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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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

Black teachers. Fenwick notes that the NTE was a more powerful weapon than white principals in eliminating Black educators. Quoting from the National Education Association (NEA), she notes that the NTE was "a punitive measure to justify the racial imbalance in hiring practices" (26). The use of the NTE was primarily in southern states with their large population of Black people.

To emphasize the humiliation that Black educators faced, the book highlights cases where experienced and well-qualified Black principals were demoted to assistant principals. These former Black principals were tasked with serving under the leadership of less-qualified white principals. Pointedly, Fenwick discusses how Blacks bore the brunt of school desegregation. Black students were bussed to white schools, where they encountered white educators with racist ideologies. The Black community suffered economic loss with the closing of Black schools. The psychological damage was also felt when the Black schools named after Black people were closed, and Black students were forced to attend schools like Robert Lee and required to sing the racist song "Dixie."

What becomes clear from reading *Jim Crow's Pink Slip* is that the architects of Black education perhaps realized that, in segregated schools, Blacks were demonstrating a high level of Black consciousness. Drawing from the scholarship of Vanessa Siddle Walker, Fenwick points out the flaw that Black schools were inferior to white schools. While the funding and school facilities were unequal, Black students experienced passionate Black educators who saw education as an emancipatory project. One glaring example of this is the case of Carter G. Woodson, the father of Black history month, who taught at Dunbar High School in Washington, DC. In all-Black schools, Black students learned aspects of their history and were able to see role models in their educators.

Contrary to popular belief, in these segregated settings several Black schools outperformed their white counterparts. Fenwick also points out the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in preparing Black educators to teach in Black schools. A highlight of the book is that it shows how Black people developed their own schools after the Civil War. Education was highly valued among the newly freed people, as they pooled their resources to build schools to educate their children. The self-determination that Black people were demonstrating was a threat to white supremacist ideology.

The book's real value is in showing how the history of Black education intertwines with contemporary educational discourses. Borrowing from the scholarship of Carter G. Woodson in the 1930's, who said, "The conditions of today have been determined by what has taken place in the past"[5], one can clearly see how past racist school policies play out in the present. The hoopla around critical race theory (CRT) is one example of how those in power seek to eliminate discourses that will disrupt social inequities. The book brings to mind one of CRT's tenets: interest convergence, which is when those in power acquiesce to the demands of oppressed groups only

5 Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro.* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications [1933] 2012), 6.

when it suits their interest. In the case of desegregation, what becomes clear from reading Fenwick's book is that it was in the interest of those in power to dismantle Black schools, which in turn had a negative effect on the Black community.

Through very deceptive policies and practices, Black educators in today's society have become near extinct. Black principals were in some cases assigned jobs where they had no one reporting to them. Fenwick does an excellent job of pointing out how the low number of Black educators is a direct result of policies that were implemented after Brown v. Board 1954. The book's discourse around policy is on point because it is through policies that the continuous cycle of educational equality is maintained. Brilliantly, Fenwick describes how the past is always present, noting that the curricula in Black schools was gutted. This is similar to policies in some states that have sought to ban African American studies from school curricula. The epilogue section of the book provides nine recommendations for addressing the historical ills that affected contemporary education. Among those that stand out are interrogating licensure exams, investing in HBCU teacher-preparation programs, and establishing antiracist curricula and ethnic studies.

If there were one critique of the book, it could be that yesteryear Black educators had a level of Black consciousness that led them to see teaching as an emancipatory project. Many of these educators were influenced by Black nationalist thinking and drew on the Black struggle to effectively educate Black students. One has to wonder if today's Black educators have the same level of consciousness as the race warrior educator intellectuals who fought for the advancement of Black people. What *Jim Crow's Pink Slip* elucidates is that the education of Black people is a concern for those ruling society. If those shaping educational policy won't treat Black people right, what makes us believe they would teach them right?[6]

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Tanya Titchkosky, Elaine Cagulada, Madeleine DeWelles, Efrat Gold, (eds.)
DisAppearing: Encounters in Disability Studies

Toronto: Canadian Scholars, 2022. 318 pp.

Eight-year-old Nadine was supposed to be happy. But she wasn't. The crowds, constant activity, and noise were too much for her at what was supposed to be an accessible educational event for children with intellectual disabilities. Instead, Nadine found the event disabling and sought out alternatives. After she returned to her regular classroom, Nadine said, "That's wonderful" in Arabic, her mother's first language (83, 88). In this chapter of the edited collection *DisAppearing: Encounters in*

6 Abul Pitre, *Liberation Pedagogy: Elijah Muhammad and the Art of Soul Crafting.* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2022).