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*Rethinking Power and Politics
in the African Diaspora*



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

Stephanie Y. Evans

Gainesville: University Press of Florida (2007)

ISBN 13: 978-0-8130-3031-9 275 pp., Cloth, \$59.95; Paper, \$24.95

The Segregated Scholars: Black Social Scientists and the Creation of Black Labor Studies, 1890–1950

Francille Rusan Wilson

Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press (2006)

ISBN 10: 0813925509 356 pp., Cloth, \$37.50

The Womanist Reader

Edited by Layli D. Phillips

New York: Routledge (2006)

ISBN 10: 0415954118. 437 pp., Cloth, \$100.00; Paper, \$39.95

Every year, the National Urban League (NUL) issues a compendium of essays, facts, and statistics that make up its signature report, “The State of Black America.” For the report, popular among journalists, grant writers, and policy wonks, the editors choose an annual theme and invite influential scholars and popular public officials to write essays to help contextualize and interpret the dry and rather abstruse graphs, charts, and figures documenting home ownership, workforce participation, infant mortality, educational attainment. The wide range of indexes form a matrix used to determine its mega-index—the NUL’s trademarked “Equality Index.” This index of indexes reduces the entire state of Black America to a raw number, where “an index number of less than one means that blacks are doing relatively worse than whites,” and for 2007, that number was 0.73 (NUL, *State of Black America* 2007:17). The report is arbitrary, essentialist, homogenizing, and explicitly reductionist, but it’s a sincere and informative way to document change over time and remind all Americans that racism exists and discrimination persists.

For 2007, the theme was “Portrait of the Black Male,” and Barack Obama wrote the foreword and recounted some of the high points of the year, but focused on the continued vulnerability of Black people in general and Black men in

particular. The first truly competitive Black presidential candidate literally framed the “state of black America” by trotting out the now familiar litany of grim facts and figures documenting low rates of high school graduation and employment and high rates of incarceration, delinquent child support payments, and HIV/AIDS. And of course, he felt compelled to remind readers that there are “more black men in prison than enrolled in college” (NUL, *State of Black America* 2007:10). The entire report focused on the crisis of Black men in America who are being left behind, disconnected, and incarcerated at alarming rates. According to the data in the *State of Black America*, however, Black women in the United States are doing better than ever, and when it comes to educational attainment, they are skyrocketing.

As many college educators observe every day in our classrooms, the number of Black women enrolled in college exceeds the number of Black men. According to the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, “black women currently earn about two thirds of all African-American bachelor’s degrees... 70 percent of all master’s degrees, and more than 60 percent of all doctorates. Black women also hold a majority of all African-American enrollments in law, medical, and dental schools” (*JBHE*, “Black Women Students Far Outnumber Black Men,” vol. 51, 2006:26). As one would reasonably predict, this trend continues into the professorate. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*’s most recent data, during the fall 2005 semester, there were 5,438 Black women who were assistant professors and only 4,459 Black men at the assistant professor rank (*CHE Almanac* 2007). This seemingly empowering and logical trend of African-American women attaining education, obtaining degrees, entering the professorate, and thus rising through the ranks, subsequently tanks when one considers the rank of full professor. Full professors and top administrators provide key leadership and the power to change policy, shape

curriculum, and produce knowledge, and while all women are routinely discouraged, shut out, and often locked out of the top of the ivory tower, the pernicious glass ceiling in the academy seems particularly wicked for African-American women because the pipeline appears to be flowing, but is cut to a trickle right at the top.

During fall 2005, there were 5,484 full professors who considered themselves, or let’s say their institutions considered them, African American. Yet, only 36 percent of these were women. That is a grand total of 1,986 out of 169,192 full professors in the United States.

Racism and sexism in the United States collide and ricochet off each other in almost surreal ways. Consider that in almost large cities, the chances of an African-American man graduating from high school are 50/50, yet Black men dominate the ranks of full professor. At the same time, Black women make up 2/3 of all of the Black undergraduate degree recipients, yet make up just over 1/3 of Black full professors. To me, this seems like one of those unpredictable patterns that creates a classic American conundrum. To my wife, however, it is not even noteworthy. She recently won her bid for tenure at North Carolina Central University and was just recruited by Duke to serve as associate dean. As she sees it, when it comes to real power or money, sexism usually trumps racism, and “getting promoted to full is still about the old-boys’ network.” Whether it is noteworthy or not, it is a troubling pattern that demonstrates that Black women are in the pipeline, but not making it up the conventional pipe, which creates barriers to the production of knowledge within the academy and inhibits efforts to truly transform the infrastructure that produces it. Although this troubling trend is perhaps a predictable articulation of race, class, and gender, we cannot stand for it and must understand it by carefully exploring the interplay of culture, power, and history.

