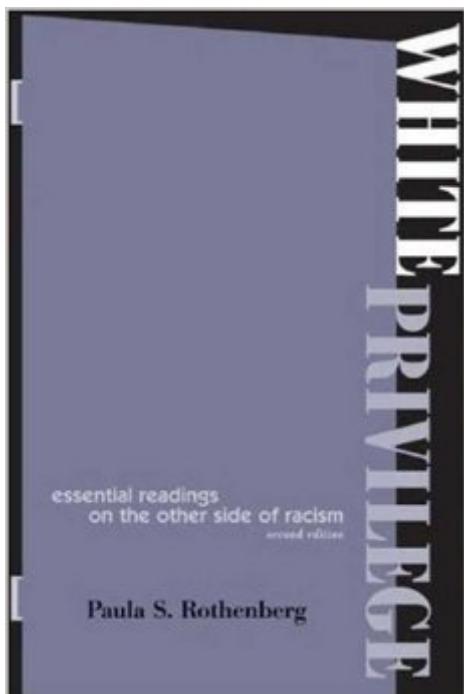


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White Privilege: Essential Readings On The Other Side Of Racism



Synopsis

Studies of racism often focus on its devastating effects on the victims of prejudice. But no discussion of race is complete without exploring the other side--the ways in which some people or groups actually benefit, deliberately or inadvertently, from racial bias. *White Privilege, Second Edition*, the revision to the ground-breaking anthology from Paula Rothenberg, continues her efforts from the first edition. Two new essays contribute to the discussion of the nature and history of white power. The concluding section again challenges readers to explore ideas for using the power and the concept of white privilege to help combat racism in their own lives. Brief, inexpensive, and easily integrated with other texts, this interdisciplinary collection of commonsense, non-rhetorical readings lets educators incorporate discussions of whiteness and white privilege into a variety of disciplines, including sociology, English composition, psychology, social work, women's studies, political science, and American studies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Picture a soldier. Picture a doctor. Picture a taxpaying American. Were any of these images black people? Probably not...even if you are black yourself. In our society the presumption is that people are white unless they are specifically raced otherwise. This presumption of whiteness as "the norm" and everyone else as "the other" - and the immense societal costs of this presumption - is at the heart of this collection, explored in 16 accessible readings designed to allow educators at different levels to initiate conversations about whiteness and white privilege in courses in many disciplines.

It's divided into four sections, each with discussion questions: The Power of Invisibility exposes the hidden power of whiteness, and the advantages it provides to whites as a group without them ever having realized, much less acknowledged, that such advantages exist. The Power of the Past traces how and why the definition of "whiteness" has evolved and changed over the years. For example, there was a time when the Irish, Jews and Eastern Europeans (among others) were not considered white. "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness" demonstrates that long after slavery ended, public policy (even that supposedly designed to help minorities, like Urban Renewal) has systematically and adversely effected African Americans' ability to amass net worth, enhancing the rewards of past discrimination. Meanwhile, when white people start to feel disadvantaged or inconvenienced, they blame "affirmative action.

I'm finding it difficult to write just a good or a bad review on Paula Rothenberg's White Privilege. The reason being- there are only so many ways to say that the concept of "white privilege" exists and that white people are benefiting from it. In short, this book is made up of a collection of essays Rothenberg saw as well-suited to approach the notion of white privilege. It is divided up into four parts, each with its own theme. Part one, titled "Whiteness: The Power of Invisibility", discusses how many white people aren't aware of the privilege they have, but also don't want to come to terms with it. The book essentially works as a funnel, first explaining the matters of "whiteness" and "white privilege", and then delving further into the power behind such privilege, and how to combat it (addressed in part four- "Whiteness: The Power of Resistance"). After reading the few chapters that made up Part one, I found myself in a strange position; I was interested in the material, yet I was falling asleep while reading it. Was I tired? No, I was fine 10 minutes ago. Am I bored? Possibly. I quickly discovered that it was because I felt I was reading the same material over and over again. Thirty pages in and I already knew what the rest of the book would entail; more essays about how "whiteness" has been glorified throughout history and as a result, those who identify as "white" have been benefiting greatly in society. Though I agreed with much of the text in the essays I was presented with, I couldn't help but feel bored; I knew I could walk away from the book and not feel like I was missing out on anything.

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