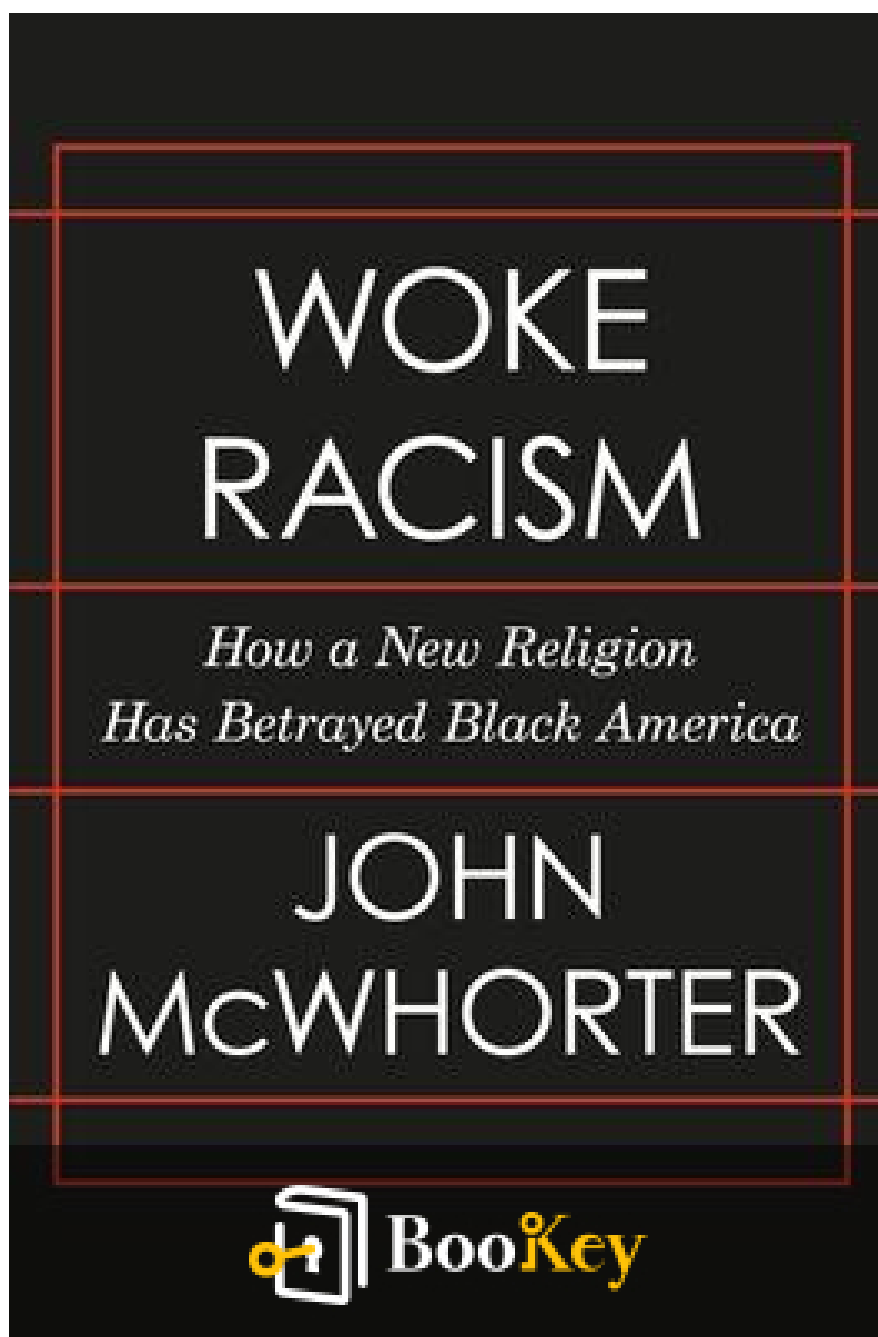


# Woke Racism PDF (Limited Copy)

John McWhorter



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## **Woke Racism Summary**

Challenging Illiberal Antiracism's Impact on Black Communities and  
Society.

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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## About the book

In "Woke Racism," linguist John McWhorter examines the evolution of racial discourse, arguing that a misguided form of antiracism has emerged that he terms "neoracism." This ideology, though presented as a progressive force, is, according to McWhorter, counterproductive and damaging to both Black communities and broader social unity. He highlights how polarized discussions around race have led to a climate where thought and expression are heavily monitored, transforming well-intentioned ideas into rigid dogmas that restrict meaningful dialogue and growth.

McWhorter critiques the concept of racial essentialism, which reduces individuals' identities to their race, and the perils of cancel culture, where individuals face social ostracism for perceived transgressions against this new orthodoxy. He argues that current policies, although designed to promote equity, can inadvertently place Black Americans at a disadvantage and perpetuate cycles of dependency rather than empowerment.

Throughout the chapters, McWhorter navigates these complex topics by drawing on his expertise in linguistics and cultural analysis, elucidating the detrimental effects of these ideologies on societal dynamics and personal identities. He advocates for a rethinking of race relations that moves beyond outdated beliefs, emphasizing that genuine justice and empowerment for Black individuals require a departure from dogmatic thinking. By offering

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practical strategies for resisting this "woke" mindset, McWhorter aims to encourage a more nuanced conversation on race that fosters individuality and true progress.

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## About the author

In the chapters of the discussed work, John McWhorter delves into the intricate relationships between language, culture, and identity. By drawing upon his extensive background in linguistics and comparative literature, he illuminates how language serves not only as a communication tool but also as a vessel for social dynamics and historical context.

The narrative begins with an exploration of creole languages, which are formed from the blending of multiple linguistic influences, often arising in contexts of colonization and cultural exchange. McWhorter exemplifies how these languages reflect the histories and identities of their speakers, offering a lens through which to understand broader societal shifts. He discusses the role creoles play in expressing cultural resilience and adaptability, highlighting their emergence in various regions and communities across the globe.

As the chapters progress, McWhorter shifts focus to the sociohistorical influences that shape language grammar. He argues that language is continuously evolving, influenced by societal changes, migration patterns, and power dynamics. The discussion includes how race and identity impact language use, particularly in American contexts where dialects serve as markers of cultural heritage and social stratification.

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Throughout the text, McWhorter incorporates personal anecdotes and case studies that illustrate the themes presented. This approach not only makes the academic theories accessible but also fosters a connection with the reader, inviting them to consider the profound implications of language in their own lives. His insights challenge the reader to reflect on their understanding of race, identity, and the fluidity of language, encouraging a more nuanced appreciation of linguistic diversity.

In conclusion, these chapters synthesize McWhorter's expertise to present a compelling argument about the interconnectedness of language, culture, and history. They foster an awareness of the ongoing evolution of language and its intimate ties to personal and collective identity, making a case for the importance of appreciating linguistic diversity as a reflection of human experience.

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# Chapter 1 Summary: What this book is not.

## Summary of Chapter 1: What This Book Is Not

In the introductory chapter, the author sets the stage by addressing misconceptions surrounding his work. He clarifies that the purpose of this book is not to critique protests or movements such as Black Lives Matter, which advocate for justice and equality. Instead, he aims to highlight a particular strain of leftist ideology that permeates American institutions and distorts the discourse on race.

The author identifies two primary audiences for his message. First, he speaks to individuals who engage with liberal media outlets like the New York Times, cautioning them against unexamined moral posturing regarding race issues. Second, he reaches out to Black individuals who may feel that their identity is solely defined by their victimhood, emphasizing the need for a broader understanding of self-worth.

The core intention of the book is not to serve as a platform for complaints or to engage with ideologies that resist change, but rather to map out constructive pathways for progress that uphold personal dignity and integrity. The author's motivation is deeply personal; he is particularly concerned about the impact of these ideologies on younger generations,

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especially his daughters. He wishes for them to grasp their reality through a prism of empowerment, rather than being confined to a narrative of victimhood that could undermine their self-worth.

The author is cognizant of the potential backlash he may encounter as a Black writer challenging prevailing narratives, which some may view as traitorous or divisive. Nevertheless, he views this endeavor as a necessary duty to advocate for genuine dignity and to confront the dominant ideologies he believes are detrimental to his community. By articulating these perspectives, he aspires to foster a more nuanced and empowering understanding of identity within the context of contemporary society.

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## Chapter 2 Summary: Why do they get away with it?

In Chapter 2 of "Woke Racism" by John McWhorter, the author explores the unsettling reality of how individuals face job loss and reputational damage for perceived deviations from the norms of Third Wave Antiracism. He questions the societal toleration of these extreme repercussions, setting the stage for a critical examination of contemporary attitudes towards race and racism.

The chapter presents two notable case studies highlighting this issue. The first focuses on **Leslie Neal-Boylan**, a nursing dean who was dismissed after expressing support for the phrase "Black Lives Matter," while also stating "everyone's life matters." This comment was interpreted as an objection to the Black Lives Matter movement, leading to her ousting. The second case involves **David Shor**, a data analyst who lost his job after sharing a study on Twitter that suggested a correlation between violent protests and increased Republican voting. His tweet was met with backlash on social media, demonstrating the harsh consequences of straying from the accepted narrative.

McWhorter explains the concept of **Third Wave Antiracism**—a movement that emerged in the 2010s positing that racism is deeply entrenched in societal structures. This ideology demands that expressions from white individuals be continually scrutinized for potential complicity in racism,

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while simultaneously advocating for a heightened sensitivity towards Black experiences. Those who challenge these norms often become targets of vilification, reinforcing an environment of fear and conformity.

The chapter elucidates the broader societal impacts of Third Wave Antiracism: it stifles nuanced discussions about race, creates a chilling effect on academic and professional discourse, and can even lead to policies that unintentionally harm the groups they aim to help. For example, lower educational standards are justified in the name of diversity, raising questions about the effectiveness of such measures.

