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Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to Be White

David R. Roediger

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In this thought-provoking volume, David R. Roediger has brought together some of the most important black writers throughout history to explore the question: What does it really mean to be white in America?

From folktales and slave narratives to contemporary essays, poetry, and fiction, black writers have long been among America's keenest students of white consciousness and white behavior, but until now much of this writing has been ignored. **Black on White** reverses this trend by presenting the work of more than fifty major figures, including James Baldwin, Derrick Bell, Ralph Ellison, W.E.B. Du Bois, bell hooks, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker to take a closer look at the many meanings of whiteness in our society.

Rich in irony, artistry, passion, and common sense, these reflections on what Langston Hughes called "the ways of white folks" illustrate how whiteness as a racial identity derives its meaning not as a biological category but as a social construct designed to uphold racial inequality. Powerful and compelling, Black on White provides a much-needed perspective that is sure to have a major impact on the study of race and race relations in America.

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