



Black France / France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness

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In *Black France / France Noire*, scholars, activists, and novelists from France and the United States address the untenable paradox at the heart of French society. France's constitutional and legal discourses do not recognize race as a meaningful category. Yet the lived realities of race and racism are ever-present in the nation's supposedly race-blind society. The vaunted universalist principles of the French Republic are far from realized. Any claim of color-blindness is belied by experiences of anti-black racism, which render blackness a real and consequential historical, social, and political formation. Contributors to this collection of essays demonstrate that blackness in France is less an identity than a response to and rejection of anti-black racism. *Black France / France Noire* is a distinctive and important contribution to the increasingly public debates on diversity, race, racialization, and multicultural intolerance in French society and beyond.

Contributors. Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga, Allison Blakely, Jennifer Anne Boittin, Marcus Bruce, Fred Constant, Mamadou Diouf, Arlette Frund, Michel Giraud, Bennetta Jules-Rosette, Trica Danielle Keaton, Jake Lamar, Patrick Lozès, Alain Mabankou, Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, Tyler Stovall, Christiane Taubira, Dominic Thomas, Gary Wilder

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Black France / France Noire* is the most comprehensive and urgent anthology regarding the questions of citizenship and belonging in France since Pierre Bourdieu's *The Weight of the World*. There's also a salutary combination of scholarly and personal narratives in this book, which elevates it to the stature of a groundbreaking manifesto, the controversial nature of which will be discussed for years to come."—**Manthia Diawara**, author of *African Film: New Forms of Aesthetics and Politics*

"*Black France / France Noire* is the most recent and best record of an ongoing and important international scholarly conversation on issues of color, race, ethnicity, exclusion, and belonging. With essays by both French and American scholars, the collection addresses some deeply challenging questions about how prejudice manifests itself in French life. Some of the French contributors are hesitant to employ ethnic categories, as is the case in the United States, as ways to speak of identity, justice, and injustice in French society. But most of them realize that to eliminate color prejudice in France they must talk about color. This collection is essential reading for scholars who study France, Europe, and the politics of racial discourse more broadly."—**Herman Lebovics**, author of *Imperialism and the Corruption of Democracies*

"Black skin may be officially invisible to France's government bureaucrats, statistics-gatherers, and devotees of French republicanism, but as a lived experience, blackness in France is very real. People of color routinely endure discrimination and find it difficult to gain full acceptance as French. Race matters in France, and the more that people talk and write about it, the more salient a social and political phenomenon race and racism in 'color-blind' France becomes. *Black France / France Noire* makes a major contribution by directly addressing experiences of blackness and anti-blackness in France."—**Edward Berenson**, author of *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa*

"In *Black France / France Noire*, leading thinkers and intellectuals raise challenging questions about how France's history of slavery and colonization, and immigration from its former colonies, are shaping the important, increasingly public discourse about blackness and racism."—**Valérie K. Orlando**, author of *Francophone Voices of the "New" Morocco in Film and Print: (Re)presenting a Society in Transition*

"This volume makes an important claim for the field of Black French studies as a bridge between constructions of Black identity in France to African American studies.... It is my hope that this particular approach will contribute to a deepening historical and cultural address to the complex implications of black Diasporic subjectivity."

(Peter J. Bloom *French History*)

"*Black France/France Noire* is a must read for any serious scholar of Black French Studies, or indeed, of Black European Studies. This text could also be successfully employed in undergraduate and graduate seminars."

(Julin Everett *Contemporary French Civilization*)

“*Black France / France Noire* offers a valuable snapshot of the vexed status of blackness in present-day France and illuminating historical genealogies for its reemergence and significance.”
(Alexander G. Weheliye *Black Scholar*)

“*Black France / France Noire: The History and Politics of Blackness*... uses a nuanced approach to discuss and problematize variously identified questions by relying on solid contributions from a diverse group of authors to form a well-rounded interpretation of race issues in France.... It offers an ideal introduction to complicated issues involved in formulating a black French identity. It skillfully combines theoretical analyses with personal narratives and historical accounts and represents a meaningful contribution to black French studies.”
(Yasmina Muthoki Martin *Africa Today*)

“The collection, as a whole, is dense but richly rewarding.... *Black France/France Noir* shows how the past has shaped present outcomes, debates, and difficulties in France but does not draw overly simplistic conclusions or too-easy morality stories. These features, along with the methodological richness of the collection, make it an important read for scholars of France, the French empire, and the black Atlantic. They also make it a strong candidate, almost mandatory reading, for any graduate seminar on modern France, the black Atlantic, or empire.”
(Rachel Anne Gillett *History: Reviews of New Books*)

About the Author

Trica Danielle Keaton is Associate Professor of African American and Diaspora Studies at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of *Muslim Girls and the Other France: Race, Identity Politics, and Social Exclusion* and a coeditor of *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*.

T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting is Gertrude Conaway Vanderbilt Distinguished Professor of French and of African American and Diaspora Studies at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of *Pimps Up, Ho's Down: Hip Hop's Hold on Young Black Women* and *Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French*, also published by Duke University Press.

Tyler Stovall is Professor of French history at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light* and a coeditor of *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France*, also published by Duke University Press.

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