

SOME READILY AVAILABLE RESOURCES REGARDING RACISM IN AMERICA WITH ANNOTATION

Bill Drake, Creating Communities Beyond Bias – Dec. 2016 (v5/18)

Initially prepared for the Unitarian Universalist Community of the Mountains, Grass Valley, CA
(Notes: There are countless resources for the following subjects. Below are a few that I recommend. The subject headings and annotations should make it easy for people to find what they are drawn to study. The main focus of most of this material is on racism and black Americans. White privilege, of course, imparts privileges to whites at the detriment of *all* non-whites. *In my opinion, among the most important resources for white people are the ones on white privilege by Feagin, Jensen, Kendall, Rosenberg, and Wise. A good starting point could be Kendall's book Understanding White Privilege.*)

BOOKS

THE BLACK EXPERIENCE AND RACISM IN AMERICA – PAST/PRESENT

See the sub-section “Black History – Overview”

(We have to understand the history of racism in America in order to understand the current racial tensions. With that being said, it is probably not possible for us white people to totally “grok” what it is like to be a person of color in America, in the face of prejudice and systemic racism. At least resources like the following can provide an inkling.)

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow*. New York: The New Press, 2012. 300 pages. An important book about the mass incarceration of black (and Hispanic) men, in many cases for low-level non-violent drug crimes. This institutionalized system destroys black men's (mostly) lives and devastates black communities. The book clearly shows how the “war on drugs,” going back to the Reagan and Clinton eras, created this unjust phenomena and how people with racist views welcomed this new way to oppress blacks after the modern day Civil Rights era made important gains in the 1960s. *It is essential that Americans learn about this unjust system and work to turn it around.* (Obama was able to take some steps to reduce this prison population, but the indications are that the Trump administration will increase it.)

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. New York: Vintage Books, 1962-1991. 128 pages. This very powerful essay conveys the pain of the black experience in white America. It was written decades ago but still has a ring of truth.

Ellis, Catherine, and Stephen Drury Smith, eds. *Say It Loud!: Great Speeches on Civil Rights and African American Identity*. New York: The New Press, 2010. 300 pages. Speeches by 23 African Americans including Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Bobby Seale, Colin Powell, and Barack Obama. Includes a CD with twenty two of the speeches. This is a companion book to another of the editors' compilations: *Say it Plain, a Century of Great African American Speeches* (New York: The New Press, 2005, 254 pages), “a vivid, moving portrait of black Americans sounding the charge against racial injustice, and exhorting the country to live up to its democratic principles.” It has speeches by 23 black leaders, including Booker T. Washington, Stokely Carmichael, Martin Luther King, and others.

Drake, Bill. *Almost Hereditary: A White Southerner's Journey Out of Racism, A Guide to Unlearning and Healing Prejudice*. Nevada City: Almost Hereditary Press, 2015 (revised ed.). Part 1, Chapters 1 and 2 (Ch. 1-2: 75 pages). These chapters provide an overview of slavery in the 1800s, racist attitudes of Southern whites, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Jim Crow era. Some of the descriptions of slavery are intense (excerpts from the diary of a slave plantation owner, my great-great-grandmother, are interspersed with excerpts from interviews of former slaves). Regarding the Jim Crow era, it is my experience that many people today don't have a real clue of what life was like for blacks and other minority families and how pervasive this system of oppression was. These chapters give a sense of the depth of the Southern experience – *for whites and blacks* (during slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow) – and why the history of the South affects Southern blacks and whites today, while also pointing to racism in the north. (*This book is also listed under "Healing Racism."*)

Feagin, Joe. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*. New York: Routledge, 2014, 3rd ed. Chapters 1, 2, and 3 (Ch. 1-3: 100 pages). These chapters offer a concise overview of the evolution of racial oppression in America, going back to the framing of the U.S. Constitution. (*See a detailed description of this book under "White Privilege and Systemic/Institutional Racism."*)

Griffin, John Howard. *Black Like Me*. 3rd ed. New York: New American Library, 1977. 200 pages. In 1959 white writer John Griffin voluntarily underwent a pigment change that allowed him to pass for a black person in the deep South. This powerful book had a big impact on me. It is based on the journal Griffin kept, details his experiences in Louisiana and Mississippi. As well as making the experience of racism "real," the book shows how destructive it is for the human personality. Still has relevancy today.

Wright, Richard. 1937. "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow: An Autobiographical Sketch." In *The Best American Essays of the Century*. Joyce Carol Oates, ed., 159-170. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000. Wright describes the painful experiences that taught him to appear subservient to whites in order to survive. This essay is also in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, Gates and McKay, eds.

