

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I invite the reader to explore this first issue of *Spaces for Difference: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. An extraordinary group of young scholars has launched this online journal, which seeks to explore issues surrounding race, racism, gender, sexuality, and social activism—not as discrete phenomena but as intersecting, overlapping, and mutually affecting fields of experience. The scholars run across the full range of the social sciences and humanities in their disciplinary backgrounds and theoretical orientations. Some are activists as well as scholars. *Spaces for Difference* invites others to share their work and enter what the editors hope will be a growing conversation that may change the academy.

They are off to a good start: this first issue is sure to provoke conversation. In “Initiating a Culturally-Responsive Discourse of Same-Sex Attraction Among African American Males,” Emery Petchauer, Mark Yarhouse, and Louis Gallien show the inadequacy of mainstream White gay discourses and call for a more appropriate explanatory framework for African American same-sex attraction. Using hip-hop as an interpretive lens, they then lay out the beginnings of what such an alternative framework might look like.

The several authors (Nicelma King, Ella Madsen, Marc Braverman, Carole Paterson, and Antronette Yancey) of “Career Decision-Making: Perspectives of Low-Income Urban Youth” shows convincing evidence that minority and low-income youth are much less likely than White or higher-income young people to believe that they will be able to achieve success educationally and professionally. They then call on policymakers and human resource professionals to do a better job of delivering good information and encouragement to minority and low-income youth.

Katherine Sweeney, in “Contact and the Continuum of White Women’s Racial Awareness,” reports on interviews with White women in interracial marriages and the wide range of their awareness of and responses to their own racial privilege. She offers little support for the comfortable old assumption that being in an interracial marriage necessarily enhances one’s ability to see racial issues clearly and act against racism.

In “Dehumanization of the Black American Female: An American/Hawaiian Experience,” Kimetta Hairston unveils ugly discrimination in a place some people have mistaken to be a racial paradise: Hawai‘i. Based on both personal experience and interviews, she begins an exploration of the ways that the American system of racialization has been laid over colonial hierarchies to make for a sometimes

explosive, often disheartening social situation for people of color, especially African Americans in the islands.

Each of these articles, in its own way, calls on the reader not only to understand a difficult problem but also to act to do something about that problem. *Spaces for Difference* offers a venue for scholars, seasoned and new, to expose their research and ideas to critical reading by an informed, engaged audience. It connects the disciplines one with another around a common set of core issues, and also asks both scholars and audience to consider meaningful social action. What is more, it stands a good chance of helping shape the coming generation's understanding of several matters that are of utmost importance.

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