

R&PA

Rhetoric & Public Affairs

VOLUME 3 • NUMBER 2 • SUMMER 2000

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These essays are remarkably free of academic jargon. This is almost a necessity when contributors come from anthropology, biology, horticulture, social ecology, agronomy, linguistics, law, activism, and other areas. This makes the volume exceedingly accessible, but it may leave the reader wishing for theoretical elaborations of the rich descriptive material. Still, that may be an unavoidable tradeoff of interdisciplinary work. In the end, *Ethnoecology* serves as a rich resource, a snapshot of the state of the global commons at a moment of crisis for indigenous peoples (and all of us) that should be of particular interest to rhetorical scholars interested in international and environmental politics.

Kevin DeLuca

University of Georgia

The Color of Freedom: Race and Contemporary American Liberalism. By David Carroll Cochran. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999; pp. viii + 207. \$17.95.

H. Ford Douglas once stated that, "There can be no union between slavery and freedom." Simply put, equality is impossible while enslaved. These coordinates of slavery and freedom might appear to be polar extremes, but in fact, their borders are not so distant. The boundary between inferiority and equality, servitude and autonomy is one that tests the elasticity of liberalism and the fairness of American civil society, while calling our constitutional foundation, ethical mandate, and identities into question. David Carroll Cochran takes on the bold task of deconstructing American liberalism in an effort to reveal its existing moral fabric. This is truly a work of recovery. It is a treatise that intends to restore hope for the "color blind liberalism" paradigm as a strategy toward pragmatically and theoretically resolving racial conflict between blacks and whites in the United States. Rather than discard the concept of "color-blind liberalism" altogether, Cochran argues for its relevance and universality within the United States.

His approach has several strengths and limitations. In chapter one, Cochran audaciously suggests that "what we call liberal and conservative positions today are generally different interpretations of the same broad liberal tradition" (7). He further contends, "they (left and right) have both embraced the paradigm of color-blind liberalism in the last several decades, though they have done so in very different ways with very different policy implications" (8).

In chapter two, Cochran demonstrates the utility of color-blind liberalism as a strategy for race resolution by explaining how its ideological touchstones embrace individual autonomy as a core principle. His admission that color-blind liberalism is currently incomplete and inadequate is refreshing; he insists upon repairing it rather than replacing it with another paradigm. This is itself a commentary on liberalism—working within the confines of the existing structure to produce change.

In chapter three, there is an insightful exploration of private spheres that serve to threaten freedom and sustain oppression. Cochran discusses strategic points of liberalist thinking—discourses on autonomy, freedom, and public policy reform. He is particularly poignant in his remarks concerning methods of confronting race discrimination.

Chapter four is clearly a scholar's chapter. It literally chronicles the intellectual work of several political philosophers. It is obvious he enjoyed writing this chapter and it seems to be the most fluid. As a political scientist, Cochran is able to "show off" his expert understanding of liberal autonomy without taking many chances. This is perhaps the most well-written chapter.

Chapter five offers too much in too little space. Cochran introduces a discussion of the black family and black church as institutions, a discussion which continues into chapter six. This was not his forté and it shows. He begins a conversation on race that is quite provocative as he explores whiteness studies. Unfortunately, his analysis of whiteness, like much of his discussion on race, is prematurely completed. Cochran uses race as a signpost or descriptor of a social condition rather than a constructed identity. This limits the race analysis and treats this central episteme as mere apparatus.

Chapter six is dedicated to merging theory and practice.

The Color of Freedom: Race and Contemporary American Liberalism is well-organized and written in captivating, yet simple language so that even the advanced layman can understand. It is a volume in SUNY's book series in Afro-American studies. After having read the book, I must say I am impressed with the editors' (John Howard & Robert Smith) decision to include this book in such a series. Cochran's work distinguishes this Afro-American series from many others, primarily because of his approach, which blends contemporary political, legal, economic, and social theory with historical and anthropological scholarship to produce a most interesting pastiche. Rarely, in African American book series, do we deal with the merger between race and liberalism in such an incisive and philosophical manner. The contemporary examples that Cochran provides elucidate the principles for which he argues. The accent points include freedom, race, autonomy, civil society, moral character, and liberalism. This book could otherwise be titled, "The demands of race and American autonomy," though the present title sounds much more compelling.

Cochran's work also has limitations. Although he affords ample space for examining race (and even adds it to the book's title), Cochran's examination of it lacks sophistication. I must confess, as a critical theorist who studies whiteness and blackness in the United States, I tend to pay particular attention to how terms are defined. If they are unclear, then it foreshadows what I might expect to see in the book; it limits what can really be accomplished. Early in the text (in chapter one), the author struggles with the terms "race," "ethnicity," and "culture." He offers a solid explanation of culture; however, the subsection is entitled "Race," and as previously

mentioned, "race" also appears in the book's title. After claiming that African Americans are not "just another ethnic group" (11), the author concludes that "we cannot collapse race into ethnicity. It is a distinct social construct in the United States with its own meanings and significance" (11). What are the distinctions? How do racial groups "cut across ethnic lines" (11)? I found it difficult to understand what the author meant by multiculturalism when he placed race and ethnicity in the same paragraph and did not clearly distinguish the terms except to announce that they were different. This also became problematic as the author used the words "African American" and "Black" synonymously. Clearly, this interchangeability without explanation depoliticizes the terms.

The Color of Freedom is a challenging, but easy-to-read text that would be suitable for an advanced undergraduate or graduate level course. It is most accessible to political scientists and political philosophers. I am not sure a political activist or public policymaker would find it useful, with the exception of the last chapter. It is of little use to a rhetorician, unless it is adopted as a supplementary text in a contemporary political rhetoric and race course. I would not recommend it as a primary text for any course that is not principally concerned with race and political theory. Because it does not do a suitable job defining and discussing race, I would not recommend selecting it based primarily on its mention of race in the title. Let there be no mistake; this is a book designed for the contemporary political theorist secondarily interested in the intersection of race and freedom.

Ronald L. Jackson II

Penn State University

Subject: book review

Date: Wed, 09 Feb 2000 23:02:36 -0600

From: "Mary E. Stuckey" <psmes@olemiss.edu>

To: rlj6@psu.edu

Professor Jackson:

I wanted to let you know that your review is now in press and scheduled for publication. I will be sending you a copy of the issue in which it appears.

Thank you for reviewing for *Rhetoric and Public Affaris."

MES

Mary E. Stuckey
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
PO Box 1848
University of Mississippi
University, MS 38677
phone: 662-915-7415
fax: 662-915-7808