

#GoodReads: Resources on Racial Equity

Joanna Carrasco



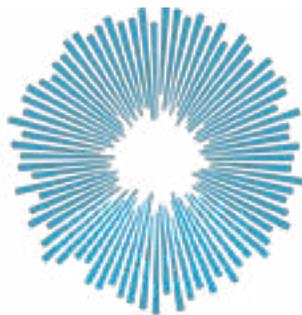
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#GoodReads

RESOURCES ON RACIAL EQUITY

Joanna Carrasco

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PODCASTS



Applause from Ratna Gill and Living Cities



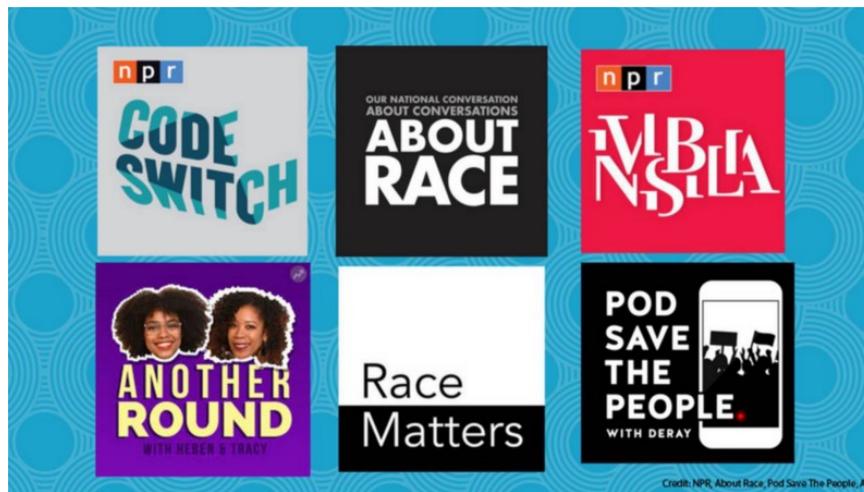
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Penn State 18'/PR Major/Bronx native

Jul 18 · 5 min read

#GoodReads: What We're Listening to on Race Equity

Podcasts to Learn About Race & Culture



Racial equity and inclusion are at the forefront of all of our work. Absent an intentional focus on race, the status quo persists and racial gaps only worsen. In practice, this isn't easy. But there are countless resources out there to help practitioners dedicated to closing racial gaps. In the coming weeks, I will be sharing resources, from podcasts to documentary films to actionable toolkits, which can help you in your own racial equity work.

I didn't become a big fan of podcasts until recently. I first discovered the About Race Podcast and since then, I've been hooked. I've found that as an Afro-Latina from New York City, a lot of the stories and conversations are enlightening and validate my own lived experiences.

They've helped me see perspectives that I may not have considered before and also inform my activism and spark my interest in racial justice issues. It also doesn't hurt that it's one of the easiest ways for you to stay informed—all you have to do is listen. The ones I've selected

below are a mix of conversations about racial inequity, with some culture and identity politics thrown in.

Another Round

This podcast, produced by BuzzFeed, stars Heben Nigatu and Tracey Clayton. The hosts explore relevant topics in regards to the black American experience, race across the spectrum, culture, gender and a whole flux of other topics.

An episode that I enjoyed was Tracey Clayton's personal account of attending a predominantly white institution which I could relate to and I think many others might too. The hosts navigate this and other topics with the help of guest stars like Issa Rae and Melissa Harris-Perry who contribute to the conversations with their own experiences and thoughts. This podcast is laugh out loud funny.

Recommended episodes:

- [Another Round's Blacker History Month](#)
- [Oh! The Racism \(with Issa Rae\)](#)
- [Carribean Vibez](#)

Codeswitch

Codeswitch: Race and Identity Remixed is a podcast produced by NPR that covers the intersections of race, gender and identity and explore what these identities mean, how people navigate the spaces they occupy in terms of identity and the ways in which these topics are ever-changing.