THE BLACK EXPERIENCE AND RACISM IN AMERICA – PRESENT

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2015. 150 pages. A book version of Coates' letter to his son, which discusses what it means to be black in America and the precautions he needs to take for his own safety. An intense and moving book by a national correspondent to *The Atlantic*. "Americans have built an empire on the idea of race, a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men – bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?"

Deerricotte, Toi. *The Black Notebooks: An Interior Journey*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997. 205 pages. A book by a black woman with light skin, who could pass for being white. "...An intimate record of the author's encounters...where she is forced to question what it means to be a black woman living in a racially divided world. ...A meditation about the complexity of race in this country, and a glimpse into the soul of a courageous woman. It is also a book about uncovering the denied and shameful aspects of the self, and the author's journey toward self-acceptance."

Fox, Helen. *Fractured: Race Relations in "Post-Racial" American Life*. New York: Peter Lang, 2015, 181 pages. "What do you think is meant by the term 'post-racial' and how far do you think we've come, as a country, toward achieving it?" Helen Fox, a white teacher and scholar, asked variations of this question to 87 high school and college students, educators, administrators, community organizers, international visitors, and tribal leaders across the country. Their stories reveal how far we are from a 'post-racial' ideal – even in the most liberal of communities. Despite her long experience as an anti-racist educator, Fox was surprised to learn how deeply the lives of people of color continue to be shaped by race, and how hard they have to work to ignore or overcome assumptions, remarks, exclusion, and at times, blatant hostility from whites."

Harrington, Walt. *Crossing: A White Man's Journey Into Black America*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992. 450 pages. Harrington, a white newspaper reporter who is married to a black woman, travels across America to interview black people, sometimes about delicate racial issues, to understand the "black experience" in our country. "He finds...a wildly divergent nation of people who are more like him and less like him than he could ever have known. Rich, provocative, and utterly absorbing, *Crossing* speaks about race in America today as it cuts across geography, age, occupation, and income."

Lowery, Wesley. *They Can't Kill Us All: Ferguson, Baltimore, and a New Era in America's Racial Justice Movement*. New York: Little, Brown, 2016. 236 pages. The author, a Washington Post report shares his experiences covering some of the recent deaths of black people at the hands of police. Much of the book's focus revolves around conversations and interviews with activists and family members of blacks who have been killed. A personal, "on-the-ground," look at the painful loss of black lives.

HEALING RACISM – IN OURSELVES AND SOCIETY

Drake, Bill. *Almost Hereditary: A White Southerner's Journey Out of Racism, A Guide to Unlearning and Healing Prejudice*. Nevada City: Almost Hereditary Press, 2015 (revised ed.). Part III, "Understanding and Healing Prejudice" (Part III: 86 pages). This section is designed to help individuals work on their own prejudices and be better able to break down barriers between themselves and others. It also looks at some of the psychology behind prejudice. Jeremy Taylor, who trains Unitarian ministers, expressed the view that the greatest factor in oppression in America is us white liberals suppressing our own racism and projecting it onto others ("those racists"). In my opinion, one of the most important things we can do is to become more aware of our prejudices and racism. This makes us more honest in being an ally for the oppressed and in confronting prejudice in others and in our world. (*This book is also listed under "The Black Experience and Racism in America – Past/ Present."*)

Kivel, Paul. *Uprooting Racism: How White People can Work for Racial Justice*. 3rd ed. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society, 2011, 350 pages. Looks at the role white people can play in creating racial equality while offering strategies and guidelines. Discusses what it means to be white, the dynamics of racism, being an ally for oppressed people, and fighting institutional racism. Exercises help readers explore their relationship to these subjects.

RACISM AND RACE IN GENERAL

James, Judith and Nancy Peterson. *White Women Getting Real about Racism*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2013. 170 pages. Essays by several white teachers about their experiences, and what they learned, from teaching in multi-cultural classrooms.

Wise, Tim. *Affirmative Action: Racial Preference in Black and White*. New York: Routledge, 2005. 200 pages. Examines arguments for and against affirmative action and makes an excellent case in favor of it. As he points out, the question should not be “Should there be affirmative action?” but rather, “Should there be white privilege?”

Wise, Tim. *Colorblind, The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equality*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2010. 215 pages. Wise points out how being “colorblind” (denying blacks their experience of living in America as oppressed people, and seeing everyone as the same) perpetuates racism.

