

recognized as a necessity around the world, [but] it is no longer conceived as a civic project” (p. 11).

Rankin’s clearly written study underlines the importance of teachers, students, and educational considerations in driving technological growth and creativity. Some sections make links to the broader history of American education, but more thorough analysis of that context would have made the book even richer. It is fascinating to think about how spreading computer use might have connected to other 1960s/1970s educational questions and patterns, such as new classroom styles, different K-12 math approaches, and changes in high school and college curricula. The ending is also rather abrupt, with a passing mention of Apple’s entry into classroom computing. It would have been valuable to see deeper analysis of the interactions between corporate education campaigns, educators, and students. Nevertheless, Rankin succeeds beautifully in refocusing early computer history away from Cold War-driven military projects and Silicon Valley genius and toward a wider picture connecting social and educational computerization from New England to the Midwest and beyond. In recapturing the significance of education in computer development, Rankin offers an intriguing historical foundation from which to reflect on more recent trends and issues in computer education and technology in schools.

AMY SUE BIX
Iowa State University

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David A. Varel. *The Lost Black Scholar: Resurrecting Allison Davis in American Social Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. 304 pp.

In this well-researched and erudite intellectual biography of the largely forgotten twentieth-century African American scholar Allison Davis (1902-1983), David Varel argues that Davis’s intellectual contributions in anthropology, sociology, and education helped transform American scholarship on race and class. In doing so, the author rescues Davis from an obscurity caused by “his interdisciplinary involvement, his iconoclasm, and his status as a racial minority in a racist academy” (p. 4).

Varel's case for Davis's scholarly importance rests on several major interdisciplinary research projects that culminated in significant publications. Indeed, Davis played a key role in some of the most important studies of race and class in the mid-twentieth century. These include *Children of Bondage: Personality Development of Negro Youth in the Urban South* (1940), which Davis coauthored with social psychologist John Dollard, and *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (1941), which Davis coauthored with anthropologists Burleigh Gardner and Mary Gardner. Varel demonstrates that these two works were "theoretically pioneering, exploring the interconnections between culture, social structure, and personality development decades before other social scientists took this approach" (p. 1). In *Children of Bondage*, a study of black adolescents in Natchez, Mississippi, and New Orleans, according to Varel, Davis and Dollard argued that "caste [meaning race] and class intersect to fundamentally shape the lives and personalities of black adolescents in the Deep South, but class is more influential" (p. 120).

Deep South was based on two years of research in Natchez, Mississippi, by Davis and his wife, Elizabeth Davis, also a trained anthropologist, along with the Gardners and anthropologist St. Clair Drake. However, neither Elizabeth Davis nor Drake were credited as authors. The researchers employed the technique of participant observation, while also interviewing many local people and reading local newspapers and other primary sources. Varel writes that the *Deep South* authors concluded that "caste and class were the primary elements of Natchez's social organization but that caste was 'the fundamental division'" (p. 92).

In addition to his influential scholarship, Davis's professional career was also groundbreaking: he was the first African American to earn a tenure-track appointment at a historically white college in the United States. In 1942, after he completed his PhD in anthropology at the University of Chicago, that institution hired him to teach in the Department of Education. In order to minimize university opposition to the appointment, university president Robert Hutchins asked the Rosenwald Fund to subsidize Davis's salary. However, Hutchins's plan was sabotaged by "a white southern liberal named Edgar B. Stern" (p. 141), who served on the fund's trustee board. Stern, president of the board of directors of Dillard University, claimed that Davis's appointment was a dangerous challenge to segregation that would damage race relations. Given Stern's segregationist stance, Varel's characterization of Stern as a "liberal" is dubious. In any event, Hutchins and other progressive Rosenwald officials overrode Stern's opposition, and Davis joined the faculty. Historian Bruce Kuklick has argued that Davis's appointment, not to the Department

of Anthropology but to the Department of Education, was prompted by the “entrenched disciplinary racism within social science” (p. 144). Varel concedes this point, but argues persuasively that Davis’s appointment to “Chicago’s highly interdisciplinary Department of Education, was a logical outgrowth of his intellectual development” (p. 144). Indeed, as Varel points out, Davis’s interdisciplinary culture-and-personality research framework and his emphasis on understanding the process of learning made the field of education a good fit for him. Subsequently, Davis’s fine scholarship was rewarded, as he earned tenure within five years and, just one year later, was named a full professor.

