views it as weeding out those who were not fit to represent the brand.

This book is not intended as a "take-down" of Morehouse or its graduates. Indeed, in providing her brilliant conceptual framework as to what is shaping the actions of the institution, Grundy identifies a path forward. The most hopeful part of her book focuses on the student body, their evolving approach to gender, and how they are clear-eyed about the failings of the administration. Students are demanding more. Her interviews also reveal significant personal growth among some of the graduates who look back with remorse at how they made the campus a less-than-welcoming place for their classmates who did not conform to the expected social or gender norms. One graduate describes arriving on campus as being the first time he experienced the full spectrum of Black manhood, and all of his internalized stereotypes about who Black men are fell away. Grundy exposes the untapped potential of Morehouse to be a place where all Black men, in all their incarnations, can thrive.

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Jon Shelton

The Education Myth: How Human Capital Trumped Social Democracy

Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2023. 270 pp.

In his excellent and important new book, *The Education Myth*, Jon Shelton argues that by the 1980s and 1990s, both leading Democrat and Republican politicians came to believe that "only those who acquire the right human capital are worthy of economic security and social respect" (ix). He calls this belief in education's magical capacity to solve the problems of inequality the education myth. As education moved to the centre of American governors' and presidents' priorities, Shelton concludes, "the myth choked off social democratic alternatives" (3).

Shelton traces the changing public rhetoric and public policies over education from the founding of the US. His story is ironic and tragic. It is ironic because the more attention education received—including the formation of a federal Department of Education under President Jimmy Carter in 1979—the more advocates of more investment in education whittled away the public purposes of education, such as forming citizens and developing a national community, until the dominant goal became developing students' human capital. It is tragic because, from Shelton's perspective, the more policymakers turned to education to address poverty and unemployment, the more they blamed individuals and eschewed progressive reform.

How did it happen? The biggest villains in Shelton's story are Democrats. After the American Revolution and into the Cold War, for all their shortcomings, public education's advocates focused largely on the importance of a broadly educated public and the integrative function of common schools. Of course, parents and policymakers understood that access to K–12 schooling and higher education encouraged

social mobility, but economic purposes never displaced civic ones. While the roots of change are deep, the first signs of the human capital approach to education appeared during the Great Society under President Lyndon B. Johnson.

This might come as a surprise to progressives. Shelton contrasts President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms, in which the right to education comes after the right to economic security, with the Johnson administration's approach. Drawing on the research of economists Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz, Johnson's administration suggested that the deep-seated and challenging problem of poverty and unemployment could be solved by enabling poor children to develop their human capital. Shelton provides an incisive and cutting definition of why the idea of human capital is, in his words, "a monumental sleight of hand" (53). Classical economics assumed three major inputs for economic activity: land, labour, capital. The idea of human capital conflates labour with capital and imagines people as if they are firms profiting from their skills.

Yet the idea was seductive because it offered a simple answer to how to get more people jobs: education. Shelton recognizes that, at first, expressions of education as a way to develop human capital was still largely framed in collective terms. Yet underneath the collective language of the Great Society was a dangerous assumption: the problems of unemployment and poverty had to do with deficiencies in individuals, not with society or capitalism. If individuals developed human capital, they would find a job. Of course, that also means that if they did not, it was their fault.

Nonetheless, as policymakers from both US political parties embraced the premise that education's primary purpose was to develop human capital, education gained greater prominence. Leaders from both parties proclaimed their commitment to improving education. President George H. W. Bush called himself the education president, while Governor Bill Clinton and other New Democrats turned to education reform to help the poor and revitalize an American economy reeling from deindustrialization and globalization. As education moved to the centre of American discourse, Shelton writes, more radical proposals such as committing the United States to full employment were marginalized. By the time of the second Bush and the Obama administrations, it was taken as gospel that education, including higher education, was as President Obama's Secretary of Education Arne Duncan put it in 2012, "about jobs."[4]

While Shelton's primary concern is the loss of social democratic alternatives, for scholars of education he makes an important point. The more Americans talked about education, the more the federal and state governments focused on education, the more education reform became central to candidates' and elected leaders' promises, the more they legislated, the more Americans' aspiration for public education "was reduced" from "a broad vision for helping Americans gain economic security and facilitate democratic citizenship" to "little more than a commodity through which to compete for a diminishing number of good economic opportunities" (xi).

4 Arne Duncan, DNC Speech [text, video], Politico, May 9th 2012, https://www.politico.com/story/2012/09/arne-duncan-dnc-speech-text-080777,

Americans once had a more robust and inspiring aspiration for what education should be in a democracy. Now, as education became a priority, it was stripped of its public meaning.

Shelton concludes with recent political backlash against the educated meritocracy, expressed in movements such as Occupy Wall Street and Make America Great Again. Shelton builds on a growing literature that questions the premises of American meritocracy. He draws in particular on Michael Sandel's book *The Tyranny of Merit*, but other recent works include Will Bunch's *After the Ivory Tower Falls* and Daniel Markovits' *The Meritocracy Trap*. Increasingly, observers are pointing out that a system that rewards education generates resentment from those who either do not have degrees or take on huge debts to get one but do not receive the promised benefits. Many of these voters turned to populist politicians like Wisconsin's Scott Walker or Donald Trump.

Surprisingly, Shelton is "hopeful that the education myth is falling" (206). He points to both the success of Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign and Trump's election. Both candidates argued that the problem facing most Americans is not their education but the lack of good jobs. As president, Trump promised to bring manufacturing jobs home and to turn back globalization, even if his policies did not always align with his rhetoric. Together, Sanders and Trump opened a space for President Joe Biden to focus again on industrial policy and the creation of jobs. If Shelton is correct, perhaps we might also again refocus on the broader purposes for K–12 and higher education, rather than reduce their value to return on investment.

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Leslie T. Fenwick

Jim Crow's Pink Slip: The Untold Story of Black Principal and Teacher Leadership

Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2022. 216 pp.

Leslie Fenwick's *Jim Crow's Pink Slip: The Untold Story of Black Principal and Teacher Leadership* is a timely book considering the discourse around critical race theory and diversity. Using archival data, Fenwick highlights the double-edged sword of integration, showing how Black principals and teachers were demoted, fired, and humiliated despite the purported intentionality of desegregation to bring about social equality.

The book provides alarming data regarding the elimination of Black educators. For example, it documents that in 1963, North Carolina had 227 Black principals, but by 1970 that number had been reduced to eight. Teachers fared no better, as was the case in Louisiana, where 519 Black teachers were pushed out. The white architects who organized Black education were skillful in their use of policy. They developed and used the National Teacher Examination (NTE) as a tool to eliminate