Radical Theory, Caribbean Reality is a collection of articles written over many years that explores the common themes of race and class in the Caribbean and the attempt to overcome social domination. Beginning with an autobiographical account of how his own philosophical outlook was shaped by the radicalization of the region following the 1968 Rodney riots, Jamaican philosopher Charles Mills looks both at those turbulent times and at their aftermath. The essays examine abstract political theory (Marxism, critical race theory, liberal social contract theory) while also focusing on specific Caribbean ideas, issues and events, such as M.G. Smith’s plural society thesis, portrayals of the Jamaican left in popular thrillers, the collapse of the Grenada Revolution, “smadditizin’” as the affirmation of personhood in a racist society and the evolution of Stuart Hall’s views on race. As such, they all share a concern with the struggle for a more just social order and are “radically” oriented. The title has a double meaning insofar as it signifies both the application of radical theory to the Caribbean reality, and the ways in which that reality has too often collided with the theory, revealing its inadequacies. As Mills explains, “The overall aim is to elucidate some classic subjects and themes in radical theory, both generally and with local Caribbean application, and to map in the process a trajectory of intellectual development not peculiar to my own history but traced by many others of my generation also.”

“Radical Theory, Caribbean Reality is a long overdue collection on the Caribbean from one of its most accomplished scholars... Mills’s books to date have focused either on broad questions of race or specific matters related to ideology. This, in a sense, represents his coming home to the Caribbean and his analysis of late-twentieth-century Caribbean politics and society.”

–Brian Meeks, Professor of Social and Political Change, Director of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, and Director of the Centre for Caribbean Thought, University of the West Indies, Jamaica

Charles W. Mills is John Evans Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy, Northwestern University.