

“DOUBLE EDGED SWORD”

By David C. Williams

(Book Review)

Book Review by; IUniverse Publishers Staff

A Writer's-Showcase Review

[www.iuniverse.com](http://www.iuniverse.com) IUniverse writer's showcase book review.

Point system Review rated on five sections, 10 points per section.

IUniverse review for this book, “Double Edged Sword” totals-46 points of 50.

Basics- 10 points. Strong concept, the concept or story line is clear, well defined and established early in the book.

Comments: The opening sentence establishes that the first-person narrator has achieved the “goals of his dreams.” This knowledge about the narrator is important because it lets us know that the narrator is ultimately successful, allowing the reader, therefore, to concentrate on the more intellectual content of this coming-of-age novel. The novel focuses on a black neighborhood, simply called “the hood,” and is both similar, yet different from such established works as Anne Moody's *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land*, and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

Williams begins his novel during the narrator's-Jason Phillips'-high school years, establishing the characteristics of his young friends (and some who are not so friendly), and we see both his and their development so that later in life, he will be able to call upon them for help and guidance.

Organization and Flow- 10 points.

Story line ideas are presented in a logical, sequential order.

Comments: The organization of this book is determined by the subject matter and the naturally emerging chronology; thus one scene naturally flows into the following one. Williams begins with an early and dramatic, strong realization about the betrayal of his education by both white and black adults. This insight leads him to speak of racial prejudice to his intelligent and understanding mother, who becomes a guiding principle in his life. What follows are subsequent, chronological scenes dealing with further high school episodes and his graduation with honor, winning a scholarship to a prestigious business college, and his eventual decision to return to work bettering the entire neighborhood.

Audience Appeal- 8 points.

For intelligent and sensitive readers, this book will be a riveting revelation about the difficulty for any person who belongs to a minority when the main character, a black man, achieves success in a world dominated by white businessmen.

Tone/Writing Style- 10 points.

Tone/Writing Style is strong and clear.

Comments: First, the writer possesses a full and extensive vocabulary, which is used effectively, but never intrudes upon the narrative style. Second, in conversational passages, he superbly captures the essence and full flavor of the rich and vibrant black dialect. He can easily use straight narrative prose in his descriptive passages, and then, just as easily, shift into the jargon of "the hood" when portraying the scenes among the young black men, playing basketball, planning a party, or playing the dozens, and other games typical of "the hood." When he discovers that his high school texts have been "tampered with," he describes his intellectual betrayal metaphorically: "It was a rude awakening for me to find that I was in a game where even the umpires had hidden agendas." He worries that by the time he finishes the game of education with people who deal from the bottom of the deck, they might have "changed the locks on the doors." For many writers, authentic conversation is extremely difficult to replicate, but Williams captures the essence of easy communication between teenagers, especially in places where there is friction or the possibility of violence.

Mechanics- 8 points.

Comments: The author's writing is so outstanding and straightforward. In such scenes as the bus ride to college and the main character's first experience in a hick Alabama small town, the author's style is masterful and rings powerfully. The event becomes one of the memorable scenes of the novel. I was literally holding my breath during the entire scene.

Observations & General Comments.

What was Williams' purpose in writing this work?

Is it a work of fiction?

Are we to assume that it is autobiography or his memoir?

Double Edged Sword can seemingly fit into any of these categories. If Williams' purpose is to incense the reader with injustice, he easily achieves that goal since I cannot conceive of an intelligent reader who would not respond powerfully and with indignation to the scenes in Alabama, where the innocent young scholar from Memphis is exposed to the worse sort of radical racist—who would easily have killed him had he not made his dramatic escape from a store (a bar) filled with other racists who also hated an intelligent black person. This young man falls prey to the same type of harassment that has been typical of the black man's plight since the first blacks arrived in America .

