

Fugitive Pedagogy

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Synopsis

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A fresh portrayal of one of the architects of the African American intellectual tradition, whose faith in the subversive power of education will inspire teachers and learners today.

Black education was a subversive act from its inception. African Americans pursued education through clandestine means, often in defiance of law and custom, even under threat of violence. They developed what Jarvis Givens calls a tradition of "fugitive pedagogy"—a theory and practice of Black education in America. The enslaved learned to read in spite of widespread prohibitions; newly emancipated people braved the dangers of integrating all-White schools and the hardships of building Black schools. Teachers developed covert instructional strategies, creative responses to the persistence of White opposition. From slavery through the Jim Crow era, Black people passed down this educational heritage. There is perhaps no better exemplar of this heritage than Carter G. Woodson—groundbreaking historian, founder of Black History Month, and legendary educator under Jim Crow. Givens shows that Woodson succeeded because of the world of Black teachers to which he belonged: Woodson's first teachers were his formerly enslaved uncles; he himself taught for nearly thirty years; and he spent his life partnering with educators to transform the lives of Black students.

Reader's comments

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