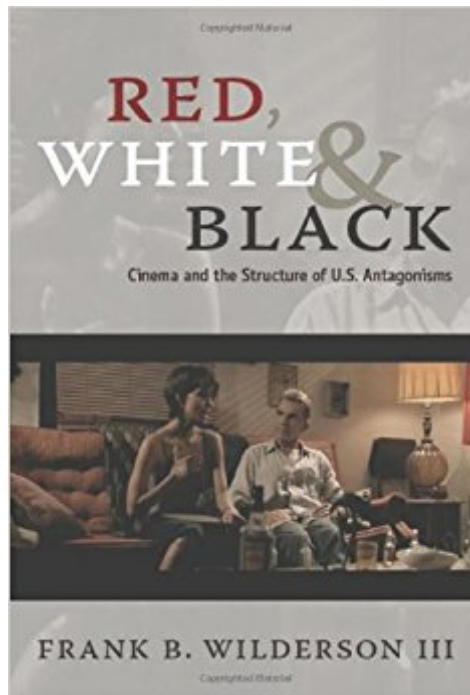




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Red, White & Black: Cinema And The Structure Of U.S. Antagonisms



Synopsis

Red, White & Black is a provocative critique of socially engaged films and related critical discourse. Offering an unflinching account of race and representation, Frank B. Wilderson III asks whether such films accurately represent the structure of U.S. racial antagonisms. That structure, he argues, is based on three essential subject positions: that of the White (the "settler," "master," and "human"), the Red (the "savage" and "half-human"), and the Black (the "slave" and "non-human"). Wilderson contends that for Blacks, slavery is ontological, an inseparable element of their being. From the beginning of the European slave trade until now, Blacks have had symbolic value as fungible flesh, as the non-human (or anti-human) against which Whites have defined themselves as human. Just as slavery is the existential basis of the Black subject position, genocide is essential to the ontology of the Indian. Both positions are foundational to the existence of (White) humanity. Wilderson provides detailed readings of two films by Black directors, Antwone Fisher (Denzel Washington) and Bush Mama (Haile Gerima); one by an Indian director, Skins (Chris Eyre); and one by a White director, Monster's Ball (Marc Foster). These films present Red and Black people beleaguered by problems such as homelessness and the repercussions of incarceration. They portray social turmoil in terms of conflict, as problems that can be solved (at least theoretically, if not in the given narratives). Wilderson maintains that at the narrative level, they fail to recognize that the turmoil is based not in conflict, but in fundamentally irreconcilable racial antagonisms. Yet, as he explains, those antagonisms are unintentionally disclosed in the films' non-narrative strategies, in decisions regarding matters such as lighting, camera angles, and sound.

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Customer Reviews

Frank Wilderson may very well be one of the most revolutionary writers of his time and his writing communicates a depth that is unrivaled in his field. While Wilderson's language is dense at times, it is necessarily so since Wilderson is attempting to grapple with the post-structuralist and Lacanian psychoanalytic implications of Blackness which necessarily call for a more abstract language which is simply unavoidably dense at times. This will not be something you read in a week, but more likely a book you study, not read. Wilderson's analysis of Black Slavery, Red Genocide and White Society is provocative and even if you do not agree with him will necessarily force you to question some of your held assumptions. I highly recommend reading Wilderson's work, but remind all those who choose to do so that it isn't really a book you read as much as a book you study and thus will take a long time and some research on the part of the reader.

Got to through policy debate, it's a fantastic starter book for understand social death. It takes a little time to read but it's worth it

great for debate; OVERPRICED

Just as expected!

Don't get me wrong I've read a ton of academic discourse and treatise in my time, which in turn informs me when an author is using unnecessary heightened language to tell me the sky is blue, which is how I felt about this book, the points are points I was well familiar with, but the language was so thick and unwieldy in trying to prove his thesis that I immediately turned off, I suppose I'm more of a bell hooks, Marshall Mironi Lee, Cornel West reader, these folks know how to interweave common language with academic verbiage in order to keep the reader engaged, not write as if to prove to your audience how smart and capable you are, we already know you are, know just simply tell us your thesis without the need to try and wow us, leave that to us to decide

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