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Bibliography Whiteness Studies

The field of critical whiteness studies recognizes the need to identify “white” as a racialized category. Those studying whiteness recognize the need to challenge whiteness as a powerful symbol of privilege. Peggy McIntosh in her widely circulated essay, “White Privilege, Male Privilege,” provides a definition: white privilege is like an invisible package of unearned assets that one can count on cashing in each day but about which one was meant to remain oblivious. These privileges are conferred not because they have been earned but merely on the basis of one’s skin color.

As a white woman, McIntosh then made a list of the personal privileges that accrue to her without having to ask or earn them. She identifies these privileges as unearned advantage and conferred dominance. She writes, “I did not see myself as racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.”

Ruth Frankenberg in *White Women, Race Matters*, arrives at a conclusion similar to that of McIntosh: social structures and institutions are racialized and those who engage in antiracist activism must look at their own whiteness from the perspective of having been socialized and constructed by racial ideology.

Many in critical whiteness educational work realize the ways in which white norms have been institutionalized as educational norms. Whiteness, embodied and institutionalized, has a way of suffocating and diverting attempts to create more egalitarian, socially just cultural, socioeconomic, and political arrangements. The goal of whiteness studies in education is to engage in antiracist teaching and develop more effective activities to interrupt and contest the dominance of whiteness. The work is both personal and pedagogical.

This bibliography is not exhaustive, but lists some key texts for those wishing to know more about the antiracist agenda of whiteness studies for the purpose of transforming education.

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