could theoretically occur in any U.S. city. The story describes an all-white scene: white cops, white crowds, white workers, etc. "There was only one black man along the entire length of the street at the time, and he wasn't in sight" (281). This unnamed man, hidden in a church with an automatic rifle, is Himes's martyr for the cause of black liberation: "Subjectively, he had waited four hundred years for this moment and he was not in a hurry" (282). Just as Lincoln was the criminal responsible for the riots in *Blind Man*, historical racial oppression since slavery is clearly the instigator of the revolution which will follow this triggering incident. The martyr knows, however, the nature of white reaction to his planned crime — he is aware of the lynch-like fervor to follow: "He knew his black people would suffer severely for this moment of his triumph. He was not an ignorant man" (282). The man is "consoled only by the hope that it would make life safer for blacks in the future. He would have to

believe that the children of the blacks who would suffer now would benefit later" (282-83; italics added). Note here the presence again of the discourse of safety and protection running throughout Himes's depictions of black life in the U.S. This language exists in dialogic relationship with the language of equality, with greater emphasis on safety as the most important condition of freedom for African Americans.

When the police parade reaches a key position on the street, the black gunman opens fire and begins mowing down rows of officers. Himes's depiction of this carnage shows his writing at its maximally grotesque:

[The commissioner] wore no hat to catch his brains and fragments of skull, and they exploded through the sunny atmosphere and splattered the spectators with goo, tufts of gray hair and splinters of bone. One skull fragment, larger than the others, struck a tall, well-dressed man on the cheek, cutting the skin and splashing brains against his face like a custard pie in a Mack Sennett comedy. (284)

Combined with the more obvious political reasons, this level of grotesque description of white deaths caused by blacks is something Himes knew the U.S. publishing establishment—and, by extension, reading public—would reject. Discussing *Plan B* with John A. Williams he says, "I don't know what the American publishers will do about this book. But one thing I do know, Johnny, they will hesitate, and it will cause them a great amount of revulsion" (312).

The slaughter causes general pandemonium in the crowd, with police officers firing at each other, at civilians, etc., in their frustrated confusion and inability to find the sniper. The lynch mob mentality takes hold, and

all were decided, police and spectators alike, that the sniper was a black man for no one else would slaughter whites so wantonly. . . . in view of the history of all the assassinations and mass murders in the U.S., it was extraordinarily enlightening that all the thousands of whites caught in a deadly gunfire from an unseen assassin, white police and white civilians alike, would automatically agree that he must be black. (285)

In an apocalyptic climax, the lynch mob itself takes the form of a technologically developed war machine, a riot tank, endowed with a brain and an eye searching, at first futilely, for the hidden sniper:

Its telescoped eye at the muzzle of the 20-mm. cannon stared right and left, looking over the heads and among the white spectators, over the living white policemen hopping about the dead, up and down the rich main street with its impressive stores, and in its frustration at not seeing a black face to shoot at it rained explosive 20-mm. shells on the black plaster of Paris mannequins displaying a line of beachwear in a department store window. (286)

The lynch mob law enforcement behavior has here reached its apocalyptic level of absurdity, shooting at plaster images of black bodies when it cannot find a human black body. This destructive action in turn triggers further mass hysteria and killing of vast numbers of innocent bystanders, until finally the tank demolishes the church with the sniper inside.

Even this last act, however, is not conclusive for the white mob, since it does not produce the desired black body: "It did not take long for the cannon to reduce the stone face of the cathedral to a pile of rubbish. But it took all of the following day to unearth the twisted rifle and a few scraps of bloody black flesh to prove the black killer had existed" (287). When whites are killed, only a black body will appease the lynching mob, and the capturing, dead or alive, whole or in pieces, of this body becomes the all-important aim. In the breakdown of criminal apprehendability which characterizes the cementing of white hegemonic power as represented in the socio-cultural milieu of *Blind Man*, blackness is made to function as redundancy in white power relations. It is as if, after Lincoln, after four hundred years of oppression, after the ghetto, white power is still, *redundantly*, emptying its bullets into an already beaten black "opponent."

For the martyr, because of the number of whites he has killed, the

exchange of his body for their deaths seems fair:

He was ready to die. By then he had killed seventy-three whites, forty-seven policemen and twenty-six men, women and children civilians, and had wounded an additional seventy-five, and although he was never to know this figure, he was satisfied. He felt like a gambler who had broken the bank. (286).