WHITE PRIVILEGE AND SYSTEMIC/INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

(The vast majority of white people in America do not have a clue about either systemic racism or white privilege. Regarding *systemic racism*, many whites don't believe there is significant discrimination in employment, housing, health care, education, politics, the legal/justice system, etc., and don't see how the present challenges for blacks relate to the past, or how poverty relates to racism. Many whites believe that the lack of advancement by blacks [and other people of color] is their own fault, because they should be able to get ahead by hard work just like “us.” *White privilege* is so pervasive, like the air we breathe, that most white people don't even notice it. There are several other reasons it appears to be invisible to whites, including the fact that the degree and type of white privileges that is enjoyed vary by things like class/socio-economic group, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and religion. There can also be the false belief by white people that they worked hard and earned everything they achieved without getting any help from something called white privilege. They resent recent “affirmative action” programs for minorities even though whites have essentially had affirmative action for centuries. As well, many whites don't want to believe that they have benefited at the expense of non-whites and that they have some degree of racism. It has been suggested that a significant factor in oppression is the phenomena whereby us white liberals repress our own racism and “project” it onto others. The vast majority, if not all, white people enjoy some degree of white privilege. It is essential that those of us who are white, and are concerned about racism, develop an understanding of it. As anti-racist Tim Wise has pointed out, we are not responsible for creating the systems of white privilege and systemic racism in America, *but we can take responsibility for changing them.*)

Battalora, Jacqueline. *Birth of a White Nation: The Invention of White People and its Relevance Today*. Houston: Strategic Book Publishing, 2013. 110 pages. A book by a lawyer and professor of sociology and criminal justice. She examines why and how the concept of “white people” came into being, and how the creation of this distinction divided laborers to the benefit of the elite. She also looks at how US law and policy were used to institutionalize positions of power for whites.

Feagin, Joe. *Racist America: Roots, Current Realities, and Future Reparations*. New York: Routledge, 2014, 3rd ed. 320 pages plus notes. “The most comprehensive, concise, and useful textbook on systemic racism in the United States.” “It provides a comprehensive history of racism and a dynamic survey of contemporary issues.” “Takes a hard look at the schizophrenic worlds we live in regarding race....Through the use of historical analysis and current sociological research, Feagin develops a ‘white frame’ that decodes contemporary racist practices. A modern day Rosetta Stone for understanding why and how racial inequality is maintained and reproduced.” *This scholarly, important, and thoroughly documented book meticulously and clearly presents how America is, and came to be, a racist country. It goes into more depth than other books in regards to systemic racism.* The chapters focus on a comprehensive perspective of systemic racism, slavery – the historical development of systemic racism, everyday practice of racial oppression today, institutions and racial oppression today, white privilege, and antiracist strategies and solutions (which, unfortunately, do not include day-to-day strategies to implement). The author, a professor of sociology, has researched racism and sexism issues for decades. His research team has interviewed, in depth, over 500 black Americans and over 300 white Americans. He has written 63 scholarly books, one of which was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, and over 200 scholarly articles. This is a textbook, so it is a little expensive for a paperback: \$40. Although it is dense with facts, and, - perhaps out of necessity - considerably repetitious, it is very readable by the general public. (*This book is also listed under “The Black Experience and Racism in America – Past/Present.”*)

Jensen, Robert. *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism, and White Privilege*. San Francisco: City Light, 2005. 95 pages. This small book is intended to help white people become aware of white privilege. It makes the case that America is a white supremacist country. This is a powerful little book that intends to be educational as well as a call to action. He writes, “It is possible to not be racist (in the individual sense of not perpetuating overtly racist acts) and yet at the same time fail to be antiracist (in the political sense of resisting a racist system). Being not-racist is not enough.” (A point of disagreement with the author: He writes [p.xvii] about his belief that “we white people should sometimes hate ourselves for what we do, or don’t do” [re: racism]. In my view the ideal is to accept parts of ourselves we don’t like, as we try to love ourselves as we are, while *also* working to transform what we don’t like.)

Kendall, Frances E. *Understanding White Privilege: Creating Pathways to Authentic Relationships Across Race*. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2012, 2nd ed. 160 pages. Very good book on this important topic. Discusses: why it is important for whites to explore white privilege, what it means to be white, understanding white privilege, what to do about white privilege, and being an ally for non-white people. This second edition sells for about \$34, whereas the first edition (2006) can be found used for as little as fifty cents. Only 2 chapters (ten pages) have been added to the 2nd edition, although the book would obviously be a little more current. The first edition is excellent (as the 2nd edition would be) and is probably sufficient considering the cost difference.

