THE BLACK RADICAL TRADITION emerges as a philosophy, a consciousness and a practice of resistance and survival necessitated by the inexplicable and outrageous onslaught of oppressive practices and phobic behavior with which European traditions of colonialism and imperialism assaulted African people as far back as the Roman Empire. This radical consciousness and practice of resistance took its strength and historical endurance from the ability of the African people in the grip of the most violent forms of enslavement, colonialism and imperialism to recreate and conserve the consciousness of the communities and societies from which they had been taken, a consciousness which insisted on the humanity and voice of all human beings. It was this enduring consciousness that gave rise and enduring life to the traditions, beliefs, myths and messianic visions that gave generation upon generation of African people who found themselves in the grip of the most destructive and horrific ideologies and practices of the West the persistence and ideological vitality to continue to imagine, attempt and put into practice the impossible. This ideological vitality took many forms finding expression in slave rebellions and marronage as well as in the practices of lived experience, embodied in, as Cedric Robinson writes, “the shouts, the spirituals, the sermons, and the very textual body of Black Christianity.”

For Program, see UCSB Center for Black Studies Research at www.research.ucsb.edu/cbs/ or UC Consortium for Black Studies in California at cbsc.ucla.edu/

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