McWhorter identifies ten contradictory tenets within Third Wave Antiracist ideology, arguing that these inconsistencies perpetuate a cycle of guilt among white individuals while simultaneously fostering a false sense of moral superiority among its advocates.

The author points to a cultural shift characterized by an intense fear of being labeled racist. This fear inhibits open and honest dialogue about race, promoting an environment where conformity is prioritized over authenticity. Many individuals feel pressured to align with prevailing societal expectations, even at the expense of their personal beliefs.

In conclusion, McWhorter invites readers to reflect on the implications of Third Wave Antiracism's influence across various societal domains. He

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challenges society to consider whether it will continue to accept this rigid ideological framework that stifles discourse and shapes cultural norms. Through his critical lens, McWhorter emphasizes the importance of fostering a more open and inclusive dialogue on race, free from the constraints of fearful conformity.

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# Chapter 3 Summary: Are we going to let them continue to?

## Summary of Chapter 3 from "Woke Racism" by John McWhorter

In this chapter, John McWhorter addresses contemporary challenges within the antiracism movement, suggesting that a new wave of advocates shares troubling ideological similarities with historical extremes, notably the systematic ideologies of Nazi Germany. He criticizes the reductive frameworks surrounding "whiteness" and "blackness" that characterize these modern antiracist movements, highlighting a troubling oversimplification of complex social dynamics.

McWhorter outlines the evolution of antiracism through three distinct waves:

1. The **First Wave** focused on combating segregation, which was widely recognized as barbaric.
2. The **Second Wave** sought to establish equality between Black and white individuals, aligning closely with mainstream progressive values and gaining broader acceptance.
3. The **Third Wave**, however, has introduced a divisive narrative, suggesting that individuals are inherently racist based solely on their skin

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color and promoting a troubling notion of self-loathing among white people.

This new antiracist ideology is critiqued for promoting a segregated view of society that undermines the progress achieved over the last fifty years.

McWhorter notes the irony that questioning these views often results in being labeled as racist, creating a culture of guilt and complicity regarding systemic racism.

He introduces the concept of "the Elect," a group within the antiracism movement characterized by a sense of moral superiority and righteousness. Unlike traditional derogatory terms such as "social justice warriors," "the Elect" see themselves as enlightened and justified in imposing their beliefs on others. This often occurs through social pressure and shaming.

Though the majority of the Elect may present as amicable and ordinary individuals, McWhorter asserts that their commitment to Elect principles can lead to subtle forms of social ostracism. While not all are overtly aggressive, their tacit complicity empowers more extreme activists, effectively stifling open discussions about race and antiracism.

The chapter warns of the chilling atmosphere that the Elect create for dissenters, which can inhibit constructive dialogue and result in poorly conceived policies that ultimately harm the very communities they aim to support.

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In concluding, McWhorter emphasizes that criticism of the Elect does not equate to opposition to antiracism itself. He advocates for a nuanced understanding of racial issues and urges a more balanced and constructive discourse on race in modern society, essential for genuine progress.

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## Chapter 4: The Elect have superstition.

In this exploration of the dynamics surrounding the Elect and their superstitious beliefs, we uncover a system akin to a faith, where certain ideas must be accepted without question. This phenomenon resembles religious adherence, where challenging the foundational beliefs prompts disdain and vague explanations, ultimately discouraging deeper inquiry.

The Elect exhibit a **Suspension of Disbelief**, echoing a religious mentality that prioritizes acceptance over exploration of uncomfortable questions. For instance, the stark contrast in outrage toward police violence versus violence within black communities often elicits evasive answers rather than confronting the underlying societal issues. This avoidance reflects a reluctance to engage with complex realities that might disrupt their established narratives.

**Conversations on Race** are framed in a manner that typically positions black individuals as the primary expressers of discontent, while white individuals assume a listening role, expected to acknowledge their privilege. This societal expectation introduces discomfort among those involved, which the Elect may label as ‘racism,’ diverting attention from essential discussions about representation and power dynamics.

This avoidance further solidifies a **Logic and Basic Sense** that mirrors

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superstition; by refusing to question the narratives surrounding racism, the Elect reinforce existing beliefs rather than fostering genuine dialogue and productive solutions. The outcome of this refusal cultivates an environment where questioning is stifled, leading to more entrenched positions.

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## Chapter 5 Summary: The Elect have clergy.

In "Woke Racism," John McWhorter delves into the intricate relationship between contemporary racial discourse and a new kind of clerical class. He draws parallels between influential figures in the modern conversation about race and traditional clergy, positioning thinkers like Ta-Nehisi Coates, Robin DiAngelo, and Ibram Kendi as spiritual leaders whose works serve to reinforce and comfort a community deeply invested in their ideologies.

McWhorter illustrates this relationship through the reception of Coates's 2014 essay, "The Case for Reparations," which sparked significant emotional engagement rather than political debate. Readers often found affirmation and validation in Coates's eloquence rather than new arguments or data, underlining a communal desire to reinforce existing beliefs about race and reparations rather than critically examine the feasibility of such concepts.

The chapter further identifies prominent figures like Coates, DiAngelo, and Kendi as central to this ideological framework, acting as clerics who craft compelling narratives around race and racism. DiAngelo's teachings, for example, evoke themes of inherent racial guilt among white individuals, echoing religious tenets that anchor contemporary discussions about race.

McWhorter argues that the fervor of the 'Elect'—a term he uses to describe

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devoted supporters of anti-racist initiatives—is sustained by the influential messages of this clerical cadre. Much like religious sermons offer comfort and reassurance, the proclamations of these thought leaders serve to solidify adherents in their beliefs, shielding them from the complexities and doubts that might arise from real-world scenarios.

Ultimately, this analysis culminates in a broader understanding of woke ideology as akin to a modern religious movement. Concepts such as original sin are paralleled with the guilt and responsibility followers feel they must acknowledge. The persistent reinforcement of these ideas by the clergy of woke ideology keeps their foundational beliefs alive and relevant within societal discourse, ensuring their continued influence and potency.

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## Chapter 6 Summary: The Elect have original sin.

In Chapter 6 of "Woke Racism" by John McWhorter, the author delves into the concept of original sin as it pertains to contemporary race discussions, particularly among a group he refers to as the "Elect." This term describes a segment of society that firmly believes in the necessity of acknowledging racial privilege, specifically, the privileges that come with being white in America. McWhorter concedes that such privileges do exist but critiques the framework that compels individuals to publicly confess this privilege as a moral imperative, suggesting it mirrors a religious obligation.

He elaborates on the practices employed by the Elect to instill this sense of privilege recognition in individuals, including children. These practices resemble educational rituals akin to Sunday school, where young attendees are encouraged to confront their supposed inherent racism and the privileges of white identity. Resources such as Robin DiAngelo's *\*White Fragility\** are commonly utilized in these learning environments, creating a structured indoctrination.

Central to McWhorter's critique is the circular logic of the racial privilege narrative: acknowledging one's privilege is seen as the only way to avoid being labeled a racist, yet to deny this privilege is to confirm one's racism. He characterizes this reasoning as arbitrary and detrimental, underscoring that it perpetuates a superstitious adherence among many individuals.

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The chapter further examines social pressures in institutions such as academia, where faculty members at Northwestern University's law school were coerced into publicly renouncing their white privilege. McWhorter argues that these acts of self-abasement resonate with the traditional belief in original sin, reflecting a troubling cultural trend.

He posits that the response to this pressure manifests as a form of worship through self-mortification, where individuals engage in emotional purging by recognizing their privilege. This acknowledgment aligns them with influential voices like Ta-Nehisi Coates, transforming their admission of guilt into a path toward enlightenment and social justice, akin to a religious experience.

In conclusion, McWhorter asserts that the Elect approach their beliefs with evangelical zeal, perpetuating a cycle of guilt and self-flagellation as a means of achieving moral righteousness and fostering a sense of community. This chapter ultimately critiques how these practices may undermine genuine dialogue about race and privilege.

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## Chapter 7 Summary: The Elect are evangelical.

### Summary of Chapter 7: The Evangelical Nature of The Elect

In this chapter, the author explores the parallels between the group known as The Elect and evangelical religious sects, particularly focusing on their approach to social justice. The Elect view their advocacy as a transformative Good News, akin to the messages preached by fundamentalist Christians who hold firm beliefs that they consider the ultimate truth. Within this framework, differing opinions are often dismissed as misguided or erroneous.

The concept of the "heathen" emerges as a critical theme, where members of The Elect categorize many individuals, particularly white people outside their immediate circles, as unenlightened. This term signifies not just a lack of understanding but also a broader geographical and cultural divide. The Elect perceive these individuals as being in a metaphorical space—"out there"—where they have yet to grasp the profound insights that The Elect claim to possess.

A sense of community and purpose thrives among those who identify as members of The Elect. They consider themselves a chosen group, armed with true wisdom, which fosters a strong communal bond. This exclusivity

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drives them to engage in a mission of evangelism, actively seeking to convert others to their viewpoint, similar to religious evangelists.

The author argues that this evangelistic inclination is not merely a sign of arrogance or self-importance; rather, it reflects a broader human tendency to cling to belief systems that offer hope and purpose. The Elect are motivated by a desire to enlighten others, which underscores their interactions with those they see as unconverted.

In conclusion, viewing The Elect through the prism of religious fervor reveals deeper insights into their motivations and behaviors, providing a context for understanding the dynamics of their social advocacy and the fervent belief in their mission.

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## Chapter 8: The Elect are apocalyptic.

### ### The Elect and Their Vision of Racism

The Elect envision a future where America must face and rectify its systemic racism, culminating in an impending judgment day. This belief, however, is challenged by the reality of America's diverse landscape and the prevailing political divides, which make the idea of a unified consensus on racism both unrealistic and impractical.