The three books reviewed here go a long way in helping to explain and document Black women's role in the academy, their contribution to social sciences, and their unbending will to produce useful knowledge in traditional yet often unconventional ways. The authors employ very different methods, use distinctly different points of departure, and organize their books in different ways, but together they offer an important new vista from which we can better understand the diverse and complex ways women sutured, entered, and negotiated a variety of networks to contribute to the variegated and versatile network of information and knowledge, disciplines and discourses that is African-American intellectual history. Implicitly and at times explicitly, each author frames her book by highlighting the liminal status of Black women scholars and the scholarship about Black women's issues in the academy, a dynamic that the inestimable Elsa Barkley Brown frames so cogently: "Women's issues may be race issues, and race issues may be women's issues." It is a simple assumption that "black women may have both women's concerns and race concerns," and they need not "insist upon delimiting each" (Phillips 173). Yet, this simple understanding sits betwixt and between two powerhouse academic industries—race and gender. Although many might interpret this liminality as marginality, these three powerful authors demonstrate that Black women have long been producing knowledge in the service of social transformation, and in ways "that complicate ideas of what an academic should do or be" (Evans 2). More importantly, each author includes, gives voice to, and provides legitimization for the many networks of women who developed "an independent and parallel" discourse that employed academic knowledge within various venues that were not limited to the academy (Wilson 91). These authors not only complicate what an academic should do or be, but also complicate what an academic discourse should do or be.

The implications of this subtle move are important. The authors halt the deathly silence and replace it with a joyful noise. As Francille Rusan Wilson clearly states, "Black female social scientists were twice silenced, first in their own time by race and gender discrimination that limited their access to advanced degrees and circumscribed their careers, and second in the historical record that has all but erased their intellectual work" (4).

Stephanie Y. Evans has written the definitive history of Black women in the academy. *Black Women in the Ivory Tower, 1850–1954: An Intellectual History* is an ambitious effort that "chronicles black women's struggle for access to increasingly advanced levels of formal education," and she pays particular attention to the philosophies and critical pedagogies of influential Black women academics (2). Evans employs a brilliant, innovative, and refreshingly quirky mix of memoir analysis, comparative biography, historiography, ethical inquiry, and quantitative analysis to document the history of education and critically analyze intellectual production. It is a comprehensive multidisciplinary and multi-method study done for the express purpose of outlining "a more democratic approach to higher education" (2). By studying the history of Black women in the academy and carefully unpacking "black women's perspectives," Evans argues, one "can contribute to a physical democracy in academe, but these perspectives can also help to create an intellectual democracy—where all people have a voice" (2). The book has two parts: the first part explores educational history and focuses on educational attainment, whereas the second part is a critical and reflective assessment of intellectual production, or what Evans calls the "claiming of public intellectual space."

Evans begins, of course, at Oberlin College with Lucy Stanton. Although Evans uses some familiar "black facts" as signposts and anchors for her compelling narrative, she always offers new and

often troubling counter-facts. Although many people know that in 1850 Lucy Stanton was the first Black woman to earn a college degree, few people know that the curriculum at Oberlin was segregated by gender, and the first African-American woman to earn a B.A. from Oberlin was actually Mary Jane Patterson in 1862. Evans is always attentive to subtle details; for example, she pays particular attention to the various regions from which these courageous women hailed, and she carefully explains that these women “earned,” never simply received, degrees from their respective institutions. She is not always subtle or nuanced. In well-placed locations throughout the text, she makes powerful and declarative statements to frame her argument, underscore a point, and trouble the reader. To put Patterson’s degree in perspective, Evans forcefully asserts that it was “two hundred years after a white male, forty years after a black man, and nearly twenty-five years after three white women received the B.A. from Oberlin in 1841” (25). Recalling the context of colonial academies, Evans describes how “much of the funding for colonial academies—especially those that now make up the ‘Ivy League’—came from blood money of imperialist ventures against Asian, Native American, Latin American, and African nations or cultures” (28). Summarizing the pedagogy of antebellum missionaries, Evans is emphatic in stating that “white missionaries provided instruction that was based on the assumption that black people were savages in need of civilizing, natural slaves in need of morality, brutes and sexual deviants in need of purity, or all of the above” (34).

