Malcolm X is one of the most important figures in the twentieth-century struggle for racial equality in America. With the passing of time, and changing attitudes to race and religion in American society, the significance of a public figure like Malcolm X continues to evolve and to challenge. This Companion presents new perspectives on Malcolm X’s life and legacy in a series of specially commissioned essays by prominent scholars from a range of disciplines. As a result, this is an unusually rich analysis of this important African American leader, orator, and cultural icon. Intended as a source of information on his life, career and influence and as an innovative substantive scholarly contribution in its own right, the book also includes an introduction, a chronology of the life of Malcolm X, and a guide to further reading.

Robert E. Terrill teaches in the Department of Communication and Culture at Indiana University, Bloomington. He is the author of Malcolm X: Inventing Radical Judgment (2004), which won the Kohrs-Campbell Prize in Rhetorical Criticism, 2005.
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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of contributors</th>
<th>page vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronology</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Introduction

ROBERT E. TERRILL

1. Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad
   CLAUDE CLEGG
   10

2. Autobiography and identity: Malcolm X as author and hero
   ALEX GILLESPIE
   26

3. Bringing Malcolm X to Hollywood
   BRIAN NORMAN
   39

4. Malcolm X and black masculinity in process
   JEFFREY B. LEAK
   51

5. Womanizing Malcolm X
   SHEILA RADFORD-HILL
   63

6. Malcolm X and the Black Arts Movement
   JAMES SMETHURST
   78

7. Malcolm X and African American conservatism
   ANGELA D. DILLARD
   90

8. Malcolm X and youth culture
   RICHARD BRENT TURNER
   101
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9 | Homo rhetoricus Afro-Americanus: Malcolm X and the "rhetorical ideal of life"  
  Mark Lawrence McPhail | 113 |
| 10 | Judgment and critique in the rhetoric of Malcolm X  
  Robert E. Terrill | 125 |
| 11 | Nightmarish landscapes: geography and the dystopian writings of Malcolm X  
  James Tyner | 137 |
| 12 | Afrocentricity and Malcolm X  
  Molefi Kete Asante | 150 |
| 13 | Malcolm X in global perspective  
  Kevin Gaines | 158 |
| 14 | The legacy of Malcolm X  
  William W. Sales, Jr. | 171 |
|   | Guide to further reading  
  Index | 185  
  191 |
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Contributors

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CHRONOLOGY

1925 Malcolm Little is born on May 19 in Omaha, Nebraska, to Earl and Louise Little. Malcolm is Earl's seventh child, and Louise's fourth (Earl had three children from a previous marriage). Both Earl and Louise are members of Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association.

1929 On November 7, the Littles’ home in Lansing, Michigan, is burned to the ground. In his autobiography, Malcolm calls this his “earliest vivid memory,” and suggests that the fire was started by the “Black Legion,” a local white-supremacy group.

1931 Earl Little is killed on September 28, when he is run over by a streetcar in Lansing. In his autobiography, Malcolm suggests that his father was attacked by whites and then laid across the streetcar tracks.

1939 On January 9, Louise Little is declared insane and committed to the state mental asylum in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Her eight children are divided among several different foster homes, and Malcolm eventually is made a ward of the state and sent to a group home for boys in Mason, Michigan.

1940 Malcolm is elected class president at Mason Junior High, and earns high grades; his English teacher, Mr. Ostrowski, tells him he should consider becoming a carpenter because that is a “realistic goal for a nigger.”

1941 Malcolm finishes the eighth grade and leaves Lansing, and school, for Boston, to live with his half-sister Ella.

1942 On December 18, Elijah Muhammad is sentenced to five years in prison for draft evasion.

1943 Malcolm is rejected by the draft board as unfit for service.

1946 Malcolm is arrested on January 12, in Boston, for burglary, and is sentenced to eight to ten years in prison, which is an unusually heavy
sentence. In his autobiography, Malcolm speculates that he also was being punished for consorting with white women in his burglary gang. On August 24, Elijah Muhammad is released from prison.

1948 In March, Malcolm is transferred from Concord Reformatory to Norfolk Prison Colony. His younger brother Reginald introduces him to the Nation of Islam. Malcolm begins corresponding by letter with Elijah Muhammad.

1952 On August 7, Malcolm is paroled, and goes to live with his eldest brother Wilfred in Detroit. He meets Elijah Muhammad and joins the Nation of Islam.

1953 Recognizing Malcolm’s considerable gifts, Elijah Muhammad promotes him to Assistant Minister of Detroit Temple Number 1.

1954 After establishing new Temples in Philadelphia and Boston, Malcolm is appointed Minister of the key Temple Number 7, in Harlem, and would remain associated with it for the remainder of his tenure with the Nation of Islam. On May 17, the United States Supreme Court hands down the decision in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas.

1955 Emmett Till is lynched after whistling at a white woman in Money, Mississippi. On December 1, Rosa Parks is arrested in Montgomery, Alabama, for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. On December 5, African Americans began a boycott of the buses in Montgomery that would last for over a year.

1957 Hinton X (Johnson), a member of Temple Number 7, is beaten and arrested on April 14. Malcolm leads a contingent of his followers to the police station, and negotiates medical treatment. The incident brings the Nation of Islam increased visibility and respect in Harlem.