### ### Defining 'Coming to Terms' with Racism

The notion of “coming to terms” with racism is fraught with ambiguity. It raises questions about who determines the criteria for such a resolution and when these terms are met. The Elect often dismiss historical progress, framing contemporary society as perpetually flawed to sustain urgency in their call for activism.

### ### America's Awareness of Racism

In contrast to the Elect's perspective, America is actively engaged in grappling with issues of racism. The intense discussions ignited by the murder of George Floyd marked a pivotal societal shift, reflected in

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widespread support for movements like Black Lives Matter and substantial policy reforms aimed at addressing racial inequities.

### ### The Stagnation of the Elect's Perspective

Despite the undeniable advancements in societal awareness, many within the Elect cling to a narrative of despair, arguing that Black voices remain unheard and true progress is illusory. This steadfastness may stem from their desire to find purpose in continuous struggles against racism, even in the face of positive change.

### ### The Complexity of Reparations

Reparations are a complex topic involving various proposals, especially regarding financial compensation. However, advocates acknowledge that such measures cannot fully compensate for the deep psychological and cultural scars left by slavery. The effects of this historical trauma persist, influencing present perceptions and lived experiences.

### ### Language and Perception of Progress

Significant changes in societal language and perceptions around race are often dismissed by the Elect as mere surface-level adjustments. They critique narratives that do not align with their views on sustained

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inequalities, insisting that the need for a continuous fight against racism remains paramount.

### The Challenge of Historical Narratives

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## Chapter 9 Summary: The Elect ban the heretic.

### Summary of Chapter 9 from "Woke Racism" by John McWhorter

In Chapter 9, titled "The Nature of the Elect," John McWhorter explores the emergence of a group he labels the Elect, which promotes a specific ideology regarding race and social justice. This group operates much like a religious sect, seeking to banish those who dissent from their views, equating disagreement with harm akin to heresy. Within this framework, dissenters are not merely mistaken; they are considered morally corrupt, and such absolutist thinking underlines their interactions and societal influence.

McWhorter draws parallels between the practices of the Elect and religious zealotry, noting that dissenting opinions are treated as pollutants that taint the purity of their ideology. This mindset has manifested in cultural phenomena like cancel culture, a term that describes the Elect's punitive actions against those who deviate from their beliefs. Though the Elect may assert that they do not seek to "cancel" individuals, their behavior suggests a deep commitment to silencing dissent as a means of enforcing ideological conformity. The societal implications are significant, reflecting a marked shift in attitudes toward accountability and public discourse.

Critics of the Elect's narrative are often characterized as threats to equality

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and progress, with social media serving as a platform for intense character attacks. This change in the treatment of dissenters is stark compared to previous decades, where disagreements might have led to discussions rather than the vilification seen today. Individuals like Andrew Sullivan and Bari Weiss exemplify those who have faced backlash for their divergent views, underscoring the growing intolerance towards alternative perspectives.

At its core, the Elect's belief system functions as a religion, with an unwavering commitment to battling perceived racism. This unwavering stance often dismisses alternative methodologies for improving the lives of Black individuals in favor of a singular narrative that vilifies detractors as morally wrong. The Elect's actions are framed as not only justified but as a natural extension of their moral duty.

In conclusion, McWhorter outlines how the ideology of the Elect has evolved from traditional political correctness to a more punitive, faith-like approach. He argues that the current landscape of antiracism reflects a transformation from the inclusive activism of figures like Martin Luther King Jr. to an exclusionary, dogmatic belief system. This chapter highlights the profound implications of such ideological shifts on societal norms surrounding race, dissent, and morality.

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# Chapter 10 Summary: The Elect supplant older religions.

### The Elect and Modern Ideologies

## Supplanting Older Religions

In this chapter, the author examines the emergence of modern ideologies, collectively termed "The Elect," which have increasingly supplanted traditional religious beliefs. The discussion is sparked by Father Daniel Patrick Moloney, MIT's Catholic chaplain, who reached out in response to a tragic incident of police violence. His email urged for understanding and empathy toward police officers, aiming to highlight their humanity even amid their failings. However, this plea was met with fierce backlash from those aligned with The Elect, illustrating a new dogmatic mindset where dissenting views are often branded heretical.

## The Response to Moloney's Email

Critics swiftly condemned Moloney's perspective, alleging that his call for compassion was a betrayal that contributed to the unsafe conditions of marginalized communities. They framed his views as an unwillingness to confront deeper issues of systemic racism, exemplifying a rigid moralism that leaves no room for dialogue. The zealous response from these critics

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reflects a tribunal-like mentality among The Elect, where strict adherence to ideological principles is demanded, and differing opinions are met with hostility.

### **The Inquisition Analogy**

The chapter draws a compelling analogy between this contemporary environment and historical instances of persecution, particularly the Inquisition. The author argues that Moloney's resignation serves as a modern echo of this intolerance, highlighting a culture where dissenting viewpoints are not merely challenged but actively suppressed. This historical parallel emphasizes the dangers of ideological conformity over compassion and understanding.

### **The Impact on Unitarianism**

The influence of The Elect extends into Unitarianism, where figures like Reverend Richard Trudeau describe this ideology as a "mental virus" that has infiltrated the church community. This characterization underlines how adherence to these beliefs can render individuals rigid, resistant to alternative perspectives, and detached from the core principles of open dialogue and acceptance that Unitarianism traditionally espouses.

### **Consequences for Dissent**

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The environment of intolerance within Unitarianism is further exemplified by the case of Reverend Todd Eklof, who faced expulsion for his critiques of Elect ideology. His experience underscores the pressures that discourage skepticism and curtail open discussions about the implications of such ideologies, highlighting a chilling effect on those who dare to voice dissent.

### **The Transformation of American Christianity**

The chapter posits that the year 2020 marked a pivotal transformation in American Christianity towards embracing the principles of The Elect. During this period, many clergy began to intertwine concepts of racial justice and white privilege with their faith practices, signifying a broader ideological shift that melds traditional religious values with modern sociopolitical frameworks. This fusion illustrates how allegiance to The Elect not only influences personal identity but also reshapes morality within American religious and social discourse, reflecting an evolving landscape where ideological conformity takes precedence over traditional doctrines.

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## Chapter 11 Summary: And so it goes.

In Chapter 11 of "Woke Racism" by John McWhorter, the author delves into the emergence of a new ideology called "Electism," which he posits acts as a quasi-religious framework influencing societal attitudes towards race in America.

The chapter begins by referencing the protests against racial injustice that erupted in 2020, particularly focusing on New York City's Mayor Bill de Blasio. His approval of these protests, despite a backdrop of quarantine rules due to the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights a selective interpretation of public health in favor of ideological expression. This example illustrates how adherence to Electism often overrides conventional norms and regulations when deemed necessary for a larger cause.

As the narrative unfolds, McWhorter critiques the medical and social responses to these protests, noting a reluctance among healthcare professionals to challenge the crowded gatherings. Their ideological alignment with movements like Black Lives Matter has led to a culture where dissenting opinions are seen as unacceptable, effectively creating a litmus test for ideological conformity.

The chapter further examines performative activism, using vivid incidents where white protesters engage in symbolic acts—such as kneeling or

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washing the feet of Black individuals—as misguided attempts to convey solidarity. McWhorter argues that these gestures, far from meaningful, serve as superficial performances reinforcing the tenets of Electism.

Turning to educational institutions, McWhorter points out a troubling trend: the framing of participation in such movements as akin to spiritual experiences. This evolution signifies a drift from secular discourse towards a dominion of ideological fervor, suggesting a shift in the fundamental nature of public life.

McWhorter introduces the idea that Electism possesses its own creation myths, tracing its roots back to the history of Africans in America. He references prominent figures like Ta-Nehisi Coates, Robin DiAngelo, and Ibram Kendi, whose works are integral to this new ideological canon, further solidifying Electism's status as a belief system.

The implications of this ideology on American values are profound. McWhorter contends that Electism reshapes essential foundations of intellectualism, morality, and expression, standing in stark contrast to the principles upon which the United States was founded. He warns that allowing this ideology to flourish can lead to a detrimental governance of public discourse by religious-like fervor.

In conclusion, McWhorter asserts that recognizing Electism as a dogmatic

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religion is crucial for society. He calls for a conscious resistance to its dominance in cultural and intellectual spheres, likening its spread to a viral outbreak that poses risks to both individuals and the broader societal fabric. This chapter serves as a clarion call to safeguard the foundational tenets of American democracy against the encroachment of ideological extremism.

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# Chapter 12: Critical race theory says what?

## Critical Race Theory (CRT) Overview

### Origins of CRT

Critical Race Theory (CRT) originated in the late 20th century from a collective of legal scholars who sought to address the persistent issues of racism and injustice within the framework of law. Unlike traditional academic debates that focus on objective analysis, CRT emphasizes personal narratives and emotional experiences to illustrate the impact of racism on individuals and communities. This shift highlights an evolution in discourse, whereby the subjective experiences of marginalized groups are increasingly recognized as legitimate evidence of systemic injustice.

### Key Tenets of CRT

1. **Subjective Truth:** Influential scholars such as Richard Delgado advocate for the principle that individual accounts of racism should take precedence over objective data. This perspective asserts that if someone from a marginalized group claims to have experienced racism, their experience must be regarded as valid, reflecting a broader call for acknowledgment of diverse lived experiences.

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**2. Rejection of Traditional Reasoning** CRT contests conventional logic and the reliance on empirical reasoning, positing that emotional and subjective narratives offer deeper insights into racial issues. This challenges the status quo of academic discourse and encourages a more inclusive understanding of truth.

**3. Challenge to Mainstream Political Discourse:** CRT proponents argue that conventional political dialogues often fail to address the root causes of racial inequities. They advocate for a more vigorous exploration of race and injustice, suggesting that traditional methods of addressing these issues, such as respectability politics, are insufficient for enacting meaningful change.