Richard Wright's *Black Boy* records similar types of events. When the main character, Jason, meets a white student who is in the same grade in another school, and after comparing notes, they discover that Jason has the exact book as the white student had last year-in fact, it even has the white student's name written inside the book-Jason realizes that the black school is exactly one year behind the white school. Thus, white boys' books are passed down, second-hand, to blacks. It is a searing, painful insight. Something similar occurs when Jason's mother explains racism to her son. This should be an important lesson to white mothers who have never had to face explaining racial hatred to their sons. Jason's mother is presented as a wise and tolerant woman whose love and concern for her son does not cloud her knowledge that without some restraint on Jason's temper, he is in danger in a "white man's world." Jason readily learns why he has never seen a white person in his part of town, and he learns the meaning of segregation. Without sinking to overt propaganda throughout the work, Williams continues to exhibit a good balance between condemning racism as an evil, and yet he remains opposed without resorting to violence. Williams shares Martin Luther King, Jr's non-violent approach to racial violence. Williams' work is well balanced, narrated in an excellent style, and the reader's interest is sustained from beginning to end. And even though the final pages are rather didactic in nature, this book should take its place among the significant writings about racial relations beginning in the 1960's.

"DOUBLE EDGED SWORD"

Author-David C. Williams

Book Title -"Double Edged Sword"

General Fiction,

Purchase Info: [www.iUniverse.com](http://www.iUniverse.com)

"DOUBLE EDGED SWORD" By David C. Williams, Writer (Book Review)

Book Review by; The Urban Book Source

Reviewed by: Cherri Millard [www.theurbanbooksource.com](http://www.theurbanbooksource.com)

The Urban Book Source review rating system.

Best review rates= 5 Stars

Reviewer Cherri Millard rates Double Edged Sword 3½ stars

Review: Get introduced to Jason Philips, a young, conscious, African-American male who embarks on a mission to restore the village-like community he once knew-before he went off to college-to its original state during the 1960's.

In the beginning Jason seems to be a good kid who is serious about his education and has the utmost respect for his mother; he puts trust in his friends and takes the wisdom and advice he receives from the "old heads" in the community.

After a brief run-in with Jeff, a white boy the same age as himself, he finds out that he hasn't been exposed to much, as far as worldly knowledge is concerned.

After a quick review of the text books Jeff is carrying with him, it's evident that Jason's education has been neglected. With a smack back into reality on education, Jason becomes concerned with his learning and sets out to learn and absorb everything he can get his hands on.

In order to advance himself, he isolates himself and sees less of his buddies in order to devote time to his studies and build a foundation to understand many things. With this new attitude and outlook, he obtains a full scholarship for college. Just before he goes off to school, he is honored for serving as captain on the debate team and is asked to speak on behalf of his high school at his graduation. On the very first day of his departure for college, Jason gets into an unlikely situation in a local town full of racist white folks that puts his scholarship in jeopardy. When Jason arrives back to his hometown, he finds everything he once was proud of in shambles, with rampant drug use along with dilapidated housing conditions and several other issues. What brings about this sudden change is a new drug that is purposely placed into the African-American communities called "crack." The drug rapidly spreads throughout the town, destroying everything in its path. Jason plans to restore the state of his community; his plan is extensive, organized, and does not involve any violence. All that is involved is

overthrowing the individuals responsible for the conditions of the population. Jason recruits some of his childhood buddies to help him with his plan.

David C. Williams creates a solid fictional tale in which he injects tons of morals and values. He isn't afraid to tackle the racial issues that are evident in the United States. Subliminal messages are scattered all over the plot, referencing how conglomerates control and monopolizes everything not nailed down to the ground. The writing is crisp and clear with little to very few errors. The usage of old dialect places you right into the 1960's. The characters are somewhat underdeveloped, while they are all positive images.

Comments & Observations: What did you like best about this book? – The story was filled with morals, values, and messages. It's not often you witness non-violent problem-solving and I appreciated that author David C. Williams used this method in his book.

What did you dislike about this book? – Some of the preparations that the main character went through, before going on his mission of restoring the community, were not believable within the inner-city setting; the dialogue was choppy in some instances; the characters used the word "brother" in the dialogue extensively throughout the book.

"DOUBLE EDGED SWORD"

Author-David C. Williams

Book Title -"Double Edged Sword"

General Fiction,

Purchase Info: [www.iUniverse.com](http://www.iUniverse.com)