Roithmayr, Daria. *Reproducing Racism: How Everyday Choices Lock in White America*. New York: New York University Press, 2014. 200 pages. Roithmayr “shows how ‘racial cartels’ like the Jim Crow system gave white Americans a now self-reinforcing and permanent economic advantage in life. Critically, she shows how today’s ostensibly race-neutral processes of family inheritance, social network ties, and institutional practices and meritocratic standards made racial inequality automatic.” “...Roithmayr, argues that racial inequality lives on because white advantage functions as a powerful self-reinforcing monopoly, reproducing itself automatically from generation to generation even in the absence of intentional discrimination.” “This book is designed to change how we think about racial inequality.” Unfortunately, the book is a little academic and much too repetitive in nature. In spite of that, it is very readable and, although it discusses a number of economic and sociological theories, Roithmayr makes them easy to understand. The author, a law professor, has an important perspective on the self-perpetuating nature of white privilege (one that is also shared by Joe Feagin in *Racist America*). The subtitle is misleading, as the book does not focus so much on our everyday choices. The book is well documented with end notes.

Rothenberg, Paula S. *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*. 4th ed. New York: Worth Publishers, 2012. 165 pages. An important book by a consultant who specializes in issues of diversity, social justice, and white privilege. It has 19 articles by a variety of writers, divided into four parts: Whiteness: The Power of Invisibility, Whiteness: The Power of the Past, Whiteness: The Power of Privilege, and Whiteness: The Power of Resistance. The book includes Peggy McIntosh’s classic article, “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” in which she lists her benefits as a white person. Includes questions for discussion and reflection. (This edition can be bought used on Amazon. A 5th edition [2015] is now available, but it is priced at about \$45 and 19 of its 25 articles can be found in the 4th edition.)

Wise, Tim. *White Like Me, Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son*. 3rd ed. New York: Soft Skull Press, 2011. 208 pages. Tim Wise is probably the foremost white anti-racist in the U.S. today. In this edition, unlike the first two, he tells his story of privilege chronologically, from the beginning. This book, which is filled with insight, is an excellent exploration of, and introduction to, the problem of white privilege. A number of his speeches can be found on YouTube (see “Webb Resources” below).

WHITES’ EXPERIENCE OF PAIN REGARDING RACIAL INEQUALITY

Haskell, Caroline T., and Ann Todd Jealous, eds. *Combined Destinies: Whites Sharing Grief about Racism*. Sterling, VA: Potomac Books, 2013. 224 pages. Includes stories by 53 white people who have come to question white privilege. Some stories relate to whites who grew up with black servants with whom they had loving relationships but were not allowed to experience as equals. Has chapters that address such issues as shame, guilt, and being silent in the face of racism. Encourages the reader to reflect on experiences in light of white privilege. A premise of the book is that healing takes place in our society when hearts as well as minds open.

TO BETTER APPRECIATE BLACK CONTRIBUTIONS TO AMERICA

(You can also study black music and other things related to black contributions to our country.)

BLACK HISTORY - OVERVIEW

Gates, Henry Louis Jr. *Life Upon These Shores: Looking at African American History, 1513-2008*. New York: Knopf, 2011. 512 pages. This large book is an excellent overview of the subject by a renowned scholar.

BLACK LITERATURE

Gates, Henry Louis Jr., and Nellie Y. McKay, eds. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. 2nd ed. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2003. 2,700 pages. An excellent volume of black literature.

Marable, Manning, and Leith Mullins, eds. *Let Nobody Turn us Around: An African American Anthology; Voices of Resistance, Reform, and Renewal*, 2nd ed. New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009. 640 pages. An excellent collection of writings.

A FEW WEB RESOURCES

PREJUDICE IN AMERICA

Sawyer, Diane, host. *True Colors*. ABC Primetime, September 26, 1991.

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YyL5EcAwB9c>;

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOS3BBmUxvs>.

Seventeen-minute film giving a disturbing demonstration of the racism black people experience in America. Two well dressed men, one black and one white, independently approach the same places for employment, housing, a car purchase, etc, while a hidden camera and microphone records their interactions. Although this was filmed in 1991, it is still relevant today.

“I, Too, Am B-CC (High School)”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KpKEFEpHms>

A powerful 6 minute video created by minority students at a high school in Maryland. It demonstrates the biases they experience at their school. Inspired by the video “I, Too, Am Harvard.” 2015.

“I, Too, Am Harvard”

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIsd5gDuEBGIKLSa_vcJFlg

A profound play with about 20 short presentations (4-5 min. each) by minority Harvard students, which describes the biases they experience at their university. 2014.