### **Implications in Society**

The ideals of CRT have profoundly influenced contemporary social interactions and educational frameworks. Texts such as "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo have gained prominence and are frequently accepted as authoritative. However, this acceptance sometimes occurs without critical examination of their underlying arguments. Consequently, this creates an environment where opposing viewpoints are often dismissed as racist or problematic, stifling open discourse.

### **Social Dynamics and CRT Adoption**

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Within these discussions, white individuals may adopt CRT principles as a means of showcasing awareness and allyship toward racial issues, which can sometimes lead to unintentional patronization. Conversely, people of color may embrace CRT as a critical tool for validating and asserting their unique experiences of discrimination. This dynamic can foster a contentious atmosphere where disagreement over CRT can be met with hostility, complicating dialogue around race.

### **Case Study: Public Reactions**

An illustrative event occurred at a public meeting in New York City where participants expressed intense emotions regarding perceived racial injustices. This gathering exemplified how the principles of CRT manifest in everyday conversations. Many attendees voiced their outrage without necessarily grasping the ideologies underpinning their arguments, underscoring the need for deeper understanding in conversations about race.

### **Conclusion**

The evolution of Critical Race Theory signifies a pivotal shift in how society addresses race and justice, prioritizing personal narratives and emotional truth over traditional reasoning. The incorporation of CRT into mainstream thought reflects a broader cultural movement that favors emotional

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engagement, often at the expense of critical and multidimensional discussions. This trend challenges society to rethink its approach to race and inclusivity, encouraging a holistic understanding of the complex realities of racial injustice.

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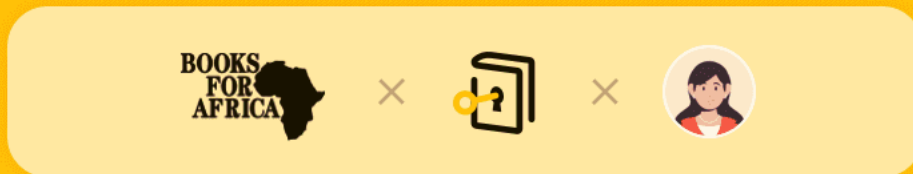




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## Chapter 13 Summary: Why do whites become Elects?

In Chapter 13 of "Woke Racism," John McWhorter delves into the phenomenon of "Electism," a term he uses to describe a specific subset of individuals, predominantly white, who ardently support critical race theory (CRT) and engage in actions deemed socially just, such as advocating for suspensions or firings of those who oppose their views. This chapter outlines how these individuals are drawn to CRT, despite its complexities and often irrational conclusions.

McWhorter explains that the left's political landscape has shifted significantly since the 1960s. No longer simply focused on reforms aimed at improving the American system, it has instead adopted a cultural stance, viewing societal transformation as essential to rectify injustices. This shift underscores the evolution of political engagement, where personal sentiment is increasingly framed as a moral imperative.

Within this context, supporters of Electism conflate their personal feelings with a sense of moral authority. This results in what McWhorter terms "folk politics," where the expression of outrage is prioritized over grappling with the intricate details of political issues. The allure of Electism lies in its provision of a clear, simplistic worldview that not only fosters a sense of community but also elevates the adherents' feelings of moral superiority—paralleling the satisfaction one might feel in solving

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mathematical problems.

A notable aspect of Electism is its grounding in guilt. Influenced by philosopher Pascal Bruckner, McWhorter highlights how individuals within the Elect often embrace a sense of guilt for injustices that occurred long before their time. This guilt is a means to forge a connection to historical struggles, allowing them to feel integral to the pursuit of social justice.

However, McWhorter points out a significant disconnect: the Elect often overlook the perspectives of actual black communities, imposing their narratives while ignoring dissenting viewpoints, such as opinions on police funding. This disconnect is particularly striking as it illustrates the way Elect individuals fashion their own moral narratives, often disregarding the voices they purport to champion.

Moreover, McWhorter draws parallels between Electism and religious belief systems. In a secular society increasingly detached from traditional religion, Electism fulfills a psychological need for a belief system characterized by absolute certainty and sanctity—echoing Sigmund Freud's caution about the dangers of rigid ideologies replacing religious faith.

In conclusion, McWhorter posits that contemporary discussions surrounding race and morality share a resemblance to religious fervor, rooted in psychological mechanisms that offer comfort and belonging. Through this

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lens, the chapter explores how Electism operates both as a form of social identity and as a modern-day belief system, with significant implications for how race and justice are navigated in current discourse.

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## Chapter 14 Summary: Dismantling hegemonic structures?

In Chapter 14 of "Woke Racism," John McWhorter delves into the distinction between genuine activism and what he calls "performative actions" prevalent among a group he labels the Elect. This group claims to be combating systemic racism and white supremacy but often ends up prioritizing self-promotion over meaningful change.

McWhorter shares several illustrative incidents that underscore the performative nature of this activism. For instance, the resignation of a Poetry Foundation chairman, compelled by criticism over a perceived weak statement in support of Black Lives Matter, exemplifies how external pressures can overshadow genuine dialogue. Similarly, a woman lost her job for wearing blackface as a misguided commentary on a controversial statement made by Megyn Kelly, demonstrating the disproportionate reactions that can arise from performative activism. Moreover, the firing of museum curator Gary Garrels—who suggested that not solely collecting works from non-white artists might constitute "reverse discrimination"—highlights how certain perspectives are deemed unacceptable within the Elect's framework.

McWhorter also critiques the impracticality of the language often used by this group, such as "dismantling structures." He claims that such jargon,

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while creating an illusion of authority, often fails to address pressing social issues like homelessness in cities like San Francisco, which remain largely unaddressed despite punitive measures taken against individuals like Garrels.

He draws a parallel between the actions of the Elect and children building forts—not for any productive outcome but for the sake of the activity itself. This metaphor serves to illustrate how the fixation on rhetoric and symbolism detracts from efforts to tackle real societal challenges.

Questioning the deeper motivations behind these performative actions, McWhorter argues that they foster a sense of moral superiority among the Elect rather than driving substantial improvements for marginalized communities. He advocates for a shift towards genuine activism that prioritizes direct action and tangible assistance for those in need.

In concluding the chapter, McWhorter challenges the readers to reassess the intentions of those who claim to dismantle oppressive systems. He emphasizes the necessity of authentic engagement with urgent social issues instead of merely indulging in symbolic gestures. His critique of the Elect suggests that their approach often does little to alleviate the suffering experienced by individuals facing systemic challenges, rendering their mission ultimately ineffective.

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## Chapter 15 Summary: Electism is easy.

### Summary of Chapter 15: Electism in "Woke Racism"

In Chapter 15, the concept of "Electism" is explored as a fundamental feature of contemporary discussions about race and racism. Electism simplifies complex human behaviors and societal structures, creating a narrative where white individuals are both unaware of their racial identity and defensive of it. This dual portrayal highlights the contradictions inherent in modern racial discourse.

Philosopher Robert McCauley sheds light on the cognitive biases that underpin these perceptions, noting that humans have a tendency to anthropomorphize abstract ideas. This tendency contributes to the demonization of "white" figures in societal discussions, where terms like "societal," "structural," and "systemic racism" are personified. Consequently, individuals often conflate these broad, complex issues with personal acts of racism, oversimplifying a multifaceted problem.

For the Elect, narratives overshadow empirical reality. They manipulate language in a way that suggests broader agency with phrases like "functions to," distancing their arguments from real-world consequences. This preference for sweeping sociopolitical narratives limits their willingness to

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engage in nuanced discussions that could challenge their existing beliefs.

Despite their intellectual backgrounds, the Elect uphold intuition as a primary source of understanding over scientific inquiry. Their fervor against racism resembles premodern religious ideologies, which categorize society into believers and non-believers. This dynamic fosters a sense of moral superiority rather than a commitment to actionable change.

In conclusion, the Elect prioritize emotional conviction over tangible actions in their fight against perceived injustices. Michael Lind emphasizes that for them, morality is measured by attitudes and beliefs, rather than actual discriminatory practices. This adherence to Electism provides a comforting ideological framework, allowing individuals to maintain a sense of righteousness amidst the complexities of societal issues.

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# Chapter 16: Black people settle for Electism to feel whole.

## Summary of Chapter 16: Electism and Insecurity in Black Identity

Chapter 16 delves into the concept of Electism, which many Black individuals adopt as a means to navigate their identities in a society that often imposes feelings of inadequacy. Electism stems from insecurities rather than a simple pursuit of pride through advocacy for others. This viewpoint suggests that Black individuals need extensive systemic changes to thrive, portraying them as inherently deficient—a narrative that is particularly distinctive to their experience compared to other marginalized communities.

The chapter reflects on the transformations brought about by the Civil Rights Movement, which successfully dismantled institutional segregation and shifted societal views on race. However, these changes were largely imposed from the top down, neglecting the gradual personal struggles that foster true pride and resilience. The swift transition from the Jim Crow era to a society that more overtly confronts racism left many Black Americans devoid of a narrative that illustrates their personal victories over challenges.

