

So You Want to Talk About Race

Ijeoma Oluo

August 14—Introduction

"These are very scary times for a lot of people who are just now realizing that America is not, and has never been, the melting-pot utopia that their parents and teachers told them it was. These are very scary times for those who are just now realizing how justifiably hurt, angry, and terrified so many people of color have been all along."

What motivated you to read this book? How have the events of the past few months changed your perspective on the issue of racism?

Chapter 1—Is It Really About Race?

"The promise of racism has still held true: in just about every demographic of socio-political-economic well-being, black and brown people are consistently getting less... What keeps a poor child in Appalachia poor is not what keeps a poor child in Chicago poor—even if from a distance the outcomes look the same. And what keeps an able-bodied black woman poor is not what keep a disabled white man poor, even if the outcomes look the same."

Can you think of a few examples of this?

"Three basic rules:

1. It is about race if a person of color thinks it's about race.
2. It is about race if it disproportionately or differently affects people of color.
3. It is about race if it fits into a broader pattern of events that disproportionately or differently affects people of color."

What if the author trying to tell us here?

Chapter 2—What is racism?

"The most common definitions of racism are as follows:

1. Racism is any prejudice against someone because of their race.
2. Racism is any prejudice against someone because of their race, when those views are reinforced by systems of power."

What is the difference between these two definitions?

"The truth is, you don't even have to "be racist," to be a part of the racist system."

"Getting my neighbor to love people of color might make it easier to hang around him, but it won't do anything to combat police brutality, racial income inequality, food deserts, or the prison industrial complex."

What is the difference between individual "racist attitudes" and "systemic racism"?