One episode that especially stuck out to me was "A Prescription for "Racial Imposter Syndrome" I liked this one because I've definitely felt that sense of being a "racial" imposter because of my identity as an Afro-Latina and my journey understanding the different aspects of myself and navigating those identities. This podcast truly has an episode for everyone with an analysis of SZA's new album "Ctrl," a step back and look into Philando Castile's death after one year and a look into how party and place shape views on discrimination.

Recommended episode:

- [A Prescription for Racial Imposter Syndrome](#)
- [From Mourning to Moonlight: A Year in Race, as told by Code Switch](#)
- [Hold Up! Time for An Explanatory Comma](#)

Invisibilia

While this podcast doesn't specifically talk about race, one episode in particular sheds a light on implicit biases that most people have due to the stereotypes that are perpetuated by society and therefore ingrained in our subconscious. The accounts from people who expressed that they'd thought they were aware of race and prejudice/discrimination described their own experiences with realizing they had implicit bias. It's a great episode that invites you to reflect on your own implicit biases, how they manifest in your everyday life and what you can do to combat these ideas.

Recommended episode:

- [The Culture Inside](#)

Pod Save the People

This podcast is hosted by activist DeRay McKesson who became well-known for his unapologetic and outspoken activism during the beginning stages of the #BlackLivesMatter movement. This podcast helps you look at decisions and events in everyday life through a racial equity and inclusion lens. DeRay hosts a number of guests that contribute insights to the current state of politics—Senator Cory Booker being one example.

He also has celebrities like John Legend on his show and discusses topics like women's reproductive rights and mass incarceration. I've found that the content on this podcast provides great building blocks for people to build their activism and develop their competencies about hot topics that affect people of color daily like battles over healthcare legislation and education budgets. This podcast is a must listen with incredible insights and food for thought.

Recommended episodes:

- [“When you have to face yourself”](#)
- [“Intentional Inequity”](#)

Race Matters

Another NPR production, Race Matters addresses race in a world that is often afraid to even say the word. Their approach in naming and addressing oppressive systems head on results in many rich conversations with leading intellectuals like Dr. George Yancy, Patricia Hill Collins, and Doctor Mariana Ortega where they explore things that aren't discussed by main stream media like black, Latina and white feminism and what the difference in those ideologies is and why they're separate to begin with. One of my favorite episodes features the above mentioned Patricia Hill Collins where she discusses her book Black Feminist Thought which personally was one of the most rewarding and insightful reads of my life. She explains her need to write the book and what she means by the phrase black feminism.

Recommended episode:

- [Doctor Patricia Hill Collins Works To Expand The Platform For Black Women's Voices](#)
- [Jabar Shumate On Campus Student Activism, Diversity Programming Following SAE Incident](#)

A Conversation About Conversations About Race

Also simply known as About Race, this podcast is hosted by Anna Holmes, Baratunde Thurston, Tanner Colby and Raquel Cepeda, who also happens to be the author of one of my favorite books, “How I Became Latina”. The hosts discuss the ways in which we discuss, avoid and think about the topic of race. Beyond that they discuss culture, privilege, identity and how those subjects interact with one another. Unfortunately, this show is no longer releasing new episodes but they have a number and a variety of episodes that you can still listen to.

Recommended episode:

- [“Will you be my Black friend? B-Side”](#)
- [“The End of Identity Politics?”](#)

Also worth a listen is Living Cities’ own podcast “Voicing Race.” There are two episodes out right now: [an insightful account on storytelling in the media](#) and [how five local governments are tackling racial equity](#). Please stay updated with us as we continue to release more episodes.

Do you have a favorite podcast on race? Let us know by tweeting @Living_Cities with the hashtag #podcasts4race

This piece was originally published on the [Living Cities blog](#).

DOCUMENTARIES



Applause from Ratna Gill, JaNay Queen, and 1 other



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Penn State 18'/PR Major/Bronx native
Aug 16 · 4 min read

#GoodReads: What We're Watching on Race Equity

Documentaries to Learn About Inequality in the Criminal Justice System



The role of racial discrimination in mass incarceration is well-documented. For example, although Whites and Blacks use and sell drugs at the same rate, Black people are jailed for the offense ten times more than White people. One in three Black men and one in six Hispanic men can expect to be jailed in his lifetime, compared to one in seventeen White men. The misconception is that this is due to Black and Hispanic people committing crimes at higher rates when in reality it has everything to do with racial bias.