SYSTEMIC RACISM

“7 Ways We Know Systemic Racism is Real”

<http://www.benjerry.com/whats-new/systemic-racism-is-real>

Ben and Jerry, of Ben’s and Jerry’s ice cream, have put a page on their website that gives an overview of systemic racism in America, with links to background material. It looks at: wealth, employment, education, criminal justice, housing, surveillance, and health care. This is a great overview. It does have some weaknesses. For example, in the section on “Wealth” their description of “wealth” of women of color is in the context of racism but ignores sexism and other variables. They share a brief video at the end of the page: “We Must Talk About Race to Fix Economic Equality” (presented by Demos and MoveOn.org). The video makes some good points but, in the beginning, tends to stereotype all “conservatives.” Otherwise, this is a very valuable resource.

WHITE PRIVILEGE

Wise, Tim. “The Pathology of White Privilege: Racism, White Denial, & the Costs of Inequality.” Mt. Holyoke College, Massachusetts, October 2007. 58 min. Videotape of speech. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOB_ix10--I. This is a powerful presentation about the nature of white privilege by the country’s foremost white anti-racist.

DOCUMENTARIES

13th by Ava Duvernay (13th Amendment and continued racism; a documentary on Netflix; racism today is part of a long history of racism in America)

MOVIES; DOCUMENTARIES

There have been quite a few movies in recent years that have dealt with racism. Here are a few of them:

42 (baseball player Jackie Robinson)

All the Way (Pres. L. B. Johnson, M. L. King, and, among other things, the Civil Rights Act of 1965)

Beloved (slavery)

The Butler (overview of modern Civil Rights era)

The Help (the Jim Crow South)

The Hurricane (framing the boxer Hurricane Ruben Carter for murder)

I Am Not Your Negro (the words of James Baldwin)

Loving (about an interracial couple and their 1967 Supreme Court case that resulted in the ruling that invalidated state laws forbidding interracial marriage)

Race (Olympic champion Jessie Owens)

Selma (the 1965 Selma to Montgomery, Alabama voting rights marches)

Twelve Years a Slave (slavery)

X (Malcolm X)

A LIST OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON LINE THAT THE ANN ARBOR FRIENDS (QUAKERS) HAS UTILIZED – from Sandy Kewman 9/1/15

“Ten Things Everyone Should Know About Race” (a single web page to read) http://www.pbs.org/race/000_About/002_04-background-01-x.htm

“A Long History of Affirmative Action – For Whites” (a single web page to read) <http://newsreel.org/guides/race/whiteadv.htm>

"White People" a film by Jose Antonio Vargas (an excellent 41 min. documentary; “what’s it like to be white” – interviews of white people, shows that whites’ views of affirmative action are not justified, etc.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zjj1PmJcRM

"America after Ferguson" (a series of short features you select to read/view individually related to Ferguson, race, etc.)

<http://www.pbs.org/specials/town-hall/america-after-ferguson/home/>

"What's race got to do with it?" (a 6 min. film on social disparities and student success)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-Q9Ue3slCY>

The Danger of a single Story by Chiamanda Ngozi Adichie, award-winning author (19 min. Ted Talk presentation by a black woman from Africa who talks about being type-cast due to stereotypes about Africa)

http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

Bryan Stevenson, attorney and author of Just Mercy participating in a round table conversation at Stanford in January, 2016 (Race and the criminal justice system – 1 hour 45 minutes)

<http://livestream.com/accounts/7425500/events/4578391>

Confronting Racism a discussion from the Evangelical Lutheran Church (42 min.)

[http://www.bing.com/videos/search?](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=bill+horne+and+evangelical+lutheran+bishop+webcast&view=detail&mid=A608A1CBCAD5245E02B8A608A1CBCAD5245E02B8&FORM=VIRE1)

[q=bill+horne+and+evangelical+lutheran+bishop+webcast&view=detail&mid=A608A1CBCAD5245E02B8A608A1CBCAD5245E02B8&FORM=VIRE1](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=bill+horne+and+evangelical+lutheran+bishop+webcast&view=detail&mid=A608A1CBCAD5245E02B8A608A1CBCAD5245E02B8&FORM=VIRE1)

Unequal Opportunity Race by African American Policy Forum (structural discrimination – the unequal opportunity race – 4 min. video)

[http://www.bing.com/videos/search?](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=animation+about+white+privilege&view=detail&mid=FCACB4E19024FBB5C4BDFCACB4E19024FBB5C4BD&FORM=VIRE8)

[q=animation+about+white+privilege&view=detail&mid=FCACB4E19024FBB5C4BDFCACB4E19024FBB5C4BD&FORM=VIRE8](http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=animation+about+white+privilege&view=detail&mid=FCACB4E19024FBB5C4BDFCACB4E19024FBB5C4BD&FORM=VIRE8)