
Volume 5 *The Revolution Is Now Being
Televised and Tweeted: Black Protest,
Preaching, and (Re)Presentations, From the
Black Arts Movement to #BlackLivesMatter,
c.1965-2016*


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The Legacy of Gil Scott-Heron

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The Legacy of Gil Scott-Heron

December 31, 2017

Dear Readers:

I want to begin by expressing my sincere thanks to the authors and artists whose ideas are included on the pages of the 2017 issue of the *Journal of Traditions & Beliefs*. I am especially grateful to the late Gil Scott-Heron, whose music provided the soundtrack for my 1970s “coming of age” story and whose words inspired the theme for this issue. As a high school student in Ohio, I listened to music from a variety of genres, but nothing seemed to be more entertaining and enlightening than the music of Gil Scott-Heron. His art reflected an awareness of the key social issues in urban America and in communities across the globe, and some of his songs (including “Is That Jazz?”) were pure celebrations of the best in African American history and culture.

As this issue was coming together in the summer and fall of 2017, I observed both the 40th anniversary of my high school graduation and the 25th anniversary of the start of my career as a post-secondary educator. Interestingly enough, I was employed at the University of the District of Columbia (UDC)—formerly known as Federal City College (FCC)—in 2017, and I sometimes encountered community members, FCC/UDC alumni, and others who remembered when Prof. Gil Scott-Heron was a faculty member in the Department of English.

There is no shortage of Gil Scott-Heron fans in this digital age. Radio dials and turntables are no longer required to access his message-filled music, and as the title of this themed issue suggests, “The Revolution Is Now Being Televised and Tweeted.” Needless to say, I am happy to know that a new generation of authors, artists, and educators is willing to join RASHAD in considering the ongoing significance of Gil Scott-Heron’s work and the evolution of “Black Protest, Preaching, and Cultural (Re)Presentations, From the Black Arts Movement to #BlackLivesMatter (c.1965-2016).”

Lastly, Gil Scott-Heron joined Stevie Wonder, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and others in calling for the establishment of a national holiday that would honor the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. —and he worked tirelessly until that dream became a reality. I am, therefore, overjoyed that we were able to publish this issue on the eve of the January 15, 2018 MLK Day Celebration, which falls on the 89th anniversary of Dr. King’s birth.

Happy birthday to Dr. King, and happy reading to you!

Regennia N. Williams, PhD
Founder and Editor-in-Chief