In general, Evans animates her staid, somber, and careful research with lively, engaging, and evenhanded prose, and only occasionally shows the reader a glimpse of her well-founded righteous indignation by letting loose these zingers that are strategically peppered throughout her volume; they never go over the top, and they always offer clarity and

punctuate an important point. Frankly, I found them refreshing and revealing of her explicit epistemological standpoint, which factors into the way she approaches the second part of her book, in which she develops a philosophical exploration of intellectual production along three familiar axes—research, teaching, and service. Focusing mainly, but not exclusively, on Anna Julia Cooper and Mary McLeod Bethune, Evans fashions an innovative philosophical lens with which to focus her ethical enquiry. Drawing from contract theorists Charles Mills, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Carol Pateman, Evans develops a concept that she calls “a *standpoint social contract* for black women that is an intersection of the racial and sexual contracts” (5). This rubric forms the philosophical scaffolding that enables her to identify four central themes in the work of Cooper and Bethune, which include a “demand for applied learning; [a] recognition of the importance of social standpoint and cultural identity in scholarship; a critical epistemology that both supported and resisted mainstream American ideals; and [a] moral existentialism grounded in a sense of communal responsibility” (8).

Evans is at her best when she is critiquing the institutions she loves most. An active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Evans proudly wears her Phi Beta Kappa key in the self-portrait that graces the back flap of the book jacket. She goes after both institutions with razor-sharp analysis and cutting criticism. In one of her most balanced but ultimately devastating critiques of the politics of respectability, Evans yokes honor societies and predominantly white institutions to Black clubs, Greek letter organizations, and uplift societies. As she recounts, “the uplift creed potentially created a martyr or savior complex for activists and ignored the agency of lower-class blacks who were not waiting to be ‘saved’ by those who claimed themselves or who were appointed race leaders ... the middle class was ultimately caught

between the rock of primitivism and the hard place of bourgeois aspirations" (65).

The entire book is a labor of love that Evans hopes will enable all of us to do our part in making more ethical and more responsible institutions of higher education—not only for Black women, but for all scholars and teachers, students and administrators, as well as the men and women who work in food service, house-keeping, and transportation. The love and fidelity she brings to this book are evident in her concluding remarks, where she recounts that "this research is my life's work. This is my word, my law, my experiment My journey. My prophecy. But this history is not my story alone. It can no longer be said that Plato's dialogues are 'universal' while black women's writers are merely simple or particular. Though originating from a unique standpoint, black women have spoken to themes of universal human interest at least as much as Greek men" (215).

Francille Rusan Wilson's *The Segregated Scholars: Black Social Scientists and the Creation of Black Labor Studies, 1890–1950* is a masterpiece of intellectual history and the history of science. Wilson has written a finely grained, thoroughly researched, and impeccable piece of scholarship that weaves detailed portraits of influential social scientists together over three generations of scholarship. Focusing on the emergence and development of Black labor studies, she was forced to focus on Black men at historically Black colleges who pioneered this scholarship. As she explains, her book "closely examines the world of fifteen representative black sociologists, historians, and economists, from their graduate training through their public careers. [These] segregated scholars were self-conscious, self-selected, and sometimes contentious colleagues committed to using empirical research to address labor and economic inequalities" (2).

Wilson goes well beyond the bounds of conventional limitations of most historians to demonstrate, document, and

recover how Black women made important contributions to advancing and expanding the theory and praxis of Black labor studies—a truly remarkable feat. She also describes, in detail, how white scholars, activists, and bureaucrats served as important allies—sometimes staunch, other times suspect. Wilson weaves a multilayered narrative that is particularly attentive to the complex valences of race and class, generation and gender.

