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## The Social World

Linda Sargent Wood

in *A More Perfect Union: Holistic Worldviews and the Transformation of American Culture after World War II*

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Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of a beloved community made another holistic declaration. "In a real sense all of life is interrelated," he contended, as he sought to unite race-divided America. Influenced by the black church, the Social Gospel, and personalism, and living in a time when racism was challenged at home and abroad, when decolonization opened up political opportunities, and economic prosperity created new possibilities, King worked to unite all races and classes and to bring an end to discrimination, poverty, and war. His holism had two pivotal points: affirming the dignity of the individual and caring for the collective well-being. Recognizing our common humanity, he thought, promised healing and a worldwide "brotherhood" that was more than a sum of its parts or a negation of the customs of segregation. His notion of an organic society knit together in agape love helped initiate sweeping changes in America's political and social fabric. Boycotts, marches, and speeches led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Seeing King as a holist, as a crusader for unity in a divided world, sheds new light on his place and power.

## A Stern-Faced, Twenty-Eight-Foot-Tall Black Man

Dell Upton

in *What Can and Can'T Be Said: Race, Uplift, and Monument Building in the Contemporary South*

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This chapter examines the popularity and the contentiousness of monuments that celebrate the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., including his bronze statue in Birmingham, Alabama. King holds a special place in the popular imagination despite the efforts of both historians and of former participants to demonstrate that the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was much broader and more varied than what he did and said. Statues that celebrate King have been a source of acrimony owing to their representation of the man. For whites and politicians of all stripes, King's image should be an agent of social "integration." In contrast, many African Americans view King as a champion and intercessor. The discussion on which King will be celebrated in the public landscape is often framed as a debate over the monuments' physical and spiritual likeness to their original. This chapter also considers the King statue at Rocky Mount, North Carolina and the memorial in Washington, DC, suggesting that both structures reflect white supremacy that continues to haunt the South's memorial landscape.

## Conclusion: The Elusive Dream

Korie L. Edwards

in *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches*

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The concluding chapter ends the book with a discussion on the implications of the book's findings for developing racially integrated religious organizations that truly epitomize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream for a cooperative, egalitarian, multiracial religious community.

## Semiotics and Martin Luther King's letter from Birmingham jail

Susan Tiefenbrun

in *Decoding International Law: Semiotics and the Humanities*

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This chapter explores Martin Luther King's views on civil disobedience as expressed in the memorable Letter from Birmingham Jail. The message contained in the Letter is that racial difference is nothing more than similarity disguised. The Letter deconstructs the myth that racial equality exists in America by first confirming the existence of racial differences,

then rejecting the notion of 'difference made legal', a concept King considered to be the basis of unjust laws. King accomplished this deconstruction by playing a highly sophisticated structural and stylistic game of semiotics.

## Martin Luther King's 'Dream Speech': The Rhetoric of Social Leadership

KEITH KEITH

in *The Arts of Leadership*

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This chapter explores Martin Luther King's leadership in the acquisition of civil rights for black Americans in the 1960s. It considers the significance of speech and language and describes the origins and guidelines established by the ancient Greeks in the art of rhetoric. It explores Aristotle's model of rhetoric, and uses it to investigate the recent examples of rhetoric, in particular an analysis of Martin Luther's 'Dream Speech'.

## The Black Uprising after King's Assassination in 1968

Janet L. Abu-Lughod

in *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles*

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One might use the military phrase "low-intensity war" to describe the interim period between the mid-1950s and mid-1960s in Chicago, during which there were forays and retreats but few confrontations involving great violence. On the West Side, the very poor Second Ghetto was absorbing into its ancient housing stock and its newer public housing projects minorities who could not afford the better housing and more organized community on the South Side. It was chiefly on the West Side that low-intensity warfare would be transformed into open hostilities after the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr., in April 1968. The signs of dissent were already apparent in the years before that massive response. While reactions of despair and anger triggered demonstrations in virtually all areas of Chicago where blacks lived, only in the West Side Second Ghetto did events spin out of control in arson and looting.

## “liberated Grounds”

Derrick E. White

in *The Challenge of Blackness: The Institute of the Black World and Political Activism in the 1970s*

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This chapter looks at the separation between the IBW and the Martin Luther King Center. The King Center leadership was frustrated at the IBW's consultations with Black intellectuals who held a variety of ideological perspectives. In the IBW's first months in existence, Harding and other leaders began an ambitious publishing plan and met with Black Nationalists, such as Stokely Carmichael, and Caribbean radicals, such as Robert Hill and C.L.R. James. The IBW's refusal to abide by the King Center's narrow civil-rights framework led the organization to choose independence. Its new perspective meant reorganizing itself into an activist think tank.

## The Second Coming of Martin Luther King Jr., 1966–1968

Daniel S. Lucks

in *Selma to Saigon: The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War*

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Vietnam so dominated the public discourse that King could not escape it. Throughout 1966, King expressed his disapproval of the war in carefully chosen venues, such as the African American press and his regular sermons at Ebenezer Baptist Church. In early 1966, King went to Chicago to tackle racism in education, housing, and employment and to ameliorate the blight of the urban ghettos. His frustration with urban political machines in the North matched his dismay over the war's deleterious impact on the poverty program. When he addressed groups of young black men, the issue of the war was paramount. In early 1967, on his way to Jamaica for a sabbatical, he happened to be looking through a magazine that contained gruesome pictures of Vietnamese children with napalm burns, and he felt compelled to speak out. On April 4, 1967, King delivered a withering attack on American policy in Vietnam at Riverside Church in New York City. His long-awaited opposition to the war provoked a spate of criticism, most notably by

the liberal establishment. These attacks haunted King, but his eloquent denunciation of the war was a pivotal event of the 1960s.

## The Preacher King

Richard Lischer

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a spellbinding orator and it is evident that he honed these skills in the pulpit in his capacity as a Baptist minister. This book is a full-scale study of King as a preacher and draws on tape-recordings and transcriptions of unpublished sermons, and interviews with King's parishioners and colleagues. Preaching to congregations was never something King did "on the side," or dabbled in when he wasn't busy being a civil rights activist. Not only was preaching integral to King's identity but the material of his Sunday morning sermons found its way into his mass-meeting speeches and civil addresses. When King spoke in civil settings, he transposed the Judeo-Christian themes of love, suffering, deliverance, and reconciliation from the shelter of the pulpit into the arena of public policy and behaviour. The book argues that King's religiously informed rhetoric helped create a fragile and temporary consensus among white and black Americans and contributed to legislation that has changed the fabric of daily life in America. King's Sunday morning sermons were far from identical with his civil addresses, however, and, in the book's view, the more intimate, unpublished "private" sermons necessarily tell us far more about what King "really" believed about his God and the ills of the nation — from issues of personal morality to the massive problems of racism and war.

## Vietnam and the Ethics of Disenchantment

Amanda Porterfield

in *The Transformation of American Religion: The Story of a Late-Twentieth-Century Awakening*

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Disillusion with American culture became widespread during the Vietnam War as protesters condemned the immorality of the war and the military industrial establishment that supported it, and supporters of the war condemned the protesters. A sense of moral and spiritual

disenchantment accompanied these culture wars, along with widespread criticism of American claims to being a nation chosen by God. In addition to describing the end of “victory culture,” and the dismantling of stereotypical distinctions between good cowboys and bad Indians, this chapter points to the important contributions made to American society by the civil rights movement. This discussion of civil rights focuses on the influence of the school of religious thought known as personalism on Martin Luther King Jr. and its linkages to long-standing American trends of religious individualism.