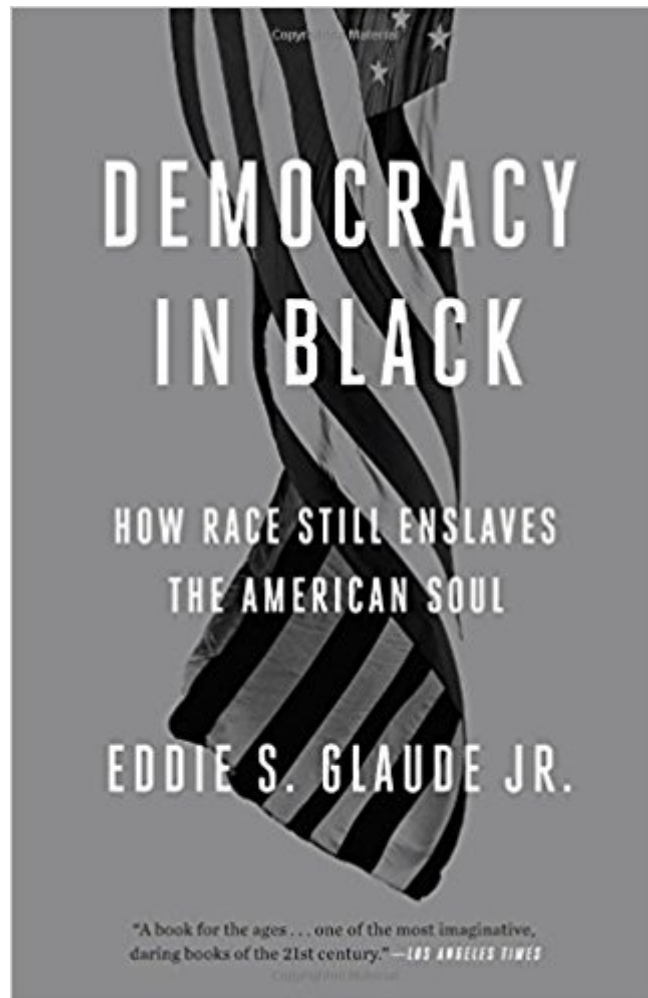




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# Democracy In Black: How Race Still Enslaves The American Soul



## Synopsis

A powerful polemic on the state of black America that savages the idea of a post-racial society. “America’s great promise of equality has always rung hollow in the ears of African Americans. But today the situation has grown even more dire. From the murders of black youth by the police, to the dismantling of the Voting Rights Act, to the disaster visited upon poor and middle-class black families by the Great Recession, it is clear that black America faces an emergency—at the very moment the election of the first black president has prompted many to believe we’ve solved America’s race problem.” Democracy in Black is Eddie S. Glaude Jr.’s impassioned response. Part manifesto, part history, part memoir, it argues that we live in a country founded on a “value gap” with white lives valued more than others—that still distorts our politics today. Whether discussing why all Americans have racial habits that reinforce inequality, why black politics based on the civil-rights era have reached a dead end, or why only remaking democracy from the ground up can bring real change, Glaude crystallizes the untenable position of black America—and offers thoughts on a better way forward. Forceful in ideas and unsettling in its candor, Democracy In Black is a landmark book on race in America, one that promises to spark wide discussion as we move toward the end of our first black presidency.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Eddie Glaude speaks some hard truths in this important new book. Glaude is the fiercest of

thinkers, and this book is a brilliant and crucial prescription for necessary change.

• Henry Louis Gates Jr. "This powerful and timely book should shape the framework for a post-Obama America • a bold rejection of black liberal politics and a prophetic call for a revolution of value that reinvigorates our democratic life with imagination and courage.

• Cornel West "Democracy in Black tells necessary truths about the state of race and justice in America and challenges us to embrace genuinely -- not merely rhetorically -- the revolution of values preached by Dr. King.

• Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow* "Eddie Glaude has written a book that challenges and demands as well as one that informs and inspires. This is a very important book, I am better for having read it and even more motivated in my work and mission.

U.S. Senator Cory Booker "Eloquent and impassioned, insightful and factual, *Democracy in Black* powerfully reimagines black politics and presents strategies for remaking American democracy.

• Nell Irvin Painter, Edwards Professor of American History, Emerita, Princeton University and author of *The History of White People* "Democracy in Black is an urgent, clear-eyed manifesto. It proves not only that Black Lives Matter, but Black social movements matter if the nation ever hopes to lift the veil of racism and long shadow of slavery.

• Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* "Eddie Glaude writes compellingly of the collective moral and intellectual failures locking Americans into a repetitive "human value gap.

• This book documents why and how race remains our ultimate, even dedicated, civic irrationality.

• Patricia J. Williams, author of *Seeing a Color-blind Future* "Democracy in Black tells a powerful story about democracy in action in the streets of Ferguson. People should read it and be transformed by Eddie Glaude's call for a revolution of values. I hope it is read widely.

• James H. Cone, Union Theological Seminary "Democracy in Black puts a Toni Morrison question to a nation "between worlds: "Wanna fly? Listen up: "You got to give up the shit that weighs you down. Easier said than done. Read all about it. I did. Now I'm thinking about it all.

• Robert P. Moses, President, The Algebra Project, Inc. "He proves his point cogently | with more than enough documentation to move the argument along this new and painful track | This is every bit as important a book as Coates's more personal account: essential reading.

--Booklist "A book for the ages...one of the most imaginative, daring books of the 21st century" --Los Angeles Times

EDDIE S. GLAUDE JR. is a professor at Princeton University, teaching in the religion department and the Department of African American Studies. From the Hardcover edition.