Furthermore, the chapter explores the impact of historical narratives on racial self-image within Black communities. The emergence of slogans like

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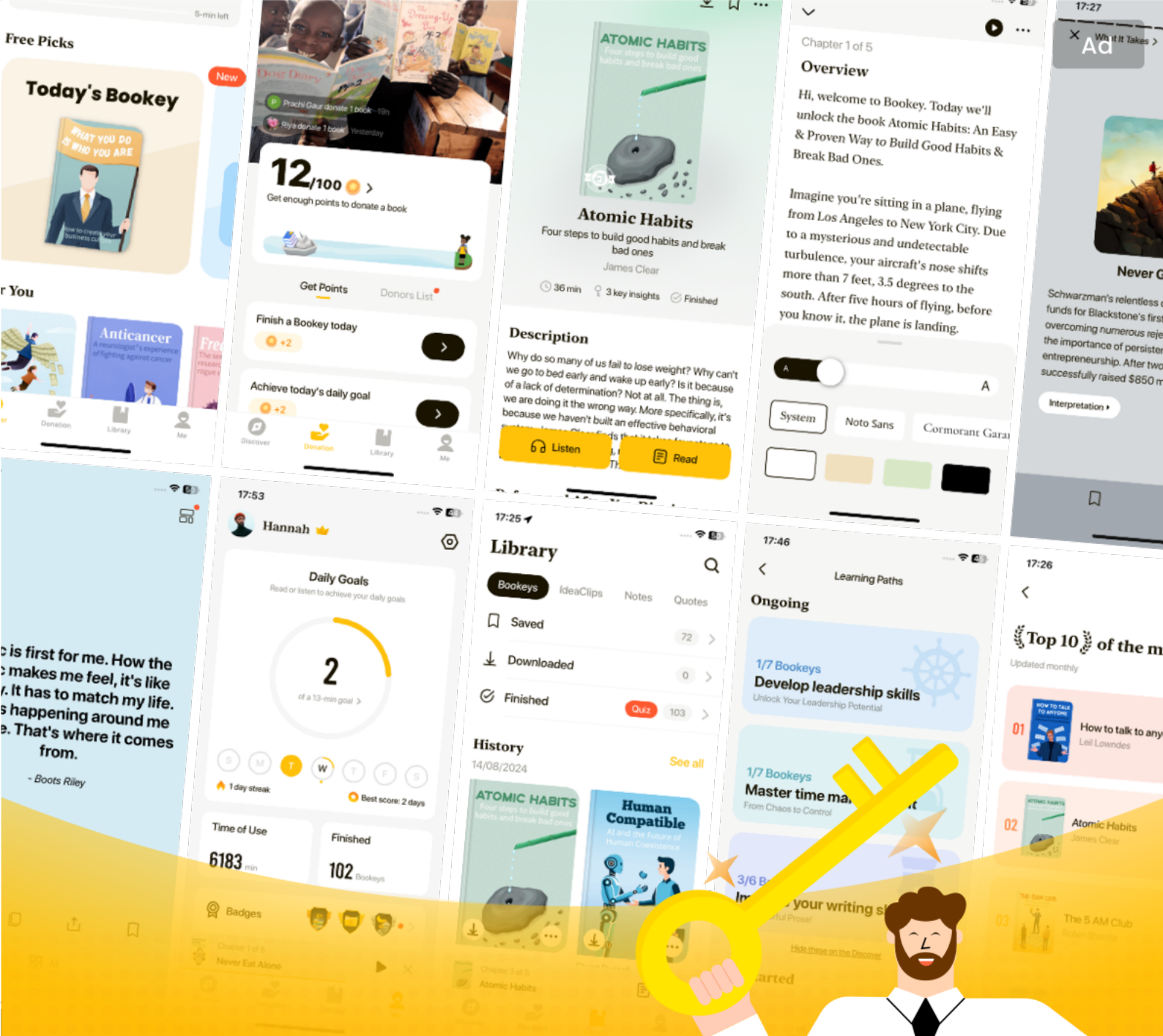
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"Black Is Beautiful" and movements such as "Black Power" stemmed from a reaction to a long history of devaluation rather than mere expressions of pride. These concepts serve as reminders of strength, countering the inferiority complex fueled by a fragmented identity and history.

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## **Chapter 17 Summary: “The race thing” makes genuine sense as a religious faith.**

### **Summary of Chapter 17 from "Woke Racism" by John McWhorter**

In this chapter, John McWhorter explores the concept of “the race thing” as a form of religious faith deeply intertwined with the insecurities surrounding modern Black identity. He highlights how many Black individuals, influenced by their electoral experiences and societal challenges, adopt an identity closely linked to victimhood. This victimhood narrative, while fostering a sense of belonging, often dominates public discourse, shaping community dynamics and personal interactions.

Using examples from pop culture, specifically referencing a rapper's experience, McWhorter underscores the intricate relationship between respect, self-worth, and how these are navigated within the Black community. The aftermath of George Floyd's murder brought forth a wave of critiques directed at both allies and the community itself, revealing the inconsistencies in expressions of solidarity that stem not from confusion but from diverse viewpoints. Each criticism reflects a shared need for pride, revealing the complexities surrounding expressions of identity and belonging.

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The chapter illustrates how victimhood acts as a unifying force, especially for educated Black individuals who might feel distanced from their cultural roots. By engaging in dialogues about racism—even with outward expressions of happiness—these individuals cultivate a sense of connection and community. McWhorter likens this to a metaphorical “warm blanket” found in being part of the Elect—a group characterized by a shared sense of legitimacy rooted in collective struggle. This idea resonates with Karl Marx's notion of a "solidarity of defeat," where individuals derive emotional solace from their shared adversities.

Finally, McWhorter addresses the therapeutic nature of this collective identity, arguing that the prevailing belief that true progress can only be achieved once racism is eradicated reflects deeper psychological needs. By anchoring their identity in shared experiences of oppression, many Black individuals attempt to mitigate feelings of alienation. In this context, McWhorter posits that the confusion surrounding articulations of racism often arises from the desire to fill emotional voids rather than from any intention to manipulate discourse. Overall, the chapter presents a nuanced understanding of the interplay between identity, collective struggle, and the search for belonging within the Black community.

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## Chapter 18 Summary: Black Electness is old school.

In Chapter 18 of "Woke Racism," John McWhorter explores the concept of "Black Electness," a deeply-rooted ideology within black America that emphasizes collective narratives over empirical truths. This idea emerged in the social and psychological climates of the 1960s and 70s, during a time when black intellectuals sought transformative change. Within this framework, exaggeration has often been accepted as a form of honesty, illustrating how communal identity can overshadow factual realities.

McWhorter uses an anecdote from a 1970s encounter group session to demonstrate the performative elements of racial healing discourse. He critiques these dialogues for being more about spectacle than substantive progress, suggesting that this trend has persisted into modern discussions surrounding race. Such performative acts often distract from genuine advancements and continue to perpetuate a cycle of ineffective communication.

The author notes a significant shift since about 2013, where an increasing number of white individuals have adopted radical ideologies prominent in black activism. Rather than promoting an honest exploration of truths, this trend has fostered a pessimistic view of race relations, which frequently eclipses the real achievements made by black Americans since the civil rights era.

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McWhorter highlights the rhetoric surrounding the quest for “authentic” voices in racial discourse, exemplified by Representative Ayanna Pressley. This notion suggests that black identity is intrinsically linked to experiences of oppression—a sentiment echoed by earlier figures like Stokely Carmichael. Today, it resonates with some white allies who feel a moral obligation to advocate for this worldview.

Finally, the chapter examines the fervent outrage expressed by those aligned with the Elect ideology towards dissenting opinions on racism. McWhorter argues that this anger acts as a form of self-defense for their identity and purpose, akin to a religious fervor. This emotional investment in narratives of oppression underscores the complexities within the black community's ongoing struggle for recognition and justice. Through this exploration, McWhorter invites readers to reflect critically on the narratives that shape discussions about race and identity in contemporary society.

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## Chapter 19 Summary: Other ways of being black.

In the chapter titled "Other Ways of Being Black," the author delves into the rich tapestry of perspectives within the Black community, emphasizing a divide between the "Elect"—well-educated individuals who emphasize systemic racism—and the broader Black populace. This contrast becomes particularly salient when examining data indicating differing experiences of racism among high school and college students. The author suggests that college environments may inadvertently teach ideologies focused on oppression that do not always resonate with the lived realities of younger Black individuals.

As the chapter unfolds in "Perceptions of Racism," a critical analysis reveals that while many college-educated Blacks report feeling unsafe due to racism, younger Black students often do not express the same fears. This discrepancy raises critical inquiries about whether increased awareness of racism stems from educational experiences rather than direct encounters, challenging the idea of a uniform Black identity. The author illustrates that historical discourse surrounding Black identity has always included a range of perspectives, countering the notion of a singular narrative.

The chapter further explores "Media Portrayals and Historical Shifts," using iconic television references, such as "All in the Family," to demonstrate how past representations of Black characters encapsulated a complexity beyond

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mere oppression. In contrast, contemporary portrayals often lean towards narratives of victimhood. The author highlights how historical movements within the Black community have celebrated success and resilience, indicating a broader evolution of thought over generations.

A critique of the "Elect" perspective follows, where the author argues that this mindset can foster a sense of moral superiority while overlooking the psychological benefits of resilience in confronting racism. There is an observable shift in viewing casual racism as equally damaging as physical abuse—an evolution McWhorter deems counterproductive.

In addressing the "Sellout Charge," the author confronts the prevalent accusation that Black individuals who diverge from the Elect's views betray their race for profit. McWhorter argues that such narratives often stem from a narrow understanding of the diverse viewpoints within the Black community. He presents Black conservatives not as traitors but as advocates for alternative strategies aimed at community upliftment. The Elect's framing of divergent opinions as heresy only serves to stifle open discourse around race issues.

In conclusion, the chapter emphasizes the importance of recognizing the multiplicity of Black experiences and thoughts. McWhorter advocates for a broader, more inclusive understanding of Black identity—one that embraces diverse expressions and resists the stigma of betrayal associated with

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differing viewpoints. This call for recognizing a richer, varied Black narrative seeks to enhance the dialogue around identity and oppression within the community.

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## **Chapter 20: The Elect on school discipline: The bigotry against black boys.**

### **The Elect on School Discipline: The Bigotry Against Black Boys**

This chapter explores the troubling issue of discipline disparities faced by Black boys in schools, who experience higher rates of suspension and expulsion compared to their peers. This phenomenon is frequently linked to teacher bias and systemic racism. While white boys may be viewed as mere "scamps" who are mischievous and require patience, Black boys are often labeled as "thugs," suggesting a fundamental difference in perception rooted in racial stereotypes. This viewpoint is supported by various institutional bodies, including the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, which argue that such disparities in discipline are largely the result of racial discrimination.

