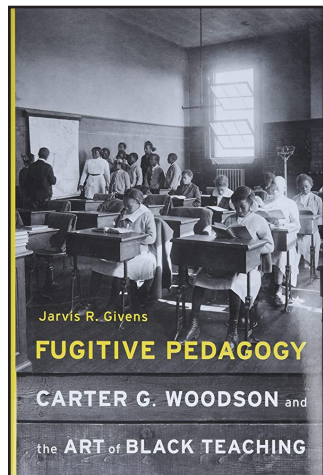


readers should not neglect early career faculty and researchers, who would also benefit from the activities and programs presented in the *Cookbook*. — *Andrea Malone, University of Houston*

Jarvis R. Givens. *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021. Hardcover, 320 p. \$36 ISBN 978-0-6749-8368-7

Dr. Carter Woodson relentlessly argued that Black intellect requireschutzpah. The famed



African American educator and maverick of Black diasporic heritage is finely depicted by Jarvis R. Givens in *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching*. Many in the library and information science field know of Dr. Woodson's contributions: his founding of Negro History Week, which evolved to Black History Month; his catalog of Black history publications, including his seminal work *The Miseducation of the Negro*; and his work to rally champions of African American interests through the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, or ASALH. Indeed, ASALH's Information Professionals special interest group evinces that archivists, librarians, and curators are important to advancing Black empowerment. Woodson's legacy continues to shape knowledge, memory, and information work.

Givens' invigorating and no-nonsense prose goes beyond merely recounting Woodson's superlatives. Neither does Givens analyze Woodson only in relation to the Booker T. Washington/W.E.B. DuBois technical-versus-applied epistemic divide, as is at times the case among Woodson scholars. Givens says he does not "wish add him as a third fountainhead of knowledge to the lingering Booker T. Washington-versus-W. E. B. DuBois binary (because despite scholarship that moves beyond this binary, it persists as a dominant paradigmatic framing in discourse, public and academic)" (16).

Instead, Givens etches Woodson's Black educational risk-taking, demonstrating how, as a tireless critic of white assimilationist indoctrination, Woodson occupied a place all his own. Rather than prescribing *what* Blacks should be taught, he decried white encroachment in any Black educational enterprise. Woodson protested oppressive funding schemes, infantilizing Black teacher training, white conformist curricula (especially textbooks), subpar facilities, and profound underestimation of Black genius and discovery. Using Woodson's same bravado, Givens brings renegade Black collective educational action to the fore.

I worried that *Fugitive Pedagogy* would not link Carter G. Woodson's educational pioneering to cognate fields such as librarianship. I was pleased, however, to find information work affirmed directly and indirectly throughout. In his acknowledgements, Givens testifies that "librarians and archivists are magicians" (296). Elsewhere, he describes Woodson's connections to library work: how much of Woodson's career is owed to Edward Christopher Williams, a former librarian; how Woodson established the first library at the historic Douglas High School in Washington, D.C., along with a Negro Makers in History traveling library; his comradery with bibliophiles like Arturo Schomburg, known for his voluminous Black diasporic collection, and Jesse Moorland, part-namesake and inspiration for the Howard University Springard-Moorland collection; and his clash with Howard University's President Durkee's efforts to censor library books with what were considered communist leanings. Libraries are central to Black freedom struggles. Givens recounts the role libraries played in John Lewis's

early civil rights activism: “Sixteen-year-old Lewis gathered his siblings and cousins to try to register for library cards at the Troy public library, even as they knew they would be turned away. The stories of Negro History Week started him on his path of ‘making good trouble’ toward social transformation” (207). These connections make *Fugitive Pedagogy* important reading for those in LIS who are familiar with radical Black library aspirations in the face of white supremacy. In our field these include the presence and suppression of HBCU library schools, the need for Black librarians to break away from ALA and form the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the courageous efforts of Black library workers who carved out paths to library access and librarianship, and those who defied U.S. Jim Crow apartheid by mounting library sit-ins.

Black miseducation, as expressed by Woodson and reiterated by Givens, implicates library and information science practice. Woodson called out various information-laden tools used to promote white aggrandizing propaganda—the “volumes written in praise of the conqueror [that] find their way to the homes and libraries of thousands of miseducated Negroes” (Woodson, 1936, 87)—and why those opposing Black educational liberation “have the idea that education is merely a process of imparting information” (Woodson, 1936, 17). Although *Fugitive Pedagogy* does not dignify today’s sensationalist, politically expedient anti-Black racist intellectual suppression, it helps us comprehend why many Black librarians embrace a grand, village-oriented assignment, and what racist/assimilationist professional norms look like—or what Hathcock calls “white librarianship in Black face” (2015).

Givens wastes no time delineating Woodson’s instructional and informational defiance. *Fugitive Pedagogy*’s opening line charges that “our language, when it comes to Black education is impoverished” (viii). This provocation prefaces Givens’s thesis on Woodson’s “fugitive spirit” in Black education. In chapter 1, Givens describes how Woodson inherited and refined the ideals of liberation and jubilee that was born of Black escape from racist enslavement. From enslaved people’s methods of “catching a lesson,” to freedmen’s schools, to the rise of hundreds of historically Black higher education institutions, Black education represents belligerent self-fashioning. Chapter 2 explains how Woodson defied institutional norms in founding ASALH, an organization that simultaneously eschewed white endorsement *and also* welcomed all types of members—teachers, librarians, and everyday citizens. In inviting a broader public, Woodson broke with both the Black and white educational rank-and-file.

In chapter 3, Givens describes where and with whom Woodson found fault: not with those who were uneducated, but those who were overeducated and misguided by white institutions and white pedagogy, especially African Americans. We cannot speak of Black miseducation without calling into question white, European, colonial, and imperial underpinnings of learning and belonging such that Black students all over the world are taught to “negate their own cultural and racialized identities” (98). This vein of learned inferiority is further unpacked in chapter 4, “The Fugitive Slave as a Folk Hero in the Black Curriculum.” To counter Black learners’ infantilization and subjugation, educators designed their own educational resources. Undoing anti-Black racist grooming necessitated flipping the epistemological order by historicizing Black rebels—Nat Brown, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, and others—as models of Black intellectual excellence. Chapter 5 likens Woodson’s commitment to Black educators to that of married enslaved couples who were forced to live separately. In other words, Woodson’s influence was so far reaching that thousands of teachers, most of whom he never met, felt stimulated, affirmed, and loved. Givens further characterizes Black educational unity in

chapter 6, centering the Black student as one who, like the teacher, strove to shed the anti-Black value systems that routinely minimized their capacities. Black students, too, openly reclaimed education for justice and freedom. Givens's conclusion proposes a direct and distinguishable correlation between Black teachers' subversive educational endeavors and the rise of Black studies scholarship. What we now acknowledge as the Black studies discipline can be traced to militant individual Black educators whose postures, networks, and lessons made way for an autonomous, pro-Black educational space.

Fugitive Pedagogy is a must-read for those discovering how white supremacist education enacts harm. It is also essential for those well-versed in non-dominant, specifically Black-centered intellectual traditions. *Fugitive Pedagogy* can shed light on why the LIS field still contends with long-standing white racialization. Widespread protests against Black ideas (e.g., the 1619 Project, critical race theory), the censorship of material in libraries of all types, and even the absence of Blacks in the publishing industry point to the very educational policing that Woodson disrupted. *Fugitive Pedagogy* will remain elastic in that it will inform what is certain to be future efforts to suppress unapologetically Afrocentric thinking. In this regard, Givens's book is as bold as it is compelling. — Ana Ndumu, University of Maryland

References

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