As Gladys Mitchell-Walthour makes clear in the conclusion of *The Politics of Blackness*, the current political climate threatens the continuance of race-based programs in Brazil. According to the author, some black activists understand the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff in 2016 in racialized terms and assert that Dilma’s impeachment was a *coup d'état* due to the political motivations of Michel Temer, who replaced her when she was subsequently removed from office. Prior to Rousseff’s impeachment, the Brazilian media aired debates as to whether or not the cash program *Bolsa Familia*, which began under Lula (president from 2003–10) and continued under Rousseff, was a form of clientelism. Mitchell-Walthour contends that the media depicted *Bolsa Familia* recipients as lazy and desirous of government handouts. Undoubtedly, millions of Afro-Brazilian families benefited from *Bolsa Familia* programs. The Brazilian media perpetuated the idea that Rousseff was re-elected as a result of votes from *Bolsa Familia* recipients. The outcomes of the *Bolsa Familia* program for Afro-Brazilians, Dilma Rousseff’s impeachment, and the election of an extreme right-wing president in 2018 national elections might prove to be a fruitful site for future studies on Afro-Brazilian political behavior and the impact of extreme right-wing politics on racial programs.

*The Politics of Blackness* is a significant and well-researched book for scholars who focus on race, politics, political representation, and national elections. The richness of Gladys Mitchell-Walthour’s findings come not just from the diversity of survey data, but also from her mixed-methods approach and her cogent ability to convey the intricacies of racial identity in everyday contexts. *The Politics of Blackness* not only provides rich and important information on racial dynamics and the social, economic, and political contexts in Brazil and Latin America, but it does so in a way that makes this work both critical and legible across multiple disciplines.

*University of California, Irvine*

**Katherine A. Cosby**

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Since Trayvon Martin was murdered by citizen-vigilante George Zimmerman in February 2012, young Black Americans around the country and comrades in countries around the world have been rallying and organizing for Black liberation in the United States. Such fights, often led by young queer Black women, are rarely destined to be archived in the annals of history—the stories, lives, and experiences of young Black Americans and African-descendant people are frequently erased or co-opted by those with more power, access, and privilege. In *Unapologetic: A Black, Queer, and Feminist Mandate for Radical Movements*, Charlene Carruthers, the founding national director of Black Youth Project 100 (BYP100), a membership-based activist organization of young Black Americans ages 18 to 35, writes against that current by centering the accounts and choices of young Black Americans during the early moments of the Black Lives Matter Movement.
Using her personal experience through participant and ethnographic observation, Carruthers explores the myriad processes, political concerns, and social constraints facing today’s social movement organizers. Importantly, the book highlights how “young, Black women and LGBTQ folks” have been integral to forming and sustaining modern Black-led movements in the United States (xvi). Her focus on the intersections of race, gender, and class serves as a touchstone for the book. Through what Carruthers refers to as “the crossroads of retrospection and vision,” the book provides critical insight, wisdom, and guidance for Black Studies scholars, activists, and students alike (xvii). Unapologetic answers two key questions: What does radical Black feminist organizing in the twenty-first century look like? What does this type of organizing demand of young Black people at the helm? By addressing these questions, Carruthers makes legible the particular forms of Black-led social organizing, political mobilization, and community engagement our present moment requires.

Carruthers situates the project through the “Black Queer Feminist lens” (or “BQF lens”). This “lens is a political praxis (practice and theory) based in Black feminist and LGBTQ traditions and knowledge, through which people and groups seek to bring their full selves into the process of dismantling all systems of oppression” (10). For Carruthers, the BQF lens is not just a theoretical talking point meant to anchor feminist dialogue or signal group membership in an intellectual class of liberal individuals. Rather, she explains that the BQF lens brings together the critical work of Black feminist and queer theorists like Barbara Smith and other members of the Combahee River Collective, Patricia Hill Collins, Audre Lorde, and Cathy J. Cohen to provide a framework for today’s movement work. Like these scholars, activists, and foremothers preceding her, Carruthers rigorously and convincingly tethers the lived experiences of young Black people in the twenty-first century to the long arc of liberatory Black freedom work and healing justice both in the United States and abroad.

