"In the balance sheet of the Cold War," Mitchell insists, "Carter's policies—and Soviet incompetence—led the United States to the winning side of the ledger. Washington won the significant battles in Rhodesia, China, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe, while Moscow won in Ethiopia and Nicaragua" (688). Such triumphalism aside, Mitchell implicitly asks readers to reconsider the chatter that Ronald Reagan played the leading role in forcing the end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War. Outstanding books challenge assumptions, raise questions, and supply at least some answers. For those reasons, *Jimmy Carter in Africa* deserves a wide audience.

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I Am Not Your Negro. Directed by Raoul Peck, Velvet Films, 2016.

For historians, *I Am Not Your Negro* is an intriguing prospect because its script is taken entirely from the published and unpublished words of James Baldwin, one of the twentieth century's most powerful writers. Intertitles provide information from alternative sources, such as the FBI's file on Baldwin. As a means by which to represent an archive, therefore, the film is innovative and even beguiling. It is also an extremely powerful way to convey Baldwin's insights.

Among these insights is Baldwin's extended consideration of the symbiotic relationship between racism and US popular culture. The film marries his meditations on race with footage from advertising, television, and film. Iconic scenes from films such as John Ford's *The Searchers* accompany Baldwin's observation that preeminent ideology in the United States springs from a need to forget the nation's genocidal origins. Director Raoul Peck sets Sidney Poitier as the holier-than-thou black character who tests the politics of white liberals in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* against Doris Day at her most *jejune*. By doing so, Peck illustrates Baldwin's account of the United States as an infantile culture, whose people distract themselves with material goods and idiotic cultural fare. To portray the devastating effects on African Americans

of white Americans' refusal to face maturely their own racism, Peck excerpts a scene from the 1934 film adaptation of Fannie Hurst's *Imitation of Life* in which a young Peola Johnson (Dorothy Black) breaks her dark-skinned mother's (Louise Beavers) heart by renouncing her in front of a classroom of white students.

More memorable still is the footage of Baldwin himself, deployed to convey perhaps the central message of Baldwin's essays and non-fiction: that racism is white people's problem and that it is whites who suffer for refusing to confront their own "moral apathy." There's first, I admit, the slight shock of watching Baldwin smoke cigarettes with such gusto, during a television interview on *The Dick Cavett Show*. It feels like a long time ago. But shock gives way to wonder at the eloquence of the former child preacher—to the gift, really, of listening to someone so articulate and persuasive, with unique phrasing and a slight British lilt to his accent. And of watching: Baldwin's face is so expressive, the smile and laughter so thoroughly felt. He spoke as he wrote, persuasively and with urgency. When the film showed Baldwin destroying an asinine professor of philosophy whom Cavett has brought on to debate him, the Lincoln Center audience (with whom I saw the film) burst into applause. Although that audience was mixed, it is hard to resist comparing the spontaneity of the 2017 audience to that of the young white men at Cambridge University who gave the disconcerted Baldwin a standing ovation after he dismantled William F. Buckley in a 1965 debate there. Peck uses several scenes from that debate in *I Am Not Your Negro*, but by cutting out all footage and reference to Buckley, it appears as a soliloquy to a white audience, just as the central message of this film is likewise directed.

The black-and-white material may be dated, but the urgency, the film argues, remains. Thus Peck has intercut footage of violence past with scenes of contemporary police violence—from Ferguson, Missouri for one—just as he juxtaposes Baldwin's own activism with Black Lives Matter protests. Baldwin's exhortation to his white fellow-citizens, made in a 1963 television conversation with professor and psychologist Kenneth Clark, still stands. "What white people have to do," Baldwin said, "is try and find out in their own hearts why it was necessary to have a nigger in the first place, because I'm not a nigger, I'm a man, but

if you think I'm a nigger, it means you need it … you invented him, you, the white people, invented him, then you've got to find out why. And the future of the country depends on that. Whether or not it's able to ask that question."

I Am Not Your Negro stumbles in the juxtaposition of Baldwin with Black Lives Matter by adhering to patriarchal norms that the activists of this movement have explicitly critiqued. No doubt some of Baldwin's work revolved around men rather than women; for example, the ellipsis in the quotation above erased these words: "The question you have got to ask yourself—the white population of this country has got to ask itself—North and South, because it's one country, and for a Negro, there's no difference between the North and South. There's just a difference in the way they castrate you. But the fact of the castration is the American fact." As the film reaches its crescendo, Peck has a clip of Baldwin again addressing white Americans with words that cast U.S. history as family drama: white and black men might ideally become metaphorical brothers, he said, but white women, rather than being sisters, might only be lovers, and he mentioned black women not at all. The film's brief consideration of Lorraine Hansberry has none of the immediacy of its accounts of men.

The film's shortcoming around women and gender is partly due to Peck's choice to frame it as being inspired by one of Baldwin's unfinished projects: a book on the impact and legacies of the civil rights movement, written through an account of the lives and assassinations of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr. *Remember This House* was the working title of this project, of which only thirty pages of notes are extant. (Biographies of Baldwin describe at least three quite different openings to the manuscript. Whatever remains in Baldwin's recently opened papers at the Schomburg Center is closed to researchers for ten years.) But the problem is deeper than this, too. From its use of Doris Day to make the case about infantilism to its ignoring of so much historical writing on the work that African American women did and do for civil rights, the film downplays the importance not only of women but of gender to activism in the last fifty or sixty years.

Moreover, by ignoring Baldwin's homosexuality, the film further disavows the intersectionality that animates Black Lives Matter. The

only mention of Baldwin's sexuality comes from an intertitle taken from, of all places, an FBI report. While Baldwin was not necessarily as open an activist about his sexuality as he was about racism, he was not in the closet. His range of writings about sexuality may not have been easy to incorporate into the film, but they were as much a part of his critique of the United States as those about race. One of his very earliest published works was an essay about homophobia in contemporary American fiction, titled "The Preservation of Innocence" and published in 1949 in the very next issue of *Zero* magazine as his famed piece, "Everybody's Protest Novel," about Harriet Beecher Stowe and Richard Wright. It does seem extraordinary that Peck has tried to stuff Baldwin into the closet, given his sexuality was as integral to his vision of the United States as his self-imposed exile in France and Turkey.

It's tempting to speculate that Baldwin was unable to finish *Remember This House* for the same limitations that stymie *I Am Not Your Negro*: an emphasis on men; on a civil rights movement as seen through its leaders rather than the foot soldiers that saw it through; and perhaps even on the grief of nuclear families rather than the more extended communities that were typical of gay men's experiences of kinship, not least Baldwin's own.

Reservations aside, *I Am Not Your Negro* is powerful and stimulating. In bringing Baldwin's words to a new audience, it will make an excellent resource for tertiary teaching.

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Hidden Figures. Directed by Theodore Melfi, 20th Century Fox, 2016.

There were so many films about African Americans in the awards races in 2017 that it was apparently impossible for Hollywood to tell them apart. Live at the Academy Awards and the Golden Globes, as well as in various publications, the entertainment industry lauded "Hidden Fences," the non-existent amalgamation of *Hidden Figures* and *Fences*—two very real films nominated for awards. The repeated mistake was