1958 On January 14, Malcolm marries Betty X (Sanders). Their first daughter, Attallah, is born on November 16.

1959 The first segment of “The Hate That Hate Produced” airs on Mike Wallace’s News Beat show on WNTA-TV, on July 13. It is the first time that most white Americans have heard of the Nation of Islam, Elijah Muhammad, and Malcolm X. Later that year, Malcolm travels to the Middle East and Africa, but does not visit Mecca. His passport lists his name as Malcolm X, also known as Malik El-Shabazz.

1960 In February, in Greensboro, North Carolina, four young African Americans “sit in” at a whites-only Woolworth’s lunch counter. On April 21, the Civil Rights Act of 1960 passes the US Congress. In September, Malcolm meets Fidel Castro, who is staying at the
Theresa Hotel in Harlem. Malcolm’s daughter Qubilah is born on Christmas Day. *Muhammad Speaks* is launched.

1961

In January, Malcolm meets with members of the Ku Klux Klan, in Atlanta, Georgia. The KKK was considering procuring land for the Nation of Islam because they perceived a common interest in the separation of the races, and because they thought that if the Nation of Islam became more influential it would draw attention away from the integrationist civil-rights movement.

1962

On April 27, Ronald X (Stokes), a member of the Los Angeles Mosque, is shot to death by police. Malcolm flies out to L.A. to preach at the funeral and seems tempted to organize a protest in response, but Elijah Muhammad does not allow it. On July 22, Malcolm’s daughter Ilyasah is born.

1963

Early this year, Malcolm begins working with Alex Haley on his *Autobiography*, which will be published posthumously in 1965. In April, Malcolm confronts Elijah Muhammad about his adultery. In May, a widely-read interview that Haley conducts with Malcolm X appears in *Playboy*. In August, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his famous “I Have a Dream” speech during the March on Washington, DC. In November, President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas; on December 1, Malcolm calls this a case of the “chickens coming home to roost,” and is subsequently “silenced” by Elijah Muhammad.

1964

In February, Malcolm visits Cassius Clay while he is training for his championship bout with Sonny Liston; after the fight, Malcolm announces that Clay will be receiving his “X” and joining the Nation of Islam. On March 8, Malcolm announces that he is leaving the Nation of Islam, and, on the 12th, that he is founding a new organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc. On March 26, Malcolm X and King meet for the only time when they are both observing the Senate debate over the 1964 Civil Rights Bill. In April and May, *Muhammad Speaks*, the official organ of the Nation of Islam, which Malcolm had helped to establish, carries a series of essays highly critical of Malcolm. On April 13, Malcolm begins his journey to Mecca to perform the hajj, a ritual pilgrimage to Islamic holy sites that is required of all Muslims who can afford it. He also delivers speeches in Beirut, Nigeria, and Ghana. He returns home to New York on May 21, bearing the name El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. On June 28, he announces the founding of the Organization of Afro-American Unity. On July 9, Malcolm again travels to Africa, and
submits a written address to the Organization of African Unity, meeting in Cairo. He returns to New York on November 24, twelve days after his mother Louise is finally released from the mental hospital in Kalamazoo. On November 30, he leaves to participate in a debate at Oxford, England. Malcolm returns to the States on December 14; a fourth daughter is born, Gamilah Lamumbah, on December 4.

1965

On February 5, Malcolm leaves for Europe, where he plans to address the Council of African Organizations in London and the Federation of African Students in France; however, he is denied entry into France. On February 12, lawyers working for the Nation of Islam attempt to have Malcolm and his family evicted from their house, owned by the Nation. On February 13, he returns to New York for the final time. In the early hours of February 14, his house is firebombed, and Malcolm blames the Nation of Islam. Malcolm X is assassinated on February 21, in New York, as he is about to begin his address at the Audubon Ballroom.

In the early hours of February 23, Harlem Mosque Number 7 burns to the ground. Malcolm is buried in Ferncliff Cemetery on February 27. In March, Betty Shabazz participates in the pilgrimage to Mecca, taking the name Hajj Bahiyah Betty Shabazz. On March 11, a grand jury indicts Talmadge Hayer, Norman 3X Butler, and Thomas 15X Johnson for the murder of Malcolm X.

On September 30, twin daughters Malaak and Malikah are born.
Any book is a collective effort, at least to some degree, but a project of this scope simply could not have been completed without the assistance and support of a great many individuals. I cannot list them all, but I would like to acknowledge at least a few. At home, my family continues to be extraordinarily accepting of the ongoing distractions and minor crises that accompany an academic life. At Cambridge University Press, I thank Ray Ryan for inviting me into the project, and Maartje Scheltens for helping it move forward. Lindeth Vasey possesses a keen eye, and the manuscript was much improved through her copy-editing. And Christina Sarigiannidou guided me with expertise and patience through the final stages of production. At Indiana University, my department chair, Greg Waller, supported my request for a leave during which a part of this project was completed, and I thank my colleagues for their interest in my work. And, of course, I thank the contributors to this volume for their fine essays, each of which makes a substantive contribution to our understanding of Malcolm X.

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