

A review of *The Making of Black Lives Matter: Lifespan Perspectives* edited by Halford H. Fairchild (Kingsway Camp, Delhi, Indo American Books, Oxford University Press, 2017. 319 pp., ISBN 93-82661-40-9) reviewed by Eric R. Jackson (Book Review Editor, *The Journal of Pan African Studies*; jacksoner@nku.edu) Professor, Department of History and Geography; Director – Black Studies Program; Northern Kentucky University and Heather Crabbe, (crabbeh1@nku.edu), Assistant Dean Chase College of Law Northern Kentucky University

Originated in the African American community, but currently functioning as a national and an international activist organization, the “Black Lives Matter” movement’s main objectives are to end racial violence and systemic racism against person of African descent. Additionally, the “Black Lives Matter” movement regularly sponsors community enrichment events, organizes protest activities, and speak-out affairs that focus on stopping the unnecessary murder of unarmed persons of color by police officers as well as other broader issues such as racial profiling, police brutality, and the inequality that permeates the criminal justice system of the United States. In 2013, after the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of African American teenage Trayvon Martin in February 2012, the movement began to use the hashtag “#Black Lives Matter” on social media, especially on Twitter. Quickly the “Black Lives Matter” movement became more nationally-known and intensified its local, regional, and national protests after the murder of two African Americans in 2014, Michael Brown, by Officer Darren Wilson of the Ferguson, Missouri Police Department, and Eric Garner, by Officer Daniel Pantaleo of the New York Police Department. In 2015, the “Black Lives Matter” movement became actively involved in the 2016 Presidential campaign, particularly on the Democratic Party side. The book under review here seeks to examine these topics as well as the various issues that confront persons of African descent, such as infant mortality, early childhood education, gangs and gang violence, police-community relations, higher education, healthcare, and elder care, which set the stage for the rise of the “Black Lives Matter” movement.

In *Black Lives Matter: Lifespan Perspectives* editor and scholar Halford H. Fairchild presents an stimulating volume of short articles, essays, and op-eds commentaries (some of which have been published previous in different forms and lengths), in six chapters, which provide an innovated pedagogy to engage the critical thinking skills of students from high school to college. Also crucial is the editor’s goal to help students become the producers of knowledge, not just consumers on the origins of the “Black Lives Matter” movement. Fairchild, a Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Black Studies at Pitzer College in Claremont, California, and former editor of *Psych Discourse: The Monthly Newsjournal of The Association of Black Psychologists*, contends in this volume’s focus is not only to inform the general public about the plight of persons of color from a Black Studies perspective, but also to provide “solutions to the problems confronting persons of African descent in the U.S. and around the world” (p. xl).

This volume contains six mostly unequally divided sections, with over thirty contributors, which range from graduate students to scholars to freelance writers to practitioners. Nevertheless, this volume is a unified and rich collection that captures many of the various disciplines within the field of African American/Black Studies, with

the first section, titled “Philosophical Origins, written by Fairchild, which lays the foundation for the rest of volume on the origins of the “Black Lives Matter” movement. In this section, the editor has short essays and articles, all written by himself, that mostly focuses on Black Psychology, specifically the articles titled “What is Africana Psychology,” “Black History, Black Psychology and the Future of the World,” and “A Constant State of Rage.” Within these pages, Fairchild contends that “Black Psychology seeks veridicality in research on Black people” (p. 6). More important, however, Fairchild concludes that the discipline of Black Psychology’s ultimate goal is to create “the “corrective medicine” to reverse the current power relationships that place members of one group in control of the earth’s material and human resources” (p. 19).

In the next two sections of the volume, titled “Birth and Infancy,” and “Childhood,” the editor includes articles and essays that discusses how many “Black Lives” are lost before birth and notes the various complex and harsh ways in which the environment that African American children are raised directly impacts their development for a lifetime. Specifically, a variety of highly-trained authors, who are mostly graduate students, such as Collin Blinder, Addison Calcagnini, Mylene Fotso, Shayn Jackson (no relation), Sonya Jendoubi, Marcus Polk, Candace Raymond, Omar Velazquez, Mylene Fotso, and Cameron Tyson, uses both quantity and qualitative research to examine the enormous racial disparities among American Americans and persons of African descent, in the areas of birth rate, infant mortality, and early childhood development, both inside and outside the United States. All of these writers conclude, “Black lives are often at greatest risk” during the first few years of these lives both in the United States and abroad (p 43).

The next two chapters, titled “Adolescence” and “Adulthood and Old Age” explores the unique challenges African American youth face daily as persons of color in the United States and the almost daily hardships, particularly in the area of health and healthcare, that Black American adults endure as they reach certain age milestones in our nation. Both areas are examined by a plethora of highly skilled scholars, students, and practitioners whose main goal is to inform the readers of the volume that to eliminate these problems, one must understand “the causes . . . in order to develop appropriate policies and interventions” (p. 266).

The last section, titled “On Making Black Lives Matter More,” as well as in the brief section titled “Reflections on Black Lives Matter,” which are perhaps the most potent parts of this volume, discusses some of the most important problems and highlights solutions to the issues that confront persons of African descent in the United States and abroad as well as how these issues led to the rise of the “Black Lives Matter” movement. Although each article, essay, and commentary is powerful in its own right, the article titled “A Luta Continua: A Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” written by the editor, is particularly intriguing. Here, Fairchild celebrates the great achievements of King, Jr. and the entire Civil Rights Movement. However, concludes that the struggle continues, especially in the areas of health, healthcare, education, and in the general state of African American life in the United States. But he also notes that these problems can be resolved with “a multifaceted approach to the re-structuring of our society” and “paint a portrait of what it is that we truly want,” which in some ways, set foundation for the rise of the “Black Lives Matter” movement (p. 284).

In general, Fairchild's *Black Lives Matter: Lifespan Perspectives* bring together a unique group of writers in the wonderful collection that will really help students, political leaders, and the general public understand the origin of the "Black Lives Matter" movement. Without question, this volume will engage students and adults alike on many levels. However, there are several shortcomings. The first is that many of the piece are uneven in their length, ranging from 2 to 12 pages. Second, the volume's focus on African Americans and not persons of African descent outside of the United States. Lastly, and perhaps more important, the volume loses its unification as it goes along and thus does not tightly tie the various articles, essays, op-ed pieces to the origin and development of the "Black Lives Matter" movement. Despite these limitations, however, this volume makes a great contribution to the growing literature on the "Black Lives Matter" movement.