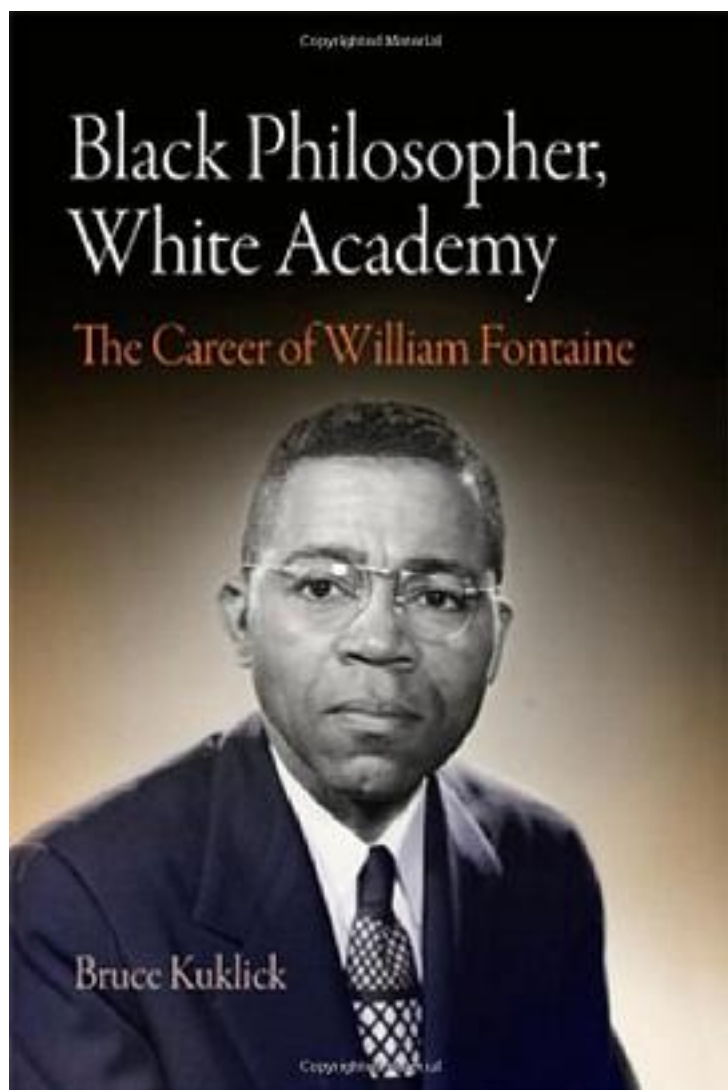


Black Philosopher, White Academy



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At a time when almost all African American college students attended black colleges, philosopher William Fontaine was the only black member of the University of Pennsylvania faculty-and quite possibly the only black member of any faculty in the Ivy League. Little is known about Fontaine, but his predicament was common to African American professionals and intellectuals at a critical time in the history of civil rights and race relations in the United States. *Black Philosopher, White Academy* is at once a biographical sketch of a man caught up in the issues and the dilemmas of race in the middle of the last century; a portrait of a salient aspect of academic life then; and an intellectual history of a period in African American life and letters, the discipline of philosophy, and the American academy. It is also a meditation on the sources available to a practicing historian and, frustratingly, the sources that are not. Bruce Kuklick stays close to the slim packet of evidence left on Fontaine's life and career but also strains against its limitations to extract the largest possible insights into the life of the elusive Fontaine.

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