This book resonated with me on so many levels. The first being I'm not crazy/out of touch - someone else share my thoughts (a scholar even). The author, Glaude, unfolds masterfully the true condition of Black Americans in America; he pulls no punches. This book is so informative. I found myself reading this book every chance I got. The author's verbiage/break down of the "value gap" - how some men and women are valued less than others because of the color of their skin - and how this gap is infused in our so called "democratic" system, as well as "racial habits" (things we do to sustain this gap) could be considered the theme of this book. This value gap informs all decisions - employment, educ, housing, and policy etc. To quote the author, "black America has experienced and is experiencing a depression more like the symptoms of a national congenital disease than the flu." The author illuminates how we like to think of our nation as the chosen moral nation ("shining city on the hill" Ronald Reagan) and how our collective active forgetting/dismembering determines the kind of story we tell ourselves. We tend to forget all the hypocrisy this country was built on as well as how much of Black history dealt with waging a relentless war against white supremacy. The book reports on heart wrenching personal stories of the effect on the foreclosure crisis that hit African Americans (AA) more than anyone else - not only monetarily but also mentally - entire family breakdowns and more than likely will be broke down for generations not to mention how we're raising our children with the belief that their lives don't matter. The author breaks down and compares the traditional/liberal with the conservative AA politician and how they pretty much all go through lip service with no real change occurring in the AA community - not even attempting to close the value gap. Standing by silently as this economic devastation swallowed black America. Our President is not excused from these list of politicians - AA have suffered tremendously on Obama's watch. I wholeheartedly agree that changing policies and addressing structural racism are the first steps toward undoing our racial habits. Initiatives such as "My Brothers Keeper" are Pie in the sky programs. So called black leaders/TV

pundits/organizations are also called out and reflected on in a very real way from Rev Al to DeRay Mckesson; again, the author pulls no punches. Some of the facts the book reveals about these individuals and the "racial theatre" they go through will leave your mouth open. Information on the young leaders of today (including DeRay and Netta) that I'm so proud of, and their so called confrontive (I call highly effective) tactics as well as current movements such as #BLACKLIVESMATTER are reported on. I really appreciated all the real and meaningful quotes from MLK (ones you never hear), James Baldwin and DuBois. "The value gap is in our national DNA."

Professor Eddie Glaude Jr., of Princeton comes out firing on all cylinders in this book. He really has his pulse on the race situation that continues to plague America and has come up with some thoughts that I'm sure will become part of the prescript of any discussions concerning race. One such idea is the "value gap", which Eddie describes as, "... (the belief that white people are valued more than others) and racial habits (the things we do, without thinking, that sustain the value gap) undergird racial inequality, and how white and black fears block the way to racial justice in this country." "We talk about the achievement gap in education or the wealth gap between white Americans and other groups, but the value gap reflects something more basic: that no matter our stated principles or how much progress we think we've made, white people are valued more than others in this country, and that fact continues to shape the life chances of millions of Americans. The value gap is in our national DNA." This is an interesting new angle in which to view the issue of racism, i.e., white supremacy. When you frame white supremacy in those terms, there certainly isn't much to argue with there. Clearly white people and white lives are valued more than others in America. In support of this "value gap" theory he quotes from Dr. King, "that in this country the idea of racial equality remains 'a loose expression for improvement.'" And by the way his understanding of Dr. King is superb, many try to lock King into a dream state, but if you listen to and read King from 1967 to the time of his assassination, you would think of him as a totally different person than the I have a dream King. And the radical King is rarely mentioned or praised in print, public or schools. Eddie is unafraid to raise the radical King, though I'm not of the belief that courage is needed in doing this, truth is truth. There is a chapter in the book titled Restless Sleep After King's Dream. I digress. But here is what the author is attempting to convey in this book, "Most Americans see inequality and the racial habits that give it life as aberrations, ways we fail to live up to the idea of America. But we're wrong. Inequality and racial habits are part of the American Idea. They are not just a symptom of bad, racist

people who fail to live up to pristine ideals. We are, in the end, what we do." Is that not correct? We all have heard the arguments of reverse racism, I'm not a racist, Black people need to take responsibility, etc. etc. Eddie does a fantastic take down of these rhetorical devices while clearly establishing that "Our democratic principles do not exist in a space apart from our national commitment to white supremacy. They have always been bound tightly together, sharing bone and tissue." Eddie provides several anecdotes that intelligibly illustrate the "value gap" and how it effects the lives of Black people. President Obama takes a heap of criticism from Eddie and even those who disagree will find Eddie's arguments logical, though I did detect a bit of contradiction. He also takes to task the modern civil rights leaders and their failure to move the needle. His definition of liberal is quite different from what usually comes to mind and challenges readers to redefine their own definitions. So what of solutions? Eddie offers up, a revolution of values and a more strident democracy as the way forward. "A revolution of value upends the belief that white people are more valued than others....It involves three basic components: (1) a change in how we view government; (2) a change in how we view black people; and (3) a change in how we view what ultimately matters to us as Americans." He has great respect and admiration for the Forward Together moral movement as well as the #blacklivesmatter campaign. Perhaps his boldest and most controversial recommendation is the "blank-out" campaign. A trip to the presidential ballot box in 2016, but instead of choosing the lesser of two evils that no doubt imprisons us to the status quo, we write in none of the above, thereby calling for a new democracy while still exercising the franchise to quell the screaming crowd of citizens who instinctively cry, "you must vote." I'm sure he will be roundly criticized for this suggestion. Though I have some minor quibbles, none worth mentioning, this is a 5star effort. The book is not at all academic, which in this case I mean as a compliment and he supplies plenty of analogies to help readers grasp his explanations, these analogies make an already accessible book that much more of an easygoing read. Surely you will see this book on many year end "best" lists.

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