Documentaries are the perfect way to lift the veil on issues of racial equity because they offer in-depth analysis without losing sight of the human story. The American criminal justice system has been widely criticized, in part due to its high rates of incarceration. The United States incarcerates more people per capita than any other country in

the world. Despite representing only 4.4 percent of the world population, it is home to 22 percent of the world's prison population.

My experience in watching these documentaries was one of surprise and sadness at the state of the criminal justice system, as well as empathy for those who it negatively affects. These documentaries delve into personal accounts while also taking a look at the system as a whole, offering analysis of its biases and injustices.

13th

Created by Ava DuVernay, this documentary features many prominent figures like Angela Davis, Cory Booker, Van Jones and Henry Louis Gates Jr. One of my favorite parts of this documentary is when Angela Davis tells part of her own story of struggle during the Civil Rights Era which, personally, really put the current struggle for justice and civil rights into perspective.

These stories show how explicit racial oppression was the norm not too long ago, and shed light on the fact that, as a country, we still have a long way to go to make our systems truly just and equitable. This must-watch documentary is really compelling and provides an overview of the prejudices that black and brown people face in the criminal justice system

Living Cities' own podcast, [Voicing Race](#), was inspired by this documentary.

The documentary can be found on [Netflix](#).

Time: The Kalief Browder Story

Produced by Jay-Z, this docuseries features the story of Kalief Browder, a 22 year old man who was arrested when he was 16 over a stolen book bag and was imprisoned for 3 years without trial. He was placed in solitary confinement for extended periods, a practice which damaged his psyche and ultimately led him to take his own life.

This story is especially heart-wrenching for me because it's based on a young man who lived only a few blocks from where I grew up—right around the corner from where I attended high school. To me, this was a prime example of the ways in which the criminal justice system fails black and brown people daily. Instead of focusing on rehabilitation, the

system often breaks people psychologically, making it difficult for many to reenter society successfully.

The series can be found on the [Spike TV](#) website.

The Central Park Five

Directed by Ken Burns and based on the infamous case from 1989, *The Central Park Five* tells the story of five young black men who were wrongly accused of a crime they did not commit and details their persecution by the media and society broadly. The racism embedded in media coverage of the case was central to the wrongful conviction of the five men, influencing the public's opinion of the accused and creating a drumbeat for revenge.

The real perpetrator came forward twelve years after the end of the trial, finally proving the young men's innocence. It's amazing to realize how these young men were unjustly tried, pressured into false confessions, and ultimately convicted, especially considering the fact that there was a complete lack of evidence against the boys.

It's terrifying to consider the number of people sitting in prison who were wrongly convicted, robbed of large pieces of their lives like these men were.

The documentary can be found on multiple streaming services, including [Netflix](#) and [Amazon Video](#).

OJ: Made in America

The most in depth analysis on this list of criminal justice and how perception of race plays a huge part in verdicts is *OJ: Made in America*. Many documentaries and adaptations of this story have been made but this one is by far my personal favorite. It's a five part series which makes it easier to understand the nuances of the case and how race played a huge part in OJ's verdict.

From the way OJ viewed his own blackness to the ways in which his lawyers used his race and celebrity in their favor, this documentary gives viewers a better understanding of the split between black and white Americans about OJ's guilt and elements in the broader culture like the Rodney King incident.

The series can be found on [Hulu](#).

I encourage all readers to use these resources to better understand some of the hidden disparities that exist in our society. Tools like these help challenge misconceptions about crime, race, and the justice system, but it's what we do with these tools and the actions we take moving forward that will create change.

This piece was originally published on the [Living Cities blog](#).

