

investment decisions and, thus, the nature of the anthracite cartel by 1902, when oil had been successfully established as an alternative fossil fuel to coal? The author observes that the “wide range of interacting decision-making, investment, and productive processes constituted the complex driving mechanism for the economic development of the Anthracite coal regions” (417). What does the data show with regard to interacting business decisions—and their timing—that resulted in eventual disinvestment by coal operators? Were such decisions evident as early as 1902? Healey notes that “in a market where the long-term trend was clearly upwards, the downside of an industry . . . was too often ignored,” suggesting that speculative gains overshadowed the real possibility of long-term loss (438). Moreover, he argues that “long term vision and strategic thinking had an important part to play” in business and regional economic development (441). It would be interesting to note what, if any, long-term vision and strategic thinking was evident in disinvestment decisions in the anthracite industry, especially as such decisions must have been present in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

*The Pennsylvania Anthracite Coal Industry* is not always an easy read, due, in large part, to its heavy reliance on technical business language. At times, frankly, the reader can get disoriented in technical jargon. The book, however, is a most significant addition to a growing body of literature on the Pennsylvania anthracite region, and it substantiates the claim that business decisions are central to regional economies. Moreover, it is the major contribution, to date, to the business history of the anthracite industry and adds another chapter to American industrial history.

*Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission* KENNETH C. WOLENSKY

*Black Philosopher, White Academy: The Career of William Fontaine.* By BRUCE KUKLICK. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008. 192 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography of the writings of William Fontaine, sources, index. \$30.)

Historian Bruce Kuklick's unsentimental account of the life of William Fontaine—the University of Pennsylvania's first African American philosophy professor—should be read by anyone intending to pursue a doctorate and teaching career in philosophy. It is a vivid, surprisingly gripping account (given the subject matter) of the life of someone who paid a price for *almost* making the big time in a lily white corner of the Ivy League.

Born in 1909, William Fontaine grew up in an ordinary family in Chester, Pennsylvania. He attended Lincoln University, a school near Philadelphia founded on the Princeton model, but with the aim of educating an elite corps of black

intellectuals to uplift the race and shepherd them back to Africa. Fontaine excelled in philosophy and Latin, wrote poems and stories, and graduated first in his class in 1930. He became Lincoln's first full-time black instructor, helping to educate African and African American leaders like Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and civil rights lawyer Robert Carter.

All of Fontaine's teachers at Lincoln were white men, just as they were at the University of Pennsylvania. Fontaine received both a master's degree and, after a summer studying at Harvard, a PhD in philosophy from Penn. Doctorate in hand, the twenty-six-year-old Fontaine accepted a job at Southern University, near Baton Rouge, in 1936. He flourished at Southern. Superb in the classroom, he taught Latin, philosophy, history, and innovative African American studies courses. After several years, accompanied by Belle, his pretty and nearly white wife, Fontaine returned to Philadelphia to a life of political activism, military service, and philosophy.

Fontaine served in the army during World War II. At war's end, he chaired the philosophy department at Morgan State, but he spent very little time there. Because he enjoyed auditing seminars at the University of Pennsylvania and managed to impress prominent liberal members of the Philosophy Department, something miraculous happened: Fontaine was hired onto Penn's standing faculty as an assistant professor. A black man teaching philosophy to white students at a major white research university was an occurrence that had never happened before.

The triumph was almost a tragedy. According to Kuklick, few in the academy were prepared to believe that a black man, even a brilliant one, could be a truly outstanding philosopher. Fontaine never received the respect from his university colleagues that he deserved. He earned less than his peers and was assigned a renovated closet as his office. According to Kuklick, few of Fontaine's philosophy publications were truly outstanding, perhaps because he tried to do the impossible. He wanted to live up to the standards of Alain Locke and W. E. B. Du Bois, who made lasting contributions to African American race studies; he also wanted to live up to the expectations of the best Anglo-American philosophers in the world—Nelson Goodman, C. L. Lewis, W. V. O. Quine, A. J. Ayers and the like—whom he counted as his friends and who were responsible for his job and membership in the once-selective American Philosophical Association.

With prodding, Fontaine managed to publish one book before his premature death from tuberculosis in 1969. His magnum opus about race, desegregation, and assimilation appeared at the height of the civil rights movement. Yet, the book was too obtuse for the general public, too old fashioned for young black intellectuals tired of being "Negros," and completely outside the spheres of concern of mainstream academic philosophy. The book was not reviewed or discussed in any scholarly journal until some forty years after its publication.

Kuklick does a remarkable job of situating Fontaine among the intellectual

movements of his day, from pragmatism to Pan-Africanism. In as much detail as the scant archival materials available allow, he describes exactly what Fontaine studied, what scholars he encountered, and what he wrote about. Reading this book, one learns not only about Fontaine's personal history, but about the institutions with which he interacted and the political events of his day.

Even though Fontaine as a person scarcely comes to life on Kuklick's pages, the profession to which Fontaine aspired is in full relief, warts and all. It is for this reason that anyone who plans to study philosophy should read this book. In general, we philosophers know too little about the people and forces that shape our careers and on whose shoulders we stand—or don't.

*University of Pennsylvania Law School*

ANITA L. ALLEN