In its seven chapters, the project is structured as both theoretical intervention and call to action. The first three chapters ask readers to engage in processes of learning and unlearning, imagining and reimagining, and committing and recommitting to the ethos of the Black Radical Tradition. Here, in a complexly intersectional fashion, Carruthers relies on personal narrative, Black feminist and queer theory, and the history of the freedom struggle in countries like Haiti, Ghana, and Palestine to draw together the various arms of Black struggle in the United States. In particular, she focuses on the ways that race, gender, and class work in tandem with geopolitical location (like poorer, Black and Brown neighborhoods) and neoliberal policy-making (like school closures and repression of accessible mental health facilities) in the current social moment. For Carruthers, a commitment to a Black radical tradition includes casting off long-held, anti-Black beliefs and ideas that even those within movement work might possess about other Black people. In chapter 3, she explains that a more complete picture of the Black radical tradition would include pursuing knowledge about today’s issues and organizing, centering Black feminist, queer, and trans liberation work, and reclaiming our memories and knowledge. Carruthers acknowledges that these processes are mired in obstacles due to
the pervasiveness of white supremacy, anti-Blackness, and neoliberal politics, but we each have a duty to fight for our freedom, whatever form that may take.

Carruthers provides a concise and cogent syllabus for movement work and collective action. In chapter 4, aptly titled “Three Commitments,” Carruthers explains that current and future Black-led movements must take up the following: building many strong leaders, adopting healing justice as a core organizing value and practice, and combating liberalism with principled struggle (66). These commitments are not efforts to be perfect in movement and organizing work. Instead, they are what Carruthers calls “collective agreements” between those committed to Black freedom, agreements to grasp at the roots of social issues in an effort to radically change the conditions facing Black Americans writ large. In the fifth chapter, Carruthers sets forth five critical questions that “everyone invested in collective liberation” should answer: Who am I? Who are my people? What do we want? What are we building? Are we ready to win? (94). These modes of inquiry lie at the foundation of what Carruthers envisions for successful and healthy Black-led movements. More importantly, they support her underlying focus on the importance of everyday people committed to the freedom of all Black people. This approach makes Unapologetic unique in that it intervenes in social science approaches to the study of social movements and collective action that are disconnected from actual movement work and organizers. Carruthers shows how critical it is to build a nuanced Black political archive, one that represents the fullness of the Black struggle.

In the remaining chapters, Carruthers brings together the historical underpinnings of Black politics in the United States with her ethnographic analysis of organizing in the city of Chicago to create a vision for future movement scholars and activists. In chapter 6, Carruthers details the intricacies of the “Chicago Model” of political organizing since BYP100 was created. Unapologetic shows how, through their work on campaigns like #StopTheCops and #FundBlackFutures—reparations for police torture victims in the city of Chicago—and #ByeAnita—which successfully accomplished the ousting of Illinois attorney general Anita Alvarez—BYP100 and other young organizers in Chicago have been so critical to Black social movements today.

The book closes with a mandate. It is the project’s fundamental charge. Carruthers says this final directive is “a call to celebrate the inherent value of all Black people. It is a call to queer our movement practices and honor the contributions of Black feminist and LGBTQ movements to the Black radical tradition. And it is a mandate to organize” (142). This mandate draws together the theoretical, historical, and ethnographic analyses Carruthers enumerates throughout the book.

Carruthers’s Unapologetic fills a broad gap in existing knowledge about young people’s experiences within Black-led movements and social justice work in three significant ways. First, while there are a great many theoretical texts committed to analyzing the sustainability, potential impact, and successes of social movement organizations, few are written by those directly involved in the formation and maintenance of those very organizations. Specifically, within Black feminist and queer literature, Carruthers’s Unapologetic stands as an accessible and critical contribution. Second, within the larger body of social movements literature, there remains much to be written about Black-led movements post-
Black Power. Most of the existing literature relies on accounts from the 1950s to 1970s as the exemplar of Black-led movements in the United States. *Unapologetic* shifts the focus to the movement happening right now. Third, and perhaps the most significant contribution of *Unapologetic*, is that it makes perceptible the tensions, uncertainties, and obstacles underlying social movement organizing, particularly within young Black-led movements. With candor and transparency, Carruthers lays bare the struggle of maintaining a Black Queer Feminist lens, which centers healing justice, even amidst sexual assault allegations against members of BYP100. In this way, the book also functions as a case study in restorative and transformative justice tactics.

In conclusion, Carruthers’s study expands our existing knowledge of social movements, Black youth organizing, and collective action among Black Americans. *Unapologetic* operates on multiple valences of analysis and examination simultaneously, which is one of its core strengths. By framing this work through the Black Queer Feminist lens and the Black radical tradition, she challenges us to think dynamically about the needs and considerations of today’s political moment. Carruthers’s centering of the intersections of race, gender, and class in her analysis intervenes in existing bodies of research that set forth a predominantly male-centered account of Black-led movements. Given the continued struggle against white supremacy, anti-Black capitalism, and unequal justice, Carruthers’s *Unapologetic* provides an imperative framework and model for archiving and studying young Black-led social movements in the future.

*Syracuse University*

*Jenn M. Jackson*