One sub-index the NUL uses to generate its Equality Index is the awkwardly titled "Unionism Index," and it is one of the few measures that exceed 1.0, or parity with whites. In 2007 it stood at 1.24, which "reveals a significantly higher percentage of blacks in unions than whites, suggesting the unions remain an important vehicle for blacks' voice in the labor force" (NUL, *State of Black America* 2007:39). The important role organized labor plays in Black America in the twenty-first century is tied to the pivotal role Black workers, organizers, activists, and yes, scholars played in the labor movement during the twentieth century, particularly the first half of the twentieth century, when many Black people, as she recounted "*the industrial problem is fundamental*" (1).

African-American studies as a curricular initiative emerged on predominantly white college campuses in the late sixties, and in the wake of desegregation and the Civil Rights Movement. This was a heady time for Black folks because, among many firsts, Carl Stokes was elected as Cleveland's mayor, Thurgood Marshall was appointed to the Supreme Court, and Shirley Chisholm was elected as a member of the House to represent New York's 12th district. African Americans began to flex their electoral muscles, as Nixon made a calculated decision to implement affirmative action because he would rather see smart Black college graduates getting paid and saddled with debt than unemployed and organizing in the streets. As African-American studies became institutionalized, African and Caribbean countries became decolonized, manufacturing

and industrial jobs began moving overseas, and the non-union service and technology sectors fueled U.S. economic growth. As crack lay waste to urban landscapes without good jobs, culture, identity, and diaspora emerged as critical loci of exciting new research that buoyed multiculturalism and created an opportunity for such critical interventions as womanism.

Wilson demonstrates that the “central theme among black social scientists between 1890 and 1950” was labor studies (7). As multiculturalism swept college campuses, African American literature and intellectual history became increasingly popular in the 1980s, but labor’s centrality within that intellectual heritage has been largely overlooked because scholars had other priorities. Stated differently, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (David Levering Lewis, Knopf, 1981) was in vogue, labor studies weren’t. More than anything else, Wilson’s brilliant narrative reasserts the centrality that Black labor studies has played within African-American history and African-American studies. Wilson begins with W. E. B. Du Bois, whom she rightfully casts as an important innovator in labor studies. Wilson explains that “it is in *The Philadelphia Negro* that Black labor studies commences. This book presented the first detailed information on black urban occupations, family income, inflated rents and the problems of female wage earners” (16). Du Bois’s detailed and comprehensive study served as a touchstone because it set “a fifty-year methodological standard by which other black social scientists would measure their own work” (17). She documents Du Bois’s role in institutionalizing social science research at the Atlanta University conferences and tracks Du Bois’s shifting perspective on the black worker, suggesting that his 1902 *Negro Artisan* emerged as the cornerstone of Black labor studies. Although the 30-year-old Du Bois was a recognized pioneer in research, he quickly became the doyen or dean of Black labor studies by being a mentor and gatekeeper for what

Wilson calls a cadre of segregated scholars that included George Edmund Haynes, R. R. Wright, Jr., Monroe Work, and Kelley Miller. According to Wilson, “Du Bois played a central role in expanding the number of black social scientists by assisting them in finding funds for their doctoral research, getting their articles placed in professional journals, and providing introductions to and interventions with their professors and white reformers and philanthropists” (57). And it was these scholars, mainly George Edmund Haynes, who provided the network of support to cultivate the next generation of scholars of Black labor: Charles S. Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier, Abram L. Harris, and Ira de A. Reid.

Wilson demonstrates how intellectual production and research is a social and collective process born within networks and nodes of social relationships—it was mainly a “boys’ network.” Wilson explains how “differences in women’s undergraduate educations, the lack of a network of academic mentors, and occupational discrimination were the central causes for a delay in the training and employment of black women who may have wanted to become professional social scientists at the turn of the century” (92).

Like Evans, however, she demonstrates how Black women developed traditional knowledge, but were forced into or chose more applied approaches. And also like Evans, Wilson rethinks what a social scientist should be and do. To recover Black women’s contribution to labor studies, she had to think outside the box or at least outside the ivory tower, and she began by looking at some of the same scholar activists of the women’s club movement Evans explores. Recovering the work of Ida B. Wells, Victoria Earle Matthews, and Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin and situating it within the tradition of labor studies was an important and proper historiographic move, but Wilson is mindful that the research of these women also “targeted a variety of ills that beset black urban communities . . . and

were late nineteenth-century exemplars of what Elsa Barkley Brown has termed 'womanist consciousness,' in that their social activism was inextricably bound together in ideologies of sexual equality and racial uplift" (95).

