

(Get free) Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America

Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America

Eugene Robinson

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There was a time
when there were agreed-upon “black leaders,” when there was a clear “black agenda,” when we could talk confidently about the “state of black America”—
but not anymore.


DISINTEGRATION

The Splintering of Black America

Eugene Robinson

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize

“A deftly written account of the fragmentation of America’s black population.” —Time

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#251009 in Books 2011-10-04 2011-10-04 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .80 x 5.201, .65 #File Name: 0767929969272 pages | File size: 35.Mb

Eugene Robinson : Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A terrific overview, briefly and eloquently statedBy MelanieFergusonA terrific overview, briefly and eloquently stated! Very informative and broad in its goal of giving insight into a complicated function of civilization.The similarities of how disparate tribes meet, mingle, and join toward common goals: Life, Liberty, Innovation, and all elements of the pursuit of Happiness (Harmony). This effort

challenges numeric inclusion in America. It asks clear questions and plots a map of this adopted theme in America's blueprint for life, as it applies to Americans of African Decent. Thank you for this addition to the study. melanie ferguson0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must readBy Ronayne ShawExcellent. As a retired person who worked in the criminal justice system, it explained what the hell is happening to my (African-American) community. It is a "must read" for African-American men who work in the systems.7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Four from OneBy John M. FordEugene Robinson has studied our misconceptions about African American demographics and is concerned about the flawed public policy that may result from them. Robinson classifies African Americans into four groups. His book describes each of these groups and explores the implications of this view of what was once a single, unified community.The MAINSTREAM middle-class majority has a "full ownership stake" in American society. Many live in suburban neighborhoods, attend college, and hold professional and managerial jobs. Parents watch their children mixing unselfconsciously with whites and are proud of how much has changed. But this also "...sets up a conflict between two strongly held Mainstream values--on one side an absolute belief in Dr. King's dream that all be judged solely by the content of their character, on the other a fierce determination that African American history and culture be not only revered but also perpetuated."The ABANDONED is a large, ghetto-bound minority with "...less hope of escaping poverty and dysfunction than at any time since Reconstruction's crushing end." They face numerous problems including unemployment, crime, failing schools, and family breakdown. Before civil rights reforms freed the Mainstream to move elsewhere, the American-African community was geographically and socially integrated. Doctors and lawyers lived next to janitors and the unemployed. Poorer members of this community benefitted from assistance, inspiration, and role models. Now the Abandoned are left to themselves, unseen and unwanted. Racial segregation has been replaced by economic segregation.The TRANSCENDENT are an elite minority with money, power, and influence. This group includes Oprah, Obama, and other celebrities in the highest circles. Many Trancenents pursue social, political, and business projects designed to benefit other African-Americans. Many such efforts benefit the Mainstream far more than the Abandoned, falling short of their desired impact. Many of the older members of this group struggled against stronger barriers to success than remain today. Some find it difficult to step away from their "outsider" roles of the past.EMERGENTS fall into one of two groups. Recently-arrived immigrants and people of mixed-race heritage. Immigrants tend to be highly educated and follow a path of self-improvement similar to white and Asian immigrants. Family loyalty, a strong work ethic, and less personal experience with America's race conflicts all enhance their chances for success. Emergents of mixed race experience resentment from the other groups and uncertainty about how they fit in to any of the groups they can claim as their own.Robinson describes patterns of conflict between these groups. "The Mainstream tend to doubt the authenticity of the Emergent, but they're usually too polite, or too politically correct, to say so out loud. The Abandoned accuse the Emergent--the immigrant segment, at least--of moving into Abandoned neighborhoods and using the locals as mere stepping-stones. The immigrant Emergent, with their intact families and long-range mind-set, ridicule the Abandoned for being their own worst enemies. The Mainstream bemoan the plight of the Abandoned--but express their deep concern from a distance. The Transcendent, to steal the old line about Boston society, speak only to God; they are idolized by the Mainstream and the Emergent for the obstacles they have overcome, and by the Abandoned for the shiny things they own. Mainstream, Emergent, and Transcendent all lock their car doors when they drive through an Abandoned neighborhood. They think the Abandoned don't hear the disrespectful thunk of the locks; they're wrong."The author closes with several strong recommendations. Uplifting the Abandoned should become a national priority. He applauds President Obama's agenda to target all of the poor, knowing that this will help African Americans the most because there are so many among the poor. But he calls for additional efforts that target the Abandoned. He cautions the Trancendents and the Mainstream that they must give up programs for all African Americans that dilute resources desperately needed by the Abandoned. Robinson also cautions against measuring progress based on statistics that summarize the jobs and resources of all four groups without distinction. Such measures underrepresent the achievements of the Mainstream and mask the needs of the Abandoned.This is an excellent and informative book which I highly recommend. It offers needed perspective on the status of African Americans and avoids the oversimplification of placing them in a single demographic category.

