



**WESTERN  
MICHIGAN**  
UNIVERSITY

The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

---

Volume 43  
Issue 3 September

Article 13

---

2016

**Review of *Black Male Violence In Perspective: Toward Afrocentric Intervention*. P. Tony Jackson. Reviewed by Husain Lateef.**

Husain Lateef  
Arizona State University, hlateef@asu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the Social Work Commons

---

**Recommended Citation**

Lateef, Husain (2016) "Review of *Black Male Violence In Perspective: Toward Afrocentric Intervention*. P. Tony Jackson. Reviewed by Husain Lateef.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 43 : Iss. 3 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol43/iss3/13>

This Book Review is brought to you by the Western Michigan University School of Social Work. For more information, please contact [wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu](mailto:wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu).



**WESTERN  
MICHIGAN**  
UNIVERSITY

was both engaging and overwhelming for one entering the academic world from a practice background. There was an evident theme throughout the book to encourage more research on communities that are not easily categorized into usual dichotomies. I gladly accept this invitation in my own work, focusing on non-binary life in experiences in the United States, not with a linguistic frame, but from a social work perspective.

*Sherri Shimansky, Arizona State University*

P. Tony Jackson, *Black Male Violence In Perspective: Toward Afrocentric Intervention*. Lexington Books (2015), 171 pages, \$80.00 (hardcover).

An accomplished clinical psychologist and professor at Skyline College, P. Tony Jackson provides readers with an understanding of the causal mechanism of black male violence and presents research findings that provide evidence for the promise of using Afrocentric models to address the issue of violence among young black men. Jackson describes the historical context of violence within the black community among largely black young men, and how American society historically has nurtured the violence both suffered and committed by black men, while at the same time openly condemning the very violence it has created.

The first chapter is an overview of the problem of black violence and the painful statistics that inform our understanding of the problem. Jackson begins with a description of how within the United States, the impact of violence within communities disproportionately impacts young black males who are both perpetrators and victims of violent crimes. The situation of black male incarceration rates has worsened with time, as U.S. funding priorities continue to focus on constructing prisons rather than funding intervention through social and mental health services.

In the following two chapters, Jackson addresses the historical roots of violence among African American youth, its link to a history of racism, and the role of media in perpetuating violence among African-American males. Violence among young black men, Jackson suggests, is a historical symptom of

enslavement for which America has yet to provide any form of reparation. During the era of American slavery, blacks were continuously victimized mentally, physically, and spiritually and were not provided with any means of retaliating or receiving protection from further assaults by white Americans. This paradigm of violence against the black community today continues to show its face, as when the cases of young men such as Oscar Grant and Michael Brown are recalled. The frustration and anguish of living under conditions in which your life can be taken without punishment, coupled with the negative influences that western stereotypes of black behavior perpetuate, continue to play a role in the internal and external manifestation of violence among young black males.

Chapters four and five provide more depth on the effects of violence and how it is intertwined with perceptions of powerlessness, oppressive institutions, micro-aggressions, and the exposure to community violence. Often with few constructive outlets to access within their communities, the “three-headed dragon” of frustration, depression and anger, manifests in detrimental ways for black male youth and their communities at large, leading to violent behavior.

Chapters six through eight provide the reader information on the historical evolution of violence prevention and innovative ideas that black communities and scholars are applying to prevent violence and to intervene on behalf of the young male population. Historically, programs designed to prevent violence have been developed to address the needs of white middle class populations. The effectiveness of using such programs to assist black male youth have been limited. However, black scholars are calling for the use of Afrocentric frameworks for the purpose of developing youth prevention programs, such as the Bakongo concept of Muntu. Afrocentric frameworks hold promise in potentially meeting the needs of black male youth which other models fail to address.

The final chapters of the book provide the results of Jackson’s brief Afrocentric group intervention on participant levels of frustration, tolerance, depression, and mediation of anger. While Jackson’s study did not demonstrate statistical significance quantitatively, qualitative results indicated potential reduction of depressive symptoms and a reduction in

anger among participants.

In many parts of the book, Jackson overemphasizes the psychological underpinnings of violent behavior and does not discuss the significant role that poverty plays as a barrier to meeting many of the psychological and social needs which aim to prevent violent behaviors. However, this book is excellent for anyone serious about gaining an in-depth understanding of the issue of black male violence. Social workers can benefit from this book in terms of understanding the problem of black-on-black violence among young black males in an effort to find pragmatic solutions.

*Husain Lateef, Arizona State University*

Heidi Hoechst, *Life In and Against the Odds: Debts of Freedom and the Speculative Roots of U.S. Culture*. Temple University Press (2015), 312 pages, \$30.00 (paperback).

In *Life in and Against the Odds*, Heidi Hoechst examines the growth and progression of speculative nationalism in the United States from pre-Revolutionary War to recent events. Speculative nationalism is explored as a mechanism for withholding freedom and perpetuating racial and gender division. Socioeconomic inequalities continue to grow between the few who are profiting and the majority who are left out, and Hoechst warns of the consequences of such enduring injustices to our collective liberation. Even against the backdrop of injustice, Hoechst provides moments of people going “against the odds” to signify how collective and individual efforts defied speculative nationalism. I appreciated and thoroughly enjoyed learning more about specific “against the odds” lived experiences, particularly the resistance from Native Americans and offspring of African Americans who reinvent their own dance and music.

Part one of the book focuses on land as a crucial point for early American nationalism. Fictional stories and the writings and career of Frederick Law Olmstead set the stage for the exploration of how land was used to convey speculative nationalism. The acquisition of land through violence and illegal means, as well as the examination of slave labor,