

Authors: Anthony P Carnevale, Peter Schmidt and Jeff Strohl, The New Press 2020.

The new book, *The Merit Myth: How our colleges favor the rich and divide America* has many strengths. Among its strengths are: • The deconstruction of the official 'meritocratic' story of their education system that Americans like to tell themselves; • Its succinct explanation of how racism undercuts and continues to hobble black and Latino students from even reaching university education; • The explanation of how the wealthy buy their children's way into elite schools like Harvard; • Showing how, in the name of 'merit', state governments lavishly fund flagship universities like the University of California at Berkeley instead of the open access state universities and community colleges that educate the vast majority of Americans who go on to post-secondary education; and • How supposedly objective admissions tests, such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), fail to predict success even as they limit access to upper tier universities such as Columbia or Princeton, which require high SAT scores. (F: N. Greenfield, UWN 30.05.20)