The marginalization of women in labor studies and the social sciences continued through the Depression. Although many women did do research and authored important reports for social service organizations and federal agencies, they were "commissioned" reports, and the women researchers rarely received individual credit. Wilson pieces together a wonderful narrative from shards of evidence. She demonstrates that women were producing useful knowledge with the tools of social science, but not as professors in social science departments. Gertrude McDougald Ayer, Helen Brooks Irvin, Emma L. Shields Penn, and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander broke through barriers and became recognized as researchers or writers, but as Wilson reports, Black women social scientists did not get regularly appointed within the faculty of arts and sciences until the late 1930s.

Despite the fact that women scholars were not conducting social science on college campuses, Wilson does the hard work of uncovering and documenting the way many women were doing labor studies and conducting social science research at the Neighborhood Union, the YWCA, the Consumer League, and the Division of Negro Economics at the Department of Labor.

Wilson's careful analysis drew her to a somber conclusion that might help to explain the wicked legacy that has led to the paucity of Black women today who have reached the rank of full professor. "Unlike their black male counterparts," Wilson explains, "the double burden of gender and racial discrimination meant that the first black female social scientists were unable to work consistently as social scientists, and thus these women formed more of a cohort of individuals than a well-defined, self-conscious cadre of scholars" (175).

Like Evans, whose standpoint, approach, and perspective appear to be channeled directly from Mary McLeod Bethune, Wilson is sincerely impressed and moved by the quality and high standards of the scholarship of the segregated scholars. The quality, precision, and "absolute objectivity" (2) she admires in so many of the scholars who pioneered labor studies are reflected in her fine scholarship and stand as a lasting tribute to the men and women with whom she studied. She has held herself to their high standards.

Layli D. Phillips's *The Womanist Reader* is a watershed volume that names, claims, and gives voice to a quarter century of self-conscious and deliberate womanist research, theory, and praxis. It is the first attempt to anthologize the work that gave rise to womanist scholarship. Phillips maps the trajectory of contemporary womanist theory, and begins with Alice Walker's initial evocation. She also identifies that two other women should be considered "birth mothers" of this distinctive perspective and highlights Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi's conceptualization of African womanism and Clenora Hudson-Weems's articulation of Africana womanism. Phillips includes a wide range of authors and includes selections from such noted scholars as Elsa Barkley Brown, Geneva Smitherman, and Patricia Hill Collins to identify how a quarter century of scholarship has shaped womanism's present-day expression as a global, anti-oppressionist perspective rooted in the praxis of everyday women of color.

"The purpose" of the reader, Phillips states, is to "highlight and showcase womanism 'on its own' and to reveal its very infrastructure through direct exposure of the sites where it has been developed by thinkers who resonate and endorse it" (xli). As ambitious as the other two volumes' authors, Phillips did not have to contend with dusty manuscripts or dig up the original papers presented at Du Bois's Atlanta University conferences.

Although the period of Phillips's historical research was coterminous with the Internet, don't think for a moment it was easier. Unlike Evans and Wilson, most of the people Phillips writes about are still alive and active scholars.

Phillips has been on the leading edge of womanism for over a decade. I distinctly remember the March 30, 1994, issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in which Layli Phillips was prominently featured as an example of the new-generation scholar who offered a novel approach and new venues to publish critical scholarship on Black women. The headline read "the rise of black feminist thought," and I thought to myself it was a nice picture of her, but Black feminism was not exactly what Phillips was trying to advance with her innovative newsletter, *The Womanist*.

In the process of crafting *The Womanist Reader*, Phillips had a distinctive set of challenges and responsibilities, and she navigated and arbitrated an intellectual terrain loaded with deeply held convictions, ideological commitments, and partisan-like snarking to provide much-needed intellectual leadership as she tasked herself with defining and delimiting a field of enquiry, a social change perspective, and a distinctive epistemology—womanism. Some of her challenges included the way many people think they know what womanism means, have clear critiques of what they think it means, or don't care what it means and just practice it. The other challenge for Phillips was to clearly, cogently, and carefully explain that womanism is not Black feminism, and she uses the metaphor of a family to make the subtle but important distinction: "Black feminism and womanism have common cultural and historical origins. While they 'favor' each other, using the old country parlance to denote family resemblance, they are not, as some would argue, one and the same—even if they sometimes seem like twins. Each must be respected for what it contributes uniquely to the struggle for liberation from oppression and to full humanization" (xxxiv).