However, the narrative becomes more complex when considering the evidence that suggests Black boys engage in more violent behaviors within public schools. Reports indicate that serious incidents, such as assaults on teachers, are more prevalent, particularly in schools situated in areas with high populations of Black and Latino students. A notable survey highlighted that Black students were over twice as likely to be involved in instances of school violence compared to their white counterparts.

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Teachers, especially those working in high-poverty schools predominantly attended by Black and Latino students, face significant behavioral challenges. Despite recognizing the possibility of implicit bias in disciplinary actions, many educators believe a stricter approach to discipline

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# Chapter 21 Summary: The Elect on university admissions: Yale or jail.

## The Elect on University Admissions: Yale or Jail

In the ongoing debate over affirmative action in university admissions, the practice has often been conceptualized as a way to enhance racial diversity by integrating race as a factor after assessing candidates on academic merits. This raises pivotal questions, particularly about the fairness of admitting Black and Latino students with lower academic qualifications compared to their white and Asian counterparts. Key historical cases, such as *\*Gratz v. Bollinger\**, reveal a troubling preference for Black applicants, which raises concerns about a "mismatch" phenomenon wherein these students may struggle to meet the academic standards of elite institutions.

### Impact of Mismatch on Academic Performance

Research, especially from economist Peter Arcidiacono, has illuminated the detrimental effects of this mismatch, indicating that Black students often face higher dropout rates within demanding majors and tend to perform poorly on crucial professional examinations like the bar exam for law school. Contrary to assertions that these students will thrive despite the

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mismatch, data consistently show that many do not possess the requisite preparation for the rigor of these academic environments.

## **Consequences of Misguided Affirmative Action**

The common notion suggesting that without affirmative action, Black students would be doomed to failure is challenged by the experience of universities like the University of California. After implementing a ban on racial preferences, it was observed that Black students elsewhere achieved honors at rates comparable to their white counterparts, demonstrating that these students can flourish in settings aligned with their educational backgrounds.

## **Critique of Current Perspectives**

Critics of the affirmative action system argue that it fosters a narrow viewpoint, presenting a select group of elite universities as the only avenues to success and neglecting the diverse educational options available. The emotionally charged discourse surrounding these issues often sidelines rational discussion, falsely equating reasoned critique with a lack of compassion or understanding of racial inequality.

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## **The Dilemma of Black Identity and Academic Success**

A complex challenge arises within the Black community regarding the perception of academic success, which some may view as a betrayal of cultural identity. This fear of alienation complicates efforts to demand equal academic standards and contributes to a narrative that sometimes allows certain groups an exemption from the academic rigor expected of others.

### **Conclusion: Reevaluating Educational Strategies**

The substantial evidence regarding the adverse consequences of mismatched admissions approaches compels a reevaluation of current higher education practices. A concerted focus on dismantling perceived structures of racism, instead of fostering equitable educational practices that ensure success for all students, could unintentionally impede meaningful progress for Black and Latino communities. It becomes essential to shift the narrative towards creating supportive environments where every student can thrive academically, regardless of race.

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## **Chapter 22 Summary: The Elect on the quality of black minds: Condescension as respect.**

### Summary of Chapter 22: The Elect on the Quality of Black Minds

In this chapter, McWhorter delves into the nuanced complexities of sympathy, historical interpretation, and educational priorities in the context of the Black experience in America.

### **Condemnation vs. Sympathy:**

The chapter begins with a critique of Ta-Nehisi Coates, highlighting his perceived lack of sympathy for the victims of the 9/11 attacks. McWhorter argues that such views dehumanize both the victims and, unwittingly, the broader conversations about race. He contends that this lack of accountability towards Coates stems from a paternalistic attitude, where society assumes that his perspective is beyond reproach due to his racial background.

### **False Narratives in Historical Interpretation:**

Next, McWhorter addresses Nikole Hannah-Jones, a prominent figure associated with the 1619 Project, who has controversially claimed that the

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American Revolutionary War was fought to preserve slavery. McWhorter criticizes the unchallenged acceptance of such claims, warning that this trend undermines the integrity of historical narratives. He posits that protecting flawed historical interpretations in the name of racial sensitivities ultimately hampers genuine understanding and discourse.

### **Patronization in Science:**

Turning to academia, particularly STEM fields, McWhorter argues against the notion that institutional racism is the primary barrier for Black representation in physics. He suggests that attributing the lack of Black physicists solely to systemic issues is patronizing and avoids addressing the deeper, systemic educational challenges that necessitate focus and reform.

### **The Dangers of Redefining Standards:**

The chapter raises concerns over proposals to lower scientific standards to be more inclusive of diverse perspectives. McWhorter warns that such alterations could reinforce a perception of inferiority among minority scientists, cultivating a cycle of condescension instead of fostering true empowerment for Black scholars and practitioners in the field.

### **Reforming Educational Focus:**

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As the discussion progresses, McWhorter critiques the KIPP academies for straying from their foundational principle of instilling hard work and kindness. He argues that this deviation undermines the preparation of students for a competitive world, pointing out that the Elect prioritize ideological battles against racism over practical strategies that could benefit Black children in real terms.

### **Conclusion: The Elect's Influence:**

Concluding the chapter, McWhorter strongly condemns the Elect—a group he associates with the contemporary focus on social justice—arguing that their priorities detract from the authentic well-being of Black Americans, particularly children. He calls for a reinvigoration of core values centered around hard work and integrity, positioning these principles as essential for genuine progress in the fight against systemic inequalities.

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## **Chapter 23 Summary: The Elect on identity: Black people's essence is not being white.**

### **Summary of Chapter 23: The Elect on Identity**

Chapter 23 delves into the complex and often contentious discourse surrounding identity, particularly in the context of race, as viewed through the lens of a group known as "the Elect." This group argues that a non-white individual's identity should be predominantly shaped by their racial background and their experiences of oppression from white society.

The concept of "Electism" serves as a critique of this ideology, suggesting that it forces non-white individuals—especially Black individuals—to anchor their identities solely in their racial experiences and the dynamics of white oppression. This perspective has the undesirable effect of simplifying and homogenizing the rich diversity of the Black experience into a monolithic narrative defined primarily by opposition to whiteness.

The chapter traces a significant historical pivot from a focus on individualism toward a collective racial identity that can overshadow personal stories and unique creative expressions. This shift ignores the contributions of those who resist being categorized by their race or defined solely by their struggles, thereby disenfranchising voices that seek to present

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a fuller, more nuanced identity.

Moreover, the pressure for Black authors to address race in their work is portrayed as constraining. It restricts their creative possibilities by asserting that their narratives must center race or racism, which limits the interpretative scope of diverse Black experiences and risks diminishing their artistic and intellectual contributions.

In challenging conventional ideas of racial identity, the chapter calls attention to individuals who may not visibly conform to traditional racial categories. It advocates for a critical reassessment of racial classifications, proposing a framework that transcends conventional definitions and recognizes the multifaceted nature of identity that exists beyond societal expectations.

In conclusion, the chapter argues that the narrow focus championed by the Elect—where identity is seen primarily as a reaction to whiteness—can be detrimental rather than liberating. It encourages a broader understanding of identity that permits personal and communal growth, emphasizing that individuality should not be confined to racial parameters alone. This chapter invites readers to reflect on the complexities of identity and the need for a more inclusive and expansive dialogue around race and self-identification.

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## **Chapter 24: The Elect on what should matter to concerned black people, exhibit A: “Unequal outcomes mean unequal opportunity.”**

### **Summary of Chapter 24: Woke Racism**

In this chapter, the author critically examines the prevailing notion that unequal outcomes are solely indicative of unequal opportunities stemming from systemic racism. This idea, championed by activists such as Ibram Kendi, presents a binary view of racial disparities, suggesting that any dissenting opinion aligns with racist ideologies. By labeling those who challenge this perspective as racists, the discourse surrounding racism becomes overly simplistic and dismissive of broader societal influences.

The analysis extends to cultural and social factors that significantly influence the outcomes of Black individuals beyond the lens of systemic racism. A pertinent case study from Philadelphia highlights an initiative aimed at providing educational support to disadvantaged Black youth. Despite these efforts, the reality of high dropout rates and persistent issues suggests that deeply rooted cultural norms—shaped by but not exclusively defined by historical racism—play a crucial role in determining educational success.

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The chapter delves into the historical context, illustrating how policies from previous decades, particularly welfare programs, have inadvertently shaped cultural expectations within Black communities. Changes in socioeconomic conditions influenced perceptions of work and education, underscoring the complexity of these dynamics. Therefore, attributing the resultant disparities

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## **Chapter 25 Summary: The Elect on what should matter to concerned black people, exhibit B: “Slavery is hushed up.”**

### **Summary of Chapter 25: "Woke Racism" by John McWhorter**

In this chapter, John McWhorter critiques the pervasive belief that America is in a perpetual state of denial about its history of slavery. He provides a nuanced examination of the cultural landscape, demonstrating that the legacy of slavery is far from overlooked. McWhorter points to significant historical events, museums, and political initiatives that have facilitated public engagement with slavery's legacy, highlighting that this awareness has been building since the early 2000s.

McWhorter further challenges the notion that slavery is a suppressed topic, citing the wealth of cultural products—such as literature, films, and documentaries—that address the subject openly. He argues that the perception of widespread ignorance about slavery is more reflective of the self-importance of certain activists rather than the reality of American society's engagement with its history.

The author asserts that expecting all Americans to continuously consider the complex legacy of slavery in their daily lives is both unrealistic and

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unnecessary. He contends that meaningful social change can occur without the prerequisite of universal historical knowledge.

