
Niambi Michele Carter. *American While Black: African Americans, Immigration, and the Limits of Citizenship*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, 296 pp. Hardcover \$120.00. Hardcover ISBN: 9780190053550. Paperback \$32.95. Paperback ISBN: 9780190053543.

Folks love origin stories. “We are all immigrants” is routinely carted out to explain our beginnings in the United States, for example. It is also just one of the many neoliberal fallacious arguments produced in the face of white supremacy. As scholars, critics, activists, and residents have long argued, in a colonial settler state that violently dispossessed indigenous peoples, then banked on a traumatic system that required the forced migration and labor of people of African descent for centuries, nothing could be more fictional than the United States as a land of immigrants (it’s really not a small world, after all). Political scientist Niambi Michele Carter’s latest book *American While Black: African Americans, Immigration, and the Limits of Citizenship* explores the long history of African Americans and their relationship to citizenship in the United States. “What does it mean to be black and American?” (136) invites us to engage in a critical and urgent dialogue on the ways in which Black people have historically viewed immigration. If the crux of white supremacy has been to historically pit communities of color against one another (Black vs. Mexican, Korean, Asian, etc.) in crucial areas such as voting, housing, education, and employment, Carter exquisitely unpacks these complexities. “My argument in this book is straightforward,” she writes, “I assert that blacks use the issue of immigration as a way to articulate their feelings about the failures of the nation-state to address *their* needs and incorporate them as full members of the citizenry” (23). This is not an anti-immigrant stance, but firmly an anti-white-supremacist one. Carter identifies this as a “conflicted nativism” for African Americans who seek survival in a country built on white supremacy.

Divided into five chapters, and organized thematically and partly chronologically, *American While Black* is narrative and empirical-driven, or as Carter writes “what black people say in order to make sense of empirical data” (6). The first chapter explores how “black experiences have informed their opinions on immigration” (6). Carter uses examples from W.E.B. Du Bois’ theory of “twoness,” that is to be Black and American, to the Montgomery Bus Boycott from 1955–1956, to the inter-racial violence in Los Angeles in the early 1990s. Chapter 2 unpacks what the scholar calls a “conflicted nativism.” Carter’s exploration of how Chinese laborers were brought into the Mississippi Delta region post-Reconstruction as a cheaper workforce, and to prevent African Americans from organizing for better working conditions and a living wage for all, is just one powerful example of this “deep ambivalence” toward immigration that recognizes how white supremacy and racial capitalism work. Chapter 3 illuminates the archives through an analysis of chapters of nineteenth-century US history. Carter examines the arguments of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, the Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision that deemed African Americans were not citizens of the United States, to the racist workings of the American Colonization Society that actively sought to expel Black people from the United States to the country that would eventually become known as Liberia. Chapter 4 uses collective memory through personal interviews or “everyday talks” to understand how the past is

present. Here Carter focuses on Jim Crow, redlining, and other forms of segregation in Durham, North Carolina. The final chapter brings together the scholar's empirical data to explore the arguments throughout the book.

American While Black delves deep into how race and citizenship are constructed in the United States, especially for people of African descent. In a country where white supremacy nurtures false narratives like the "good immigrant" in a veil of anti-Blackness, especially in a post-1965 Hart-Celler Act context that opened up the United States to non-European immigration, Carter's work has a necessary urgency to it. If assimilation, or a partial race to whiteness, is the key to the American Dream ("a nation of immigrants"), then Carter invites us to reconsider its cost. Her analysis that white supremacy "does not equate to white people," but a "system that favors white people," and "all of us can participate in perpetuating the system of white supremacy," is a warning to all communities of color. If we truly want to dismantle structural racism, we must confront how we got here and the debts owed to people of African descent. Carter's book is a welcome addition to a recent wave of work by scholars such as Leslie Alexander, Keisha N. Blain, and Martha S. Jones, that explores how Black people have understood their own position in the United States, especially in terms of citizenship. In the absence of the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) that guaranteed citizenship to anyone born in the United States, to the Fifteenth Amendment (1870) that gave the right to a US citizen to be able to vote, Black people have long pioneered rights for all, regardless of race, and ensured that this country live up to its democratic promise. Framed as the "beginning of a conversation rather than an ending" (7), Carter's work is a warm invitation to understand how newer immigrants of color (in my case, a South Asian British New Yorker) stand on the shoulders of Black people, to humanize African American responses to immigration, and to map out new modes (and recover older ones) of dismantling white supremacy.

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Michael R. Jin. *Citizens, Immigrants, and the Stateless: A Japanese American Diaspora in the Pacific*. Stanford University Press, 2021, 248 pp. Hardcover \$90.00. Hardcover ISBN: 9781503614901. Paperback \$30.00. Paperback ISBN: 9781503628311.

In the field of Japanese American history, most scholarship on the Nisei, the second generation Japanese American, have tended to study them as a minority community that lived out the rest of their lives in the United States. However, Michael R. Jin's *Citizens, Immigrants, and the Stateless: A Japanese American Diaspora in the Pacific* is a welcome departure that centers the lives of the Nisei who were born in the United States, migrated to Japan, returned to the United States, or whose situations led them elsewhere and back again—what he identifies as a "highly mobile transpacific diaspora." A historian in the program of Global Asian Studies at University of Illinois Chicago, Jin has written a book on diasporic Japanese Americans that contributes to the fields of history, Asian American