The African American population in the United States has always been seen as a single entity: a "Black America" with unified interests and needs. In his groundbreaking book, *Disintegration*, Pulitzer-Prize winning columnist Eugene Robinson argues that over decades of desegregation, affirmative action, and immigration, the concept of Black America has shattered. Instead of one black America, now there are four:

- a Mainstream middle-class majority with a full ownership stake in American society;
- a large, Abandoned minority with less hope of escaping poverty and dysfunction than at any time since Reconstruction's crushing end;
- a small Transcendent elite with such enormous wealth, power, and influence that even white folks have to genuflect;
- and two newly Emergent groups—individuals of mixed-race heritage and communities of recent black immigrants—that make us wonder what "black" is even supposed to mean.

From Publishers Weekly In this clear-eyed and compassionate study, Robinson (Coal to Cream), Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for the Washington Post, marshals persuasive evidence that the African-American population has splintered into four distinct and increasingly disconnected entities: a small elite with enormous influence, a mainstream middle-class majority, a newly emergent group of recent immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean, and an abandoned minority "with less hope of escaping poverty than at any time since Reconstruction's end." Drawing on census records, polling data, sociological studies, and his own experiences growing up in a segregated South Carolina college town during the 1950s, Robinson explores 140 years of black history in America, focusing on how the civil rights movement, desegregation, and affirmative action contributed to the fragmentation. Of particular interest is the discussion of how immigrants from Africa, the "best-educated group coming to live in the United States," are changing what being black means. Robinson notes that despite the enormous strides African-Americans have made in the past 40 years, the problems of poor blacks remain more intractable than ever, though his solution--"a domestic Marshall Plan aimed at black America"--seems implausible in this era of cash-strapped state and local governments. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist Based on his years of reporting and observation of changes in black America, journalist Robinson finds that the black community has evolved to the point where it has disintegrated into distinct sectors: the mainstreamers, or black middle-class majority, who have made tremendous but often understated progress; the abandoned minority with little hope of escaping poverty; transcendental elites of such wealth and power that whites can't deny; and an emergent group of biracial blacks and recent black immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean who are challenging an essentially native black American experience. In the age of Obama, Robinson notes the advancement of the black elites, with wealth and power, into "full ownership stake" in the U.S., distancing them economically from the middle and lower classes. The emergent group identifies with a different notion of the black experience, making them ideologically and politically unreliable. All are in strong contrast to the abandoned, who are at the center of the black disintegration. Readers don't have to agree with Robinson's observations to appreciate the undeniable differences within black America and to maybe want further analysis. --Vernon Ford "A deftly written account of the fragmentation of America's black population." —Time "[A] sober, careful and engaging consideration of phenomena that began with the official end of segregation and has of late been accelerating. . . . Those familiar with [Robinson's] style will find Disintegration the same blend of logical analysis and gentle humor that makes him sometimes appear to be the Most Reasonable Man in America." —SF Gate "[A] bold call to action . . . [Disintegration] makes clear that Robinson's success, and the success of his fellow black fortunates, simply do not negate the problems of the other 30% of blacks who continue to struggle at the bottom." —Los Angeles Times "The text would be useful as a young person's introduction to Race in America 101." —The New Republic "Readers don't have to agree with Robinson's observations to appreciate the undeniable differences within black America and to maybe want further analysis." —Booklist "In this clear-eyed and compassionate study, Robinson . . . marshals persuasive evidence that the African-American population has splintered into four distinct and increasingly disconnected entities. . . . Of particular interest is the discussion of how immigrants from Africa, the 'best-educated group coming to live in the United States,' are changing what being black means." —Publishers Weekly "In Disintegration, Eugene Robinson neatly explodes decades' worth of lazy generalizations about race in America. At the same time, he raises new questions about community, invisibility, and the virtues and drawbacks of assimilation. An important book." —Gwen Ifill "Gene Robinson's Disintegration is the first popular salvo in the Age of Obama regarding the delicate issues of class division, generation gap, and elite obsession in Black America. This painful conversation must continue--and we have Gene Robinson as a useful guide." —Cornel West