

Black Women in the Ivory Tower, 1850–1954: An Intellectual History. By

Stephanie Evans. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007. xv + 275 pp. Maps, photos, notes, bibliography, and index. \$59.95 (cloth).

There is a general misconception that African American women have excelled at higher education and are taking over the workforce. Stephanie Evans's monograph corrects this widespread myth with sobering findings. No informed educator or policymaker should leave home without reading this text and learning of the actual status of African American women, many of whom yearn for an education but still have difficulty attaining it. On the brink of the twenty-first century, only 14.8 percent of African American women held a professional occupation, a figure comparable to the rate in the late 1880s (p. 204). Building upon this dismal statistic, Evans describes thoroughly the pitfalls that have befallen so many black women who have aspired to higher education. The first half of her book utilizes trends, data, and memoirs from degree recipients from 1850 to 1954 to trace the first college diplomas before the Civil War through the attainment of doctorate degrees by the 1940s and 1950s. As expected, this information conveys both the fortitude of women who struggled through the academy and the massive obstacles that they faced in varying degrees: racism; sexism; class bias; family pressures; inadequate curriculum; and restrictive uplift ideology that turned the college experience into a glass-house, gauntlet-driven reality show rather than a time for experimentation and growth. In addition to recovering the story of black women overcoming vast barriers to fight for their rights to a transformative intellectual life, this section also exposes the politics of college rankings and how historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) had to contend for legitimacy, the power of collective striving from black sororities and other service organizations, a comparison of travails and triumphs between primarily white institutions and HBCUs, and documentation of the professionalization of the academy from the perspective of black female intellectuals, many of whom resisted this turn and countered that education should serve a broader social base, not merely the individual.

The second section charts and analyzes the philosophies of such luminaries as Anna Julia Cooper and Mary McLeod Bethune along with lesser-known scholars such as Fanny Coppin, Rose Browne, and Mary Branche. This discussion encapsulates educational theory from early black female intellectuals who argued that the academy should stimulate research, teaching, and service. Evans captures Cooper's multi-edged voice and critique of pure reason and Bethune's regard for black history and culture. Both, according to Evans, argued that education should lead to social justice and equality, rights that had been authorized by a higher power. Evans carefully reveals that black women offered powerful reformist ideas that challenged the manner in which the academy was becoming complicit in creating a professional managerial class that largely ignored the *hoi polloi*, opting instead to construct the working poor and underclass as projects to be studied and repaired at a distance. This section has the potential to define a new course for higher education's grand

mission, and I wish that Evans had expanded it by analyzing more of these women's pronouncements and writings, especially in relation to class. I also hope that Evans will explore the intersection between intellectual productivity from the other 85 percent of black women who are nonprofessionals and the ideas of those holding degrees (pp. 27, 126).

Overall, Evans's work punctures history's reified dome and links black women's writing to current calls for a restructuring of schools from top to bottom. She makes a strong case for a return to the more ameliorative, service-based institutions started by and preferred by African American female intellectuals.

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American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America. By Allan Punzalan Isaac.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. xxx + 205 pp. Notes and index. \$20.00 (paper).

An ambitious attempt to reconstitute the willful amnesia of the Philippines from the U.S. imagination, Allan Punzalan Isaac's *American Tropics* is a welcome and original contribution to the recent surge of scholarship on Filipinos and Filipino Americans and their wide-ranging coordinates within the U.S. imperial cosmology. Through the interdisciplinary study of law, literature (from the rhetorically troubling *Boy Scouts* novels of 1911 to the brilliantly cacophonous *Dogeaters* [1990] of Jessica Hagedorn), and films and musicals rhapsodizing about an American Pacific, Isaac navigates not only the "mobile borders" of Filipino America, but also its "mobile bodies" (p. xxv). Initially pondering the spectral Andrew Cunanan—the serial killer notorious for killing Gianni Versace—Isaac argues that as the American public misrecognized Cunanan's Filipino heritage, the United States has historically refused to acknowledge both the presence of Filipinos in America and the facticity of the U.S. empire itself.

Drawing on the work of Hayden White, Isaac illuminates the dark shadow cast by the "American Tropics" within that empire. As he puts it, "Focusing on the Philippines and Filipino America as crucial parts of that shadow, the American Tropics turns upon 'America' to demonstrate how America not only is itself a trope but continually gyrates and generates tropes about itself to underscore its identity . . . against its perceived others" (p. 1). More than a story about metropole and periphery, *Tropics* innovatively maps the postcolonial Filipino imagination within "dislocated American island spaces" (p. xxx), proffering a new and convincing narrative turn in American culture.

Proposing a theoretical framework of "enfolded borders" (p. 47), Isaac manages to encompass much more than a simple, dichotomous analysis of the United States and the Philippines in building upon the foundational work of Sharon Delmendo's *Star-Entangled Banner* (Piscataway, NJ, 2004). Pushing towards a comparativist

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