After World War II, Davis’s research focused on the influence of social class on child-rearing, culminating with the publication of *Father of the Man* (1947), coauthored with Robert J. Havighurst, and *Intelligence and Cultural Differences* (1951), coauthored with Havighurst, Kenneth Eells, Virgil Herrick, and Ralph W. Tyler. In an era when many Americans accepted the notion of a “classless” nation, Davis “sharpen[ed] the distinctions between the classes. This allowed him, first, to document the existence of a stratified class system and, second, to humanize the people at the bottom of that system” (p. 171).

Davis’s work on intelligence testing was particularly influential, according to Varel, and resulted in two major publications. In *Social-Class Influences upon Learning* (1948), Davis synthesized much of his earlier research on the impact of social class and culture on children’s education and criticized psychologists for their simplistic understanding of intelligence. Moreover, he challenged the efficacy of intelligence tests based on their failure to account for cultural differences among test takers. Observing that cultural differences were largely determined by social class differences, Davis urged test makers to eliminate class biases in the tests. However, as Varel perceptively points out, “social class ... informs every aspect of people’s behavior, values, and motivations” (p. 185), so eliminating class bias was impossible. Consequently, Davis and his colleagues’ attempts at creating a nonbiased commercial intelligence test failed. Nonetheless, Davis’s work “initiated a far-reaching debate on issues of class bias, fairness, and ability” (p. 171).

Despite Davis’s academic successes, as Varel astutely notes, racism continued to circumscribe the opportunities and achievements of Davis and other black scholars. Varel explains that Davis’s “contributions were often subsumed under those of the white scholars with whom he typically coauthored his books and articles” (p. 149). Moreover, many of the first generation of black scholars who were hired at northern white universities were not accorded equal status with white scholars. Varel concludes by noting that “the best way to understand Allison Davis’s career is to view it as part of the larger black freedom struggle” (p. 220).

The Lost Black Scholar is an important contribution to our understanding of the history of twentieth-century social science in the United States. Varel does an excellent job in explaining the social and intellectual context for Davis's work. Occasionally, Varel's claims outpace his evidence. While Varel calls *Deep South* "an environmentalist project" (p. 106), the *Deep South* authors' environmentalism was not always consistent, as they sometimes considered race a biological, not a social or historical, construct. For example, the authors asserted that "some Negroes are *biologically* white [emphasis in the original]."¹ They also referred to a "Negroid genetic structure" and a "Caucasoid genetic structure."² Nonetheless, David Varel's biography, based on his thorough reading of Davis's publications and papers, as well as the published work and papers of Davis's peers, enhances our understanding of American and African American intellectual history and rightly "resurrects Allison Davis in American social thought and makes the case that he belongs within the pantheon of eminent twentieth-century American intellectuals" (p. 4).

JERRY GERSHENHORN
North Carolina Central University

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Joy Ann Williamson-Lott. *Jim Crow Campus: Higher Education and the Struggle for a New Southern Social Order*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2018. 176 pp.

In *Jim Crow Campus*, Joy Williamson-Lott reminds us that the history of southern higher education remains understudied. This book, which draws from a wealth of archival sources, is an important contribution to this field. Williamson-Lott rightfully points out that no comprehensive history of southern higher education exists, and she argues that the canon in this arena discusses northern and western institutions. From the outset, Williamson-Lott clearly states that her study is not by any means exhaustive, and the parameters of this work are clearly drawn in the introduction. I would posit that it provides an important set of

¹ Allison Davis, Burleigh B. Gardner, and Mary R. Gardner, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 8.

² Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, *Deep South*, 8.