Phillips is sensitive to the fact that any anthology or "reader" is, by virtue of its form, a powerful mechanism of inclusion and exclusion and a selective process of disciplining and defining. The form itself created a challenge because it forces "the anthologist to sample from the universe of available material as fairly and representatively as possible" (xlvi). In short, choose who is in and who is out, and that selection process goes against the womanist ethic that strives to be inclusive. To meet this challenge, Phillips crafted a very careful and sensitive introduction that is bold and audacious while being gracious and accommodating to mean-spirited scholars who simply don't get it.

Phillips begins her introduction by addressing her biggest challenge: What is womanism? She explains it as "a social change perspective rooted in black women's and other women of color's everyday experiences and everyday methods of problem solving in everyday spaces, extended to the problem of ending all forms of oppression for all people, restoring the balance between people and the environment/nature, and reconciling human life with the spiritual dimension" (xx). She elaborates and explicates this pithy definition by explaining that people who approach womanism express it "intuitively rather than analytically. While some might view this as problematic, there are good reasons for it—reasons that only affirm the distinctiveness and incommensurability of womanism vis-à-vis other perspectives with which it might be confused or conflated" (xxi).

She elaborates how it's been misidentified and ill-defined by everyone and everything, ranging from the *American Heritage Dictionary* to *The Reader's Companion to U.S. Women's History*. One gets the impression that Layli Phillips feels compelled to set the record straight and is using this volume to do it, reminding the reader, however, that "womanism is a harmonizing and coordinating project, not an isolating and separating project"

(xxxii). She provides a useful outline of some of the important ethical elements embedded in the project, which include the way practitioners strive to be non-ideological, communitarian, spiritualized, and anti-oppressionist. It is also important to note that womanism is vernacular and identifies with the everyday. As Phillips expresses so convincingly, womanists “just act in the course of everyday life, and the nature of these actions varies widely from person to person” (xxv).

The volume is organized historically and thematically, and even includes a section on womanist critics. Phillips acknowledges that various authors contributed in different ways and in different forms, but adds that what quickly emerged was a “collective basis for an interpolated field of theory and praxis used by a host of people to follow” (xx). She is clear, however, that:

[N]one of these [early] authors created something new; rather each named something that had been in existence for some time, functioning below the academic and activist radar and outside dominant histories of consciousness. What is significant is that the time had come to name, and ultimately elaborate, this thing. (xx)

Both Evans's and Wilson's work demonstrate that Black women have been producing knowledge in the academy right alongside men, but Black women have also been producing knowledge outside the academy and have often been motivated by similar ethics and values that have been recently elaborated as womanism.

By giving voice to these scholars and properly contextualizing this scholarship, these three authors subtly shift the way we understand the place of academic knowledge in Black history, and we can begin to place it among other kinds of knowledge employed to transform, heal, fight, and provide succor in uncertain times. These authors demonstrate that academic knowledge should stay in the

ivory tower, but that it can also be taken out of the sterile, pompous, and limiting realm of intellectual history and learned men and placed alongside spirituality, music, prayer, magic, conjuring, poetry, folklore, and the polyphonic and polymorphic ways of knowing that have always been employed by diasporic communities—often with women in leadership roles.

Reviewed by Lee D. Baker
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Dub: Soundscapes and Shattered Songs in Jamaican Reggae

Michael E. Veal

**Middletown, CT: Wesleyan
University Press (2007)
338 pp., Paperback, \$27.95**

The task of documenting and conveying the significance of a genre's intramusical, musical, and extramusical qualities represents a primary site of inquiry for ethnomusicologists working in the realm of sound, music, and technology. Michael Veal's *Dub: Soundscapes and Shattered Songs in Jamaican Reggae* provides a much needed contribution to these efforts. Veal uncovers the influence of dub in Jamaica and abroad through his historical, analytical, and interpretive study. Through his description, readers are left with an understanding of the role of engineers, studios, technology, ideology, and aesthetics in the production of dub.