A significant portion of the chapter critiques a group McWhorter identifies as "the Elect," who promote a narrative of denial around slavery in America. He argues that this framing serves to reinforce their ideological positions rather than contribute to constructive conversation about contemporary societal issues. McWhorter posits that such insistence distracts from the pressing challenges we face today and perpetuates a false narrative about national ignorance.

Moreover, the chapter addresses the modern trend of "canceling" historical figures whose actions do not align with contemporary values concerning race. McWhorter critiques this phenomenon, arguing that it oversimplifies the complexity of history and obstructs opportunities for robust dialogue about past injustices and their implications in the present. By providing this context, McWhorter advocates for a more balanced understanding of history that acknowledges both its atrocities and accomplishments, promoting constructive engagement over ideological exclusion.

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## **Chapter 26 Summary: The Elect on what should matter to concerned black people, exhibit C: “Historical figures who weren’t woke on race must be canceled.”**

### ### Summary of Chapter 26: The Elect and Historical Figures

In this chapter, the author critically examines the perspective of "The Elect," a group that advocates for canceling historical figures who fail to meet contemporary standards regarding social justice and racial awareness. This movement tends to vilify esteemed individuals such as George Washington and John Locke, labeling them solely based on their connections to slavery while dismissing their broader contributions to society.

The chapter opens by acknowledging the desire within society to uphold moral integrity, but it argues that applying today’s ethical benchmarks to historical figures is fundamentally flawed. Individuals like Washington and Locke operated within the narratives of their time—complex socio-political contexts that shaped their beliefs and actions. Rather than ignoring their accomplishments due to their shortcomings, the author calls for a more nuanced understanding of the progress these figures contributed to over time.

The critique extends to how the Elect engage in selective condemnation.

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Figures such as Woodrow Wilson are often rebuked for their racist policies, yet the Elect frequently overlook the substantial legacies they left behind, including significant advancements in governance. Through this lens, the author poses a provocative question regarding how future generations might judge today's leaders based on evolving norms, thus highlighting the absurdity of the Elect's present-day judgments.

The author brings attention to a notable inconsistency in the Elect's reasoning. For instance, figures like Barack Obama have been forgiven for past views that would not align with today's standards, a double standard that raises important questions about fairness and logic in accountability.

Moreover, the chapter explores the emotional landscape surrounding historical figures, using the example of a hypothetical boy who vandalizes Abraham Lincoln's statue out of turmoil. This action reflects a broader sense of frustration, which, while understandable, underscores the need for a balanced reflection on historical legacies rather than impulsive denunciation.

In closing, the author argues that obsessing over canceling historical figures ultimately diverts attention from urgent contemporary issues that require genuine action and engagement. By questioning the health of this ongoing discourse, the chapter advocates for a more constructive approach to historical reflection that acknowledges both the imperfections of the past and the potential for continued progress in present and future societal challenges.

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# Chapter 27 Summary: Plank 1: End the war on drugs.

## Plank 1: End the War on Drugs

The first plank presents a compelling case for ending the war on drugs, specifically advocating for the regulation and availability of potent substances like heroin. This stance is rooted in the observation that the current illegality of these drugs strengthens a black market that disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, particularly underserved black men. These individuals often struggle in failing educational systems and face limited social networks, driving some to engage in drug trafficking as a means of survival. The author argues that under different circumstances, these men would likely choose legal employment over the dangers associated with drug dealing, which include violence and prison time, further complicating their future prospects. The broader societal acknowledgment of the failures of the war on drugs suggests that its cessation could lead to significant positive change within black American communities, including reductions in crime and fatherlessness. Thus, the focus of antiracism efforts should prioritize ending the war on drugs, emphasizing systemic reform without relying on narratives of white privilege to instigate change.

## Plank 2: Teach Reading Properly

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Building on the themes of empowerment and societal reform, the second plank emphasizes the critical need for effective reading instruction in educational settings. Recognizing literacy as a fundamental skill that unlocks opportunities, the author critiques the current pedagogical approaches that have failed to adequately teach reading, particularly in underserved communities. The chapter explores various teaching methods, underscoring the importance of phonics-based instruction and individualized learning plans that cater to diverse student needs. Additionally, the author highlights that poor reading skills not only hinder academic success but can perpetuate cycles of poverty and crime, further entrenching systemic inequalities. By prioritizing effective reading instruction, schools can provide students with the tools they need to thrive, thereby contributing to the overall upliftment of marginalized communities. This plank aligns with the broader objective of dismantling structural barriers and fostering an equitable society where all individuals have the opportunity to succeed.

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# Chapter 28: Plank 2: Teach reading properly.

## Plank 2: Teach Reading Properly

In this chapter, the author explores two prominent methods for teaching reading: phonics and the whole word method. Phonics is a systematic approach that trains children to decode words by sounding out letters and blending them together, while the whole word method promotes recognizing words based on their shapes and contextual clues without sounding them out. Research consistently shows that phonics is far more effective, particularly for children from low-income backgrounds who may not have access to ample reading resources at home.

Since the 1960s, multiple studies have indicated that phonics instruction correlates with significantly higher reading proficiency, particularly among Black children. Despite this evidence, many school districts continue to implement whole word or hybrid approaches, disregarding the benefits of phonics. This disregard for effective reading instruction has severely impacted generations of Black students, limiting their academic engagement in other subjects and exacerbating existing educational disparities.

The author passionately advocates for a shift towards phonics in educational policies, asserting that this change is essential for addressing racial

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inequalities in America's education system. By prioritizing phonics, educators can better equip all children with vital reading skills, opening doors to academic success and greater opportunities.

### **Plank 3: Get Past the Idea That Everybody Must Go to College**

In this chapter, the author challenges the prevailing notion that college education is the only pathway to success. While higher education has traditionally been viewed as the ultimate goal, the author argues that this mindset can be detrimental, particularly to students who may excel in other areas or prefer vocational training. It's essential to recognize that success comes in many forms and is not exclusively tied to a college degree.

The chapter emphasizes the importance of diversifying educational pathways to accommodate different skills and interests. Vocational training and apprenticeships can provide valuable skills, leading to well-paying jobs in industries such as trades, technology, and healthcare. Furthermore, many successful individuals have forged paths outside of the traditional college route, illustrating that there are numerous ways to achieve fulfillment and financial stability.

By promoting a more inclusive understanding of success that values various forms of education and career preparation, the author advocates for a shift in

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societal attitudes. This shift can empower students to pursue their unique interests and strengths rather than adhering to a one-size-fits-all narrative that may not align with their aspirations. In doing so, we can better prepare all young people for a variety of rewarding futures.

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## Chapter 29 Summary: That's it?

In Chapter 29 of "Woke Racism," McWhorter grapples with two central objections to his proposed list of reforms aimed at addressing racism and the challenges faced by Black America. The first objection critiques the list's perceived brevity, with some advocating for a more extensive set of goals. McWhorter argues that a concise, targeted platform is more pragmatic and actionable, contrasting it with longer, utopian lists that have historically failed to effect real change. He underscores the importance of proposals that can realistically become legislation and bring about tangible improvements.

McWhorter emphasizes a pragmatic approach to the issues confronting Black communities, advocating for reforms that can realistically be implemented. He highlights initiatives such as ending the war on drugs, which have the potential to improve relationships between Black communities and law enforcement. By focusing on educational and vocational opportunities, these reforms could lead to a significant reduction in negative police encounters.

The chapter also critiques the 'Elect' ideology, which he claims prioritizes performative activism over substantial progress. McWhorter points out that this philosophy can foster disempowerment, framing Black individuals as victims rather than promoting individual achievement. This creates confusion about how to effectively tackle racial issues and often leads to an

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unhealthy dynamic where white individuals are encouraged to feel guilt rather than engage constructively.

In outlining actionable recommendations, McWhorter insists on essential reforms: dismantling the war on drugs, enhancing reading education for underprivileged children through phonics, and promoting vocational training as a respectable career choice. He stresses the necessity of resisting the Elect ideology while working towards these practical reforms.

Overall, McWhorter's argument in this chapter advocates for a focused and realistic approach to combating racism, emphasizing initiatives that can lead to real change rather than performances of commitment without substance.

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## Chapter 30 Summary: What not to do.

### Summary of Chapter 30: Woke Racism

In this pivotal chapter, the author delves into the challenges of discussing race within the context of contemporary ideological debates. Specifically, it addresses the interactions with those who subscribe to "Elect" ideology—a term used to describe individuals who hold a rigid belief system around race and social justice, often rejecting divergent opinions.

The chapter begins with the assertion that productive dialogue with proponents of Elect ideology is largely unattainable. These individuals are largely focused on converting others to their view rather than engaging in genuine conversation. They tend to frame dissenting opinions as not just incorrect but morally reprehensible, often dismissing any attempt at constructive discussion as an attack on their ethical stance. This dynamic creates a frustrating atmosphere where alternative perspectives are not welcomed or valued.

Next, the narrative critiques the concept that recognizing rational explanations for emotional responses in race-related contexts equates to victim-blaming. The author argues that while genuine instances of victimhood exist, many claims may be exaggerated or lack foundation.

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Elevating these claims to unquestionable truths overlooks the complexities of individual agency and contributes to a culture where critical evaluation is stifled and dissent is swiftly labeled as racist.

Finally, the chapter encourages a focus on logical reasoning rather than reliance on personal authenticity. The idea that true discussions about race can only be held by those from marginalized backgrounds simplifies the intricate nature of racism and its effects. The emphasis should be on the validity of arguments rather than the perceived authenticity of the speaker's experiences. The author advocates for a fair consideration of all perspectives, asserting that logic should guide discussions rather than a hierarchy of lived experiences.

In essence, Chapter 30 underscores the importance of stepping back from unproductive engagements with ideologically rigid individuals, critically evaluating victimhood claims, and ensuring that all viewpoints are considered thoughtfully and rationally, free from the confines of ideological bias.