Himes specifically envisions this kind of murderous gamble as the key move to trigger more widespread planned violence by blacks "which will mobilize the forces of justice and carry us forward from the pivot of change to a way of existence where everyone is free" ("Negro Martyrs" 159).<sup>11</sup>

In 1972, Himes explained his long-held belief in the necessity of violence to Hoyt Fuller: "I have always believed—and this was from the time that *If He Hollers . . .* was published—that the Black man in America should mount a serious revolution and this revolution should employ a massive, extreme violence" (18). Again, notice that to a black interviewer, for a piece published in *Black World*, Himes calls for "massive, extreme violence." Himes's political philosophizing moves from an assertion of defensive violence to an aggressive violence, yet all within the construct of making the U.S. ultimately a *safer* place for blacks.

Himes's literary expression of black revolutionary ideologies should be seen within a tradition—his voice obviously is not the first, nor does it stand alone. Hoyt Fuller, in his *Black World* interview, calls Himes's attention to his literary company in Sam Greenlee's *The Spook Who Sat By the Door* (1969) and another novel whose author is unnamed, *Black Commandoes*. I would historicize this revolutionary discourse further and add Sutton Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* (1899) to the list. Griggs's novel exists as an interesting precursor for *Plan B*, since it too involves two heroes, long-time companions who disagree over particular revolutionary ideologies, with death as the result. Coffin Ed and

Grave Digger play a minor role in *Plan B*. Himes states, "I began writing a book called *Plan B*, about a real black revolution in which my two black detectives split up and eventually Grave Digger kills Coffin Ed to save the cause" (*My Life* 360). Grave Digger is then killed by Tomsson Black (*Plan B* 209). Thus, in *Plan B* we see the final role and ultimate demise of Himes's two heroes.

For Himes, then, white law enforcement represents the greatest

threat to personal safety for impoverished African American urban dwellers. In an environment pervaded by racial oppression the first requirement of freedom is protection from lynch mobs, and the feeling that one's body is not endangered. But over the course of Himes's writing we see this first requirement become less and less attainable. We reach what Himes always considered the absurdity of U.S. race relations.

## Notes

1. Both H. Bruce Franklin (223-24) and Edward Margolies (*Which Way* 59) also discuss Himes's prison experiences as influential on his detective story writing.
2. John Roberts, in the Introduction to his excellent study *From Trickster to Badman*, expresses the need for an analysis of African American folk heroes "as symbols of black cultural identity" (2). He emphasizes that "African American folk heroic creation is a normative cultural activity linked to black culture-building in America" (4). This is the sense in which I use the term *folk heroic creation* as well.
3. See Senter for a discussion of white responses to voodoo.
4. Ten years earlier than Berry's article, Raymond Nelson, in "Domestic Harlem: The Detective Fiction of Chester Himes," uses nearly identical phrasing to delineate the two cops as "bad niggers" (266).
5. Levine also discusses "Badmen and Bandits" (407-20).
6. Gilbert Muller invokes Marc Chagall and Hogarth (83-84). Nelson cites Bosch (274). Margolies names Hogarth (*Which Way* 66). Dy finds scenes of *Blind Man* Flabelaisian (20). René Micha calls Himes's Harlem Dickensian (1507). Such analogies strip away the redolent meanings and complexity of Himes's vision and obscure his particularly African American literary voice in the same way that critical appraisal of him in terms of a previously all-white genre of detective fiction does.
7. I am grateful to Sherley Anne Williams for reminding me of Toomer's poem.
8. Himes did not speak French; Michel Fabre translated his responses for publication in this French magazine. The French-to-English translation is my own.
9. What does it mean to "call" for revolution from an expatriate stance of non-participation? In Himes's discussions of what "the black man in America" should do, he stands outside the implied group of actors whom he refers to as "they." This self-positioning certainly raises questions for revolutionary political polemicizing, if not for literary analysis.
10. *Plan B* was published in the U.S. in 1993 (by the UP of Mississippi).
11. It is interesting to note that in 1944, when Himes was still living in the U.S., his revolutionary proclamations were expressed in terms that include *him*: He uses the pronoun *us* instead of *them*.

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## Discography

**Assistant Professor of English**, tenure-track, to serve as Director of Freshman English. Composition specialist, Ph.D. in hand, to start Fall 1995. Position may rotate; director teaches nine credit hours per semester. Summer responsibilities. Preference given to candidates with a record of publication in literary fields, full-time college teaching experience, and formal course work in historical rhetoric. Applications reviewed until position is filled. Texas Woman's University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Send letter, *c.v.*, and three letters of reference to Frank Longoria, Chair, Texas Woman's University, Department of English, Speech & Foreign Languages, Box 23972, Denton, TX 76204.