Dub music is a subgenre of Jamaican reggae and was a phenomenon that first developed during the roots reggae era between the late 1960s and early 1980s. Osbourne “King Tubby” Ruddock, Lee “Scratch” Perry, and Errol “Errol T.” Thompson pioneered the music that is characterized by a confluence of sounds that create the feeling of real and virtual

spaces. Sound engineers created this aural nebula using audiotape editing techniques, reverberation and delay technology, and other audio signal processors. Listeners typically hear these efforts as a mix of edited prerecorded instruments and voices with heavy echo and other electronic sound effects that all combine to make interesting moods, textures, and soundscapes. Unique practices in the production of dub were responsible for the music's distinction and were a result of Jamaica's dynamic historical and sociopolitical milieu surrounding the leadership of Michael Manley. In short time, the music became an international sensation. While many audiences were captivated by dub's lyrical messages that proclaim Rastafarian, Ethiopian, repatriation, and ganja sensibilities, recording studio engineers, particularly in England and the United States, began adopting many of dub's production practices for other types of popular music.

Veal enters his discussion in chapter 1 by both providing a brief history of Jamaican music that preceded dub and explaining electronic music through this frame. This necessary chapter properly fashions an understanding of the musical environment in which dub emerged. Veal's historicization of Jamaican music, in conjunction with this contextualized examination of electronic music makes the first chapter a very pointed and appropriate introduction to his work.

Chapter 2 continues the work of the first chapter by addressing more closely the economic, stylistic, and technological foundations of the genre. In particular, Veal asserts that the studio mix engineer is a composer who consciously incorporates texture and soundspace into the conceptual mix of Western musical terminology such as melody, rhythm, and harmony. For this reason, the author makes great strides in using an all-encompassing language that fully accommodates a discussion of the work of these mixers in the production of the music.

Veal dedicates much of the body of the book, from chapters 3–6, to an analysis of particular recording studios and sound engineers. While much of this writing reveals more history and equipment, the chapters prioritize the divergent styles of producing dub between different studios and sound engineers. Since no audio CD is attached to the book, the author provides a discography for the reader to obtain pertinent recordings in order to further an understanding of the intricate aesthetic choices that were made in these recording studios.

The seventh chapter explains the changes in dub at the end of the roots reggae era and how dub moved toward the digital age in the 1980s. Following this chapter, the author moves beyond the foundational considerations of the histories and for the production practices within dub toward a theorization of dub through the lens of particular postcolonial Caribbean and African diasporic tropes of exile, nostalgia, and Afrofuturism. Veal accomplishes this through his treatment of the dub mix as a microcosm for activities within Black culture. In the coda, through a comparison between dub and hip-hop, Veal demonstrates the dissemination of dub's many production practices throughout the international popular music scene. These last few chapters collectively symbolize the music's practical and theoretical movement out of its localized position in Jamaica.

The author's rigorous immersion into the world of dub—filled with detailed histories, people, technology, and politics—makes this book required reading for anyone interested in any or all of the topics he discusses. Arguably, one of the most powerful messages this work provides is yet another well-needed plea for the de-essentialization of the seemingly inextricable ties between Black music, rhythm, and primitivism within antiquated music discourse. From this perspective, not only does Veal present a music of high sophistication from Black people but one that has played an active role in setting new

standards for popular music production around the world.

Michael Veal's *Dub: Soundscapes and Shattered Songs in Jamaican Reggae* is a wonderful testament of the birth, life, and transcendence of a musical subgenre

as a dynamic cultural practice that has both influenced and been influenced by its local and global contexts.

Reviewed by Whitney Jesse Slaten
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Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society is a quarterly interdisciplinary journal sponsored by the Center for Contemporary Black History, a scholarly resource center of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University; it is published by Taylor & Francis. Established in January 1999, the journal maps the broad boundaries of scholarship and intellectual debates in the contemporary Black experience: the current studies in recent Black history, politics, socioeconomic research, social theory, and culture. Produced in the spirit of the intellectual activism of W. E. B. Du Bois, *Souls* presents creative and challenging interpretations of the key issues now being confronted by scholars of modern Black America, Africa, and the Caribbean. Under the editorial direction of Manning Marable, the journal brings together traditional scholars and representatives of public and private institutions, to engage in critical conversations about the meaning and reality of Black life in the United States and beyond.

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