

## **BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW**

The following books are available for review in The Journal of Negro Education. Please contact Dr. Krystal L. Williams, Book/Media Review Editor at [journalnegroed@gmail.com](mailto:journalnegroed@gmail.com)

### **A Common Human Ground: Universality and Particularity in a Multicultural World** **Claes G. Ryn**

A great challenge of the twenty-first century is the danger of conflict between persons, peoples, and cultures, among and within societies. In *A Common Human Ground*, Claes Ryn explores the nature of this problem and sets forth a theory about what is necessary for peaceful relations to be possible.

Many in the Western world trust in “democracy,” “capitalism,” “liberal tolerance,” “scientific progress,” or “general enlightenment” to handle this problem. Although each of these, properly defined, may contribute toward alleviating disputes, Ryn argues that the problem is much more complex and demanding than is usually recognized. He reasons that, most fundamentally, good relations among individuals and nations have moral and cultural preconditions.

What can predispose them to mutual respect and peace? One Western philosophical tradition, for which Plato set the pattern, maintains that the only way to genuine unity is for historical diversity to yield to universality. The implication of this view for a multicultural world would be a peace that requires that cultural distinctiveness be effaced as far as possible and replaced with a universal culture. A very different Western philosophical tradition denies the existence of universality altogether. It is represented today by postmodernist multiculturalism—a view that leaves unanswered the question as to how conflict between diverse groups might be averted.

Ryn questions both of these traditions, arguing for the potential union of universality and particularity. He contends that the two need not be enemies, but in fact need each other. Cultivating individual and national particularities is potentially compatible with strengthening and enriching our common humanity. This volume embraces the notion of universality, while at the same time historicizing it.

Using wide-ranging examples, Ryn presents a firmly sustained and systematic argument centering on this central issue. His approach is interdisciplinary, discussing not only political ideas, but also fiction, drama, and other arts. Scholarly and philosophical, but not specialized, this book will appeal to general readers as well as intellectuals.

### **Campus Counterspaces: Black and Latinx Students' Search for Community at Historically White Universities** **Micere Keels**

Frustrated with the flood of news articles and opinion pieces that were skeptical of minority students' "imagined" campus microaggressions, Micere Keels, a professor of

comparative human development, set out to provide a detailed account of how racial-ethnic identity structures Black and Latinx students' college transition experiences.

Tracking a cohort of more than five hundred Black and Latinx students since they enrolled at five historically white colleges and universities in the fall of 2013 *Campus Counterspaces* finds that these students were not asking to be protected from new ideas. Instead, they relished exposure to new ideas, wanted to be intellectually challenged, and wanted to grow. However, Keels argues, they were asking for access to counterspaces—safe spaces that enable radical growth. They wanted counterspaces where they could go beyond basic conversations about whether racism and discrimination still exist. They wanted time in counterspaces with likeminded others where they could simultaneously validate and challenge stereotypical representations of their marginalized identities and develop new counter narratives of those identities.

In this critique of how universities have responded to the challenges these students face, Keels offers a way forward that goes beyond making diversity statements to taking diversity actions.

### **Eliminating the Achievement Gap** **William Jeynes**

The purpose of the *Eliminating the Achievement Gap* is to provide a resource for scholars and students into many of the most salient issues, trends, and factors that are most effective in reducing the achievement gap. *Eliminating the Achievement Gap* is particularly unique because it will: 1) utilize a meta-analysis to determine what factors contribute the most to reducing the achievement gap and 2) examine potential achievement gap reducing variables from across disciplines. These disciplines include education, sociology, economics, family science, psychology, public policy, and educational psychology. The second emphasis is largely based on the meta-analysis, because the results of the meta-analysis indicate that the best way to completely eliminate the achievement gap is to initiate a multidisciplinary approach to the achievement gap. It is the intention of this book to make scholars, educators, policymakers, parents, and the general public more aware of the factors that best bridge the achievement gap, so that they can take major steps to implementing comprehensive and multidisciplinary efforts. The more such efforts are inaugurated, the more the achievement gap will be reduced. The nine chapters of this book are therefore divided into four parts to reflect this extent of this comprehensive approach.

### **Plantation Politics and Campus Rebellions** **Power, Diversity, and the Emancipatory Struggle in Higher Education** **Edited by Bianca C. Williams, Dian D. Squire, and Frank A. Tuitt**

*Plantation Politics and Campus Rebellions* provides a multidisciplinary exploration of the contemporary university's entanglement with the history of slavery and settler colonialism in the United States. Inspired by more than a hundred student-led protests during the Movement for Black Lives, contributors examine how campus rebellions—and university responses to them—expose the racialized inequities at the core of higher

education. Plantation politics are embedded in the everyday workings of universities—in not only the physical structures and spaces of academic institutions, but in its recruitment and attainment strategies, hiring practices, curriculum, and notions of sociality, safety, and community. The book is comprised of three sections that highlight how white supremacy shapes campus communities and classrooms; how current diversity and inclusion initiatives perpetuate inequality; and how students, staff, and faculty practice resistance in the face of institutional and legislative repression. Each chapter interrogates a connection between the academy and the plantation, exploring how Black people and their labor are viewed as simultaneously essential and disruptive to university cultures and economies. The volume is an indispensable read for students, faculty, student affairs professionals, and administrators invested in learning more about how power operates within education and imagining emancipatory futures.

