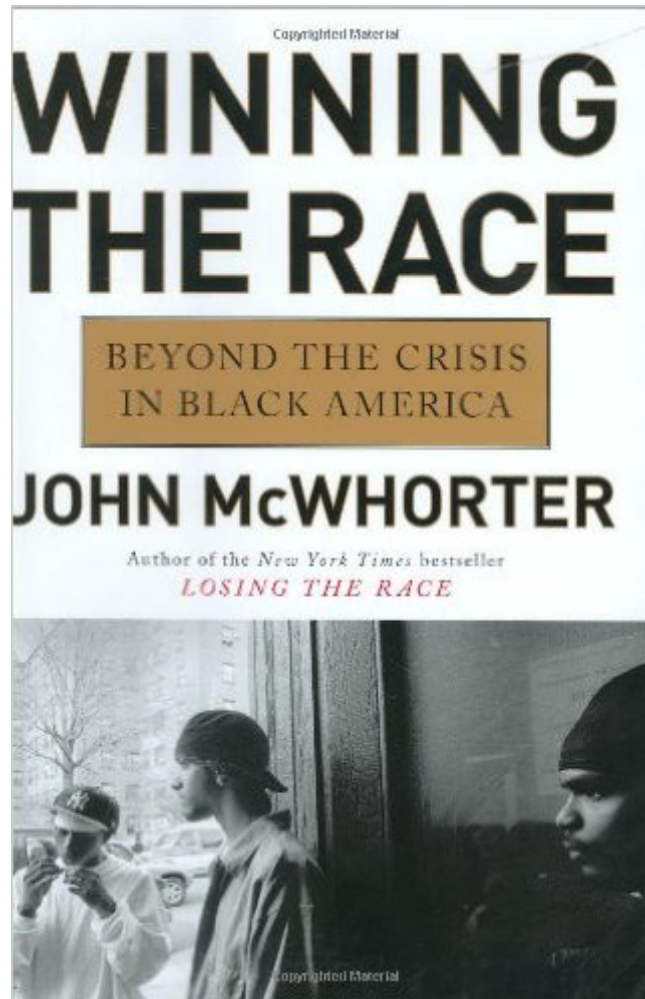


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Winning The Race: Beyond The Crisis In Black America



Synopsis

A provocative new look at the true sources of the social scourges that are holding back black America—and an impassioned manifesto for change. Four decades after the great victories of the Civil Rights Movement secured equal rights for African-Americans, black America is in crisis. Indeed, by most measurable standards, conditions for many blacks have grown worse since 1965: desperate poverty cripples communities nationwide, incarceration rates have reached record highs, teenage pregnancy and out-of-wedlock births are rampant, and educational failures are stifling achievement among the next generation. For years, prominent sociologists and pundits have blamed these problems on forces outside the black community, from lingering racism, to the explosion of the inner-city drug trade, to the erosion of the urban industrial base and the migration of middle-class blacks to the suburbs. But now, in an important and broad-ranging re-envisioning of the post-Civil Rights black American experience, acclaimed author John McWhorter tears down these theories to expose the true roots of today's crisis, and to show a new way forward. In *Winning the Race*, McWhorter argues that black America's current problems began with an unintended byproduct of the Civil Rights revolution, a crippling mindset of "therapeutic alienation." This wary stance toward mainstream American culture, although it is a legacy of racism in the past, continues to hold blacks back, and McWhorter traces all the poisonous effects of this defeatist attitude. In an in-depth case study of the Indianapolis inner city, he analyzes how a vibrant black neighborhood declined into slums, despite ample work opportunities in an American urban center where manufacturing jobs were plentiful. McWhorter takes a hard look at the legacy of the Great Society social assistance programs, lamenting their teaching people to live permanently on welfare, as well as educational failures, too often occurring because of an intellectual climate in which a successful black person must be faced with charges of "acting white." He attacks the sorry state of black popular culture, where indignation for its own sake has been enshrined in everything from the halls of academia to the deleterious policy decisions of community leaders to the disaffected lyrics of hip-hop, particularly rap's glorification of irresponsibility and violence as "protest." In a stirring conclusion, McWhorter puts forth a new vision of black political and intellectual leadership, arguing that both blacks and whites must abolish the culture of victimhood, as this alone can improve future of black America, and outlines steps that can be taken to ensure hope for the future. Powerful and provocative, *Winning the Race* combines detailed research with precise argumentation to present a compelling new vision for black America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Winning the Race, by John Mcwhorter, is the work of a man who has thought long and hard about race and the condition of African Americans. Mcwhorter's approach to this study is that of an observer who has soaked in his surroundings and then delved painstakingly into the task of investigating why things are the way they are. Has he found the right answers? I won't say that the conclusions in this book are definitive, but they are plausible, and they do make a great deal of sense. Mcwhorter's questions are as follows: how did certain black inner city neighborhoods across the nation become the drug ravaged, urban war zones that they are today? Why are so many black children underperforming academically? And perhaps most importantly, is racism to blame for the fact that blacks trail whites in every economic and educational indicator? Or is the problem a cultural one? The author's answers to these questions are very well thought out. He is aware of opposing arguments on the various issues he has covered and has regurgitated those arguments in the pages of his book so as to debunk them. When academics have blamed the removal of factories, hence jobs, from the inner city as a reason why black unemployment spiraled and working class black neighborhoods deteriorated into cauldrons of dead end poverty, he refutes the notion. If factory relocation were to blame, he asks, why did this terrible social blight affect the black community in Indianapolis, where factory jobs remained accessible to blacks? Mcwhorter analyzes poor blacks' disproportionate dependence on welfare, pointing out how blacks early in the twentieth century were disinclined to accept charity. Mcwhorter brings much history into his argument to compare and contrast the attitudes of African Americans in the past with those of the present.

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