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## Chapter 31 Summary: Back to basics.

Chapter 31 of "Woke Racism," titled **Back to Basics: Rejecting Elect Thought**, highlights the author's critical perspective on what they term the "Elect"—a faction that espouses a guilt-driven philosophy regarding racism. The author argues that engaging in discussions shaped by the Elect's ideology often leads to unproductive outcomes. Instead, they advocate for acknowledging one's non-racist beliefs as a rational stance against the radical left's narrative that demands constant guilt and reflection on purported complicity in systemic racism.

The chapter introduces a white friend of the author, whose viewpoint serves as an example of the progress made by individuals who might otherwise be labeled as implicit racists by the Elect. The author emphasizes that recognizing subconscious biases is a natural human experience and that excessive guilt surrounding these biases can be counterproductive rather than constructive.

A significant critique is directed towards the Elect, who prioritize guilt and moral superiority over effective solutions. The author notes that historical precedents do not support the idea that guilt among the ruling class leads to meaningful political change or improved conditions for marginalized communities. This approach, they argue, mirrors Pharisaical judgment, focused more on self-righteousness than on compassionate reform.

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In contrast, the author proposes a better path forward—one centered on tangible issues. They suggest activism that addresses problems like the war on drugs and advocates for improved educational practices. This approach prioritizes real, actionable change over the guilt-laden rhetoric frequently promoted by the Elect.

In the conclusion of the chapter, the author encourages readers to reject the Elect's narrative and their moral admonitions, advocating instead for a more pragmatic, solution-oriented form of antiracism. This shift away from guilt-driven narratives towards practical activism is framed as essential for fostering positive social change.

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## Chapter 32: Just say no.

### Summary of Chapter 32: Woke Racism

In this chapter, the author addresses the influence of an elite group known as the Elect, who maintain control through intimidation and a perceived moral superiority. Rather than engaging in constructive dialogue, the Elect often reject opposing viewpoints, branding them as inherently racist or "white." This dismissal underscores a significant barrier to productive conversation about race.

The narrative highlights the challenges faced by individuals, particularly those within the Black community, who diverge from the Elect's ideology. Such individuals often encounter accusations of racism or self-hatred, regardless of their actual beliefs. The author advises that the best approach is to accept these labels as a reality, focusing instead on one's own understanding of racism and personal rationale.

The chapter presents a pivotal choice for individuals: to either suppress their own rationality to align with the Elect's views or to embrace discomfort in pursuit of meaningful social change. Opting for the latter requires courage, as it involves standing firm against accusations and prioritizing actions that lead to genuine progress in society.

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The impact of individual decisions is emphasized, demonstrating how personal acts of resistance can collectively contribute to a cultural shift. Refusing to acquiesce to public scrutiny not only empowers the individual but can also inspire others to challenge the status quo.

Ultimately, the author advocates for a reestablishment of dialogue that includes diverse perspectives, rather than allowing a single ideology to dominate discussions about race. The chapter calls for a balanced discourse that recognizes the importance of rational conversation in the pursuit of social justice, aiming to create an inclusive environment where all voices can be heard.

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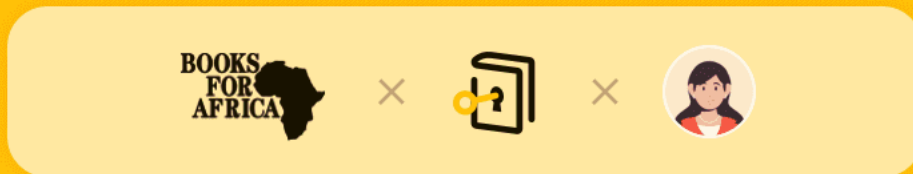




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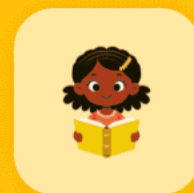
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## Chapter 33 Summary: Separation of church and state.

In Chapter 33 of "Woke Racism" by John McWhorter, the author presents a compelling argument regarding the increasing influence of progressive ideologies, referred to as the "Elect," likening them to a religion rather than mere opinions. This perspective is essential for understanding the prominence of these beliefs within academia and broader cultural discussions.

The "Elect" can be viewed as a group of ideologically aligned individuals who establish doctrines that shape institutional policies and societal norms. Educational institutions serve as their "cathedral complexes," where these tenets are taught and upheld. While McWhorter acknowledges the appeal of these beliefs, especially among some members of the Black community, he urges that they should not dictate public policy or educational curricula.

McWhorter outlines several key doctrines held by the Elect, which include:

1. A call for genuine apologies for perceived injustices against Black individuals.
2. An emphasis on recognizing the diversity within the Black community, challenging reductive stereotypes.
3. The view that remaining silent on racial matters constitutes a form of violence.



4. The assertion that individuals can never fully understand the Black experience due to inherent cultural and experiential divides.
5. The importance of practicing multicultural sensitivity and steering clear of cultural appropriation.
6. Promotion of Black spaces while simultaneously advocating for some distance from them.
7. A critical examination of both "white flight" and "gentrification" as systemic issues.
8. An inquiry into the interracial dating choices of individuals as a reflection of wider societal dynamics.
9. Acknowledgment of collective accountability for historical injustices tied to the concept of "whiteness."
10. Support for altered admissions criteria for Black students to enhance diversity within educational environments.

In concluding this chapter, McWhorter expresses skepticism toward treating these beliefs as doctrine within the public sphere. He advocates for civil discourse, emphasizing the importance of open dialogue over the imposition of these ideologies on society at large. By framing this discussion in a religious context, he encourages a reevaluation of how these beliefs influence public policy and education, urging a more balanced approach that respects diverse viewpoints.



## Chapter 34 Summary: Sample scripts.

In Chapter 34 of "Woke Racism" by John McWhorter, the author addresses the imperative for individuals to resist the dominant ideologies propagated by a group he refers to as the "Elect." Drawing from the experiences of immigrants who have fled oppressive regimes, McWhorter advocates for a metaphorical response to counteract the aggressive rhetoric used by these groups.

He likens confronting the "Elect" to repelling a shark; it requires a firm and decisive reaction—essentially a "bop on the nose"—to deter their intimidating practices. This approach involves actively voicing disagreement and asserting one's beliefs, thereby preserving autonomy in thought and discourse.

To illustrate his point, McWhorter provides several pragmatic examples of how to navigate confrontational situations effectively. These include confidently stating one's opinions without succumbing to negative labeling, declining to sign petitions or adjust educational materials to reflect the "Elect's" values, and engaging in meaningful conversations about genuine commitments to aid marginalized communities, despite potential accusations of racism.

The author emphasizes that consistently resisting these aggressive

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confrontations can foster a collective awareness among peers, weakening the impact of the "Elect's" shaming tactics. He champions the concept of civil valor, aiming to promote a form of courage that counters intellectual oppression rather than adhering to traditional forms of bravery.

McWhorter also contextualizes his arguments within historical movements that have championed rational discourse and individual rights. He argues that sacrificing jobs and reputations for the sake of ideological conformity is neither an advancement nor an acceptable reality. The "Elect's" tendency to frame all discussions around power dynamics threatens personal identities and undermines meaningful dialogue.

In conclusion, the chapter urges readers to stand decisively united against the "Elect," positioning this struggle as essential for safeguarding rational thought and individual dignity. McWhorter invokes a "Spartacus" spirit, inspiring resistance against the enforced ideologies that threaten to fundamentally reshape society.

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# Chapter 35 Summary: Be Spartacus.

## Be Spartacus

In a world where standing up against formidable opposition can be daunting, the importance of honesty and resilience shines through. The narrative emphasizes that speaking the truth, even in the face of potential backlash, can not only lead to individual survival but can also foster a supportive community for those who dare to confront prevailing ideologies.

## Examples of Resilience

1. **Trader Joe's:** This grocery chain faced demands to alter culturally themed product names but chose to maintain its branding, proving that conviction in identity can lead to continued success.
2. **Harding University:** The university opted to keep the name of a former president on one of its buildings after reflecting on his complex legacy, showcasing a commitment to forgiveness and alignment with their Christian principles.
3. **Princeton University:** Academics Sergiu Klainerman and Joshua Katz

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took a stand against a divisive manifesto labeling the institution as racist. Despite the ensuing criticism, they remained steadfast in their convictions, illustrating the resolve to uphold integrity in academia.

4. **UC Davis:** Mathematician Abigail Thompson resisted pressure to comply with a controversial diversity statement, ultimately affirming her personal and professional beliefs while retaining her position.

5. **Unitarian Reverend Todd Eklof** After being excommunicated for challenging dominant ideologies within his religious community, Eklof found strength in the support of his followers, highlighting the power of standing up against conformity.

6. **Artists Against Censorship:** In response to museums canceling Philip Guston's provocative exhibitions, more than a hundred artists united against censorship, underscoring the vital role of art in challenging societal norms and stimulating dialogue.

7. **Sandia National Laboratories:** Casey Petersen's bold critique of a required diversity statement resulted in professional backlash, yet he remained employed, exemplifying resilience in the face of institutional pressure.

8. **Northwestern University President Morton Schapiro:** Confronted

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with protests demanding his resignation, Schapiro responded honestly to student concerns, demonstrating that leading with integrity can withstand political pressures.

9. **Pedro Domingos:** An AI researcher who questioned the ethics of enforcing an "Elect" test faced backlash but received support from colleagues, allowing him to continue his important work in the field.

10. **Anonymous Academic:** This individual resigned from a position tied to enforcing racial accusations dictated by the Elect's principles but remained committed to their beliefs, reflecting the difficult choices faced by those in academia.

## Call to Action

Though dissenters may be painted as immoral by those in power, it is crucial to stand firm in one's beliefs. This call to action encourages individuals to join the ranks of resilient figures who have spoken out against oppressive narratives and emerged intact, advocating for truth and personal conviction even in challenging environments.

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