**Racial Equity on College Campuses  
Connecting Research and Practice**

**Edited by Royel M. Johnson, Uju Anya, and Liliana M. Garces**

The current socio-political moment—rife with racial tensions and overt bigotry—has exacerbated longstanding racial inequities in higher education. While educational scholars have developed conceptual tools and offered data-informed recommendations for rooting out racism in campus policies and practices, this work is largely inaccessible to the public. At the same time, practitioners and policymakers are increasingly called on to implement quick solutions to what are, in fact, profound, structural problems. *Racial Equity on College Campuses* bridges this gap, marshaling the expertise of nineteen scholars and practitioners to translate research-based findings into actionable recommendations in three key areas: university leadership, teaching and learning, and student and campus life. The strategies gathered here will prove useful to institutional actors engaged in both real-time and long-term decision-making across contexts—from the classroom to the boardroom.

**Sisterlocking Discourse  
Race, Gender, and the Twenty-First-Century Academy**  
**By Valerie Lee**

In *Sisterlocking Discourse*, hair is a medium for reflecting on how academic leadership looks, performs, and changes when embodied by a Black woman. In these ten essays, Valerie Lee traverses disciplines and genres, weaving together memoir, literary analysis, legal cases, folklore, letters, travelogues, family photographs, and cartoons to share her story of navigating academia. Lee's path is not singular or linear, but rather communal and circular as she revisits her earliest years in her grandmother's home, advances through the professoriate and senior administration, and addresses her hopes and fears for her own children. Drawing inspiration from the African American storytelling traditions she has spent decades studying and teaching, Lee approaches issues of race, gender, social justice, academic labor, and leadership with a voice that is clear, intimate, and humorous. As she writes in the introduction, "*Sisterlocking Discourse* is about braiding and breathing and believing that a Black woman's journey through the academy is important." Lee's journey will appeal to students, faculty, and administrators

across fields and institutions who are committed to making higher education more inclusive, while speaking to the experiences of professional women of color more broadly.

### **Stakes Is High**

#### **Trials, Lessons, and Triumphs in Young Black Men's Educational Journeys By Derrick R. Brooms**

Drawing on interviews that span over seven years, Derrick R. Brooms provides detailed accounts of a select group of Black young men's pathways from secondary school through college. As opposed to the same old stories about young Black men, Brooms offers new narratives that speak to Black boys' and young men's agency, aspirations, hopes, and possibilities. Even as they feel contested and constrained because they are Black and male, these young men anchor their educational desires within their families and communities. Critical to their journeys are the many challenges they face in public discourse and societal projections, in their home neighborhoods and schooling community, in educational environments, and in their health and well-being. In charting these challenges and the high stakes of the trials, lessons, and triumphs they experience, Brooms shows that we cannot understand the educational journeys of Black boys and young men without accounting for the full sociocultural contexts of their lives and how they make sense of those contexts.

#### **Transformative Ethnic Studies in Schools: Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Research Christine E. Slater and Miguel Zavala**

This timely and compelling book conceptualizes Ethnic Studies not only as a vehicle to transform and revitalize the school curriculum but also as a way to reinvent teaching. Drawing on Sleeter's research review on the impact of Ethnic Studies commissioned by the National Education Association (NEA), the authors show how the traditional curriculum's Eurocentric view of the world affects diverse student populations. The text highlights several contemporary exemplars of curricula—from classroom level to district or state-wide—illustrating core concepts in Ethnic Studies across a variety of disciplines and grade levels. A final chapter considers how research on P-12 ethnic studies can be conceptualized and conducted in ways that further both advocacy and program sustainability. *Transformative Ethnic Studies in Schools* is essential reading for educators working to transform schools by rehumanizing learning spaces for all students.

#### **Young, Gifted and Missing: The Underrepresentation of African American Males in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Disciplines Vol: 25 Edited by Anthony G. Robins, Locksley Knibbs, Ted N. Ingram, Michael N. Weaver Jr. & Adriel Hilton**

Acting as a bridge between the academic and policymaking communities, *Young, Gifted and Missing* sets the stage for addressing critical issues around why African American men are absent in the STEM disciplines.

The authors track the experiences of African American male students in STEM at every level of the educational system in order to produce successful models of achievement. The number of African American males who enroll in STEM degree programs as opposed to the lower numbers that ultimately graduate portends poorly for U.S. communities and democracy. The road to economic success and global participation requires a rich, educated community that must include African American males. There is a state of urgency to address this critical challenge. Action must happen now. An educated public, not just for some, but one for all is a must.

Graduate students in STEM, education, and business disciplines, as well as executive leadership in education, corporate and non-profit entities stand to benefit from reading this volume. Lastly, those looking to research the successes of African American males in STEM disciplines would find this book purposeful.