BOOKS



Applause from Ratna Gill, Living Cities, and 1 other



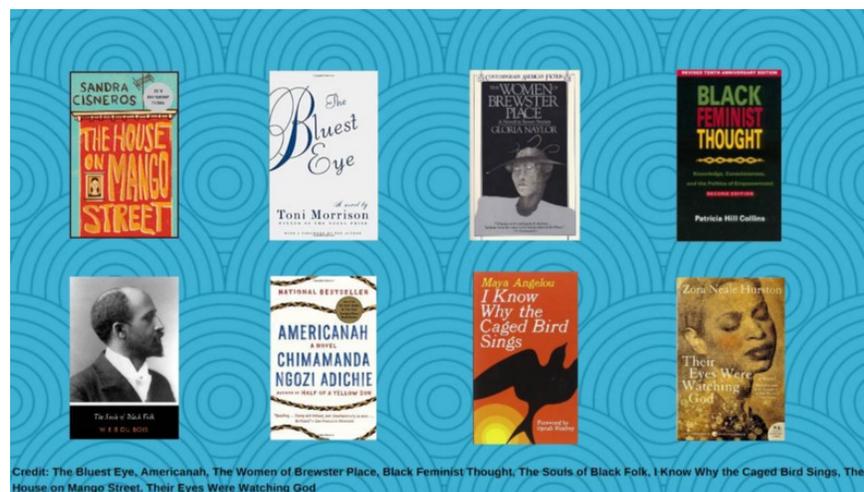
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Penn State 18'/PR Major/Bronx native

Aug 16 · 5 min read

#GoodReads: What We're Reading on Racial Equity

Books to Learn About the Lived Experiences of POC



Credit: The Bluest Eye, Americanah, The Women of Brewster Place, Black Feminist Thought, The Souls of Black Folk, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, The House on Mango Street, Their Eyes Were Watching God

Knowing what I know now, I realize that I went into my freshman year at Penn State lacking competency on the state of racial equity in America. I was, for the most part, unaware of the many systematic and intentional forces working against people of color. It wasn't until my second-semester African American Literature class that I began to expand my thinking and started seeing the world through a racial equity lens.

Literature is a powerful medium for telling stories that humanize. Books give readers the ability to see into someone else's lived experiences and intersectional identities, particularly those who are subject to injustice. The books we read in this class were transformative to my understanding of race—so much so that my commitment to racial equity work is due in large part to these works of literature.

I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings (Maya Angelou)

An easy and insightful read, Angelou allows us to experience her childhood through this autobiographical novel. This book is one of my favorites because of its raw approach to storytelling. Following her journey of self-definition was empowering given the many tribulations she overcame.

Race manifests itself in every aspect of the novel but mainly through the socialization that Marguerite, the main character, endures in order to safely navigate white society in the American South.

Their Eyes Were Watching God (Zora Neale Hurston)

Hurston navigates themes of race, womanhood, liberation, voice and gender roles in this novel. Janie Crawford, the novel's main character, is a young and beautiful black woman who gets a lot of attention for her physical features. The novel is pioneering in that it gives Janie a voice which allows her create her own identity beyond that of the male gaze and ideas of womanhood in the early 20th century. While it takes her a while to find that identity, her journey to becoming a woman who does not conform to being subordinate proves her strength and intelligence.

The Women of Brewster Place (Gloria Naylor)

This novel tells the story of several black women living in an inner city neighborhood. Naylor brings to life disparities between people of color and white people in the inner city. She breaks down the root causes of the disparities that exist for people who live in similar conditions and beyond that shows how the debilitating forces at play—environmental racism, sexism and homophobia intersect and manifest in each of the women's lives.

Beyond that, the book explores black womanhood in relation to motherhood, othermothering—the act of a woman caring for children who are not her own—sexual orientation and gender norms.

The Bluest Eye (Toni Morrison)

Another personal favorite of mine, *The Bluest Eye* follows the main character, Pecola, through her childhood. We're given a look into what standards of American beauty can mean for young black girls and the effects of those distorted and unrealistic ideologies. The novel also highlights Pecola's mother story, which depicts the frustration and

internalized self-hatred many women of color are vulnerable to due to economic disparities that are out of their control.

The House on Mango Street (Sandra Cisneros)

This short novel tells the story of a young Latina and her experience in her under-developed neighborhood. It is a depiction of the shame many people of color experience because of their background. In this case, the main character, Esperanza, feels shame in her home and neighborhood because of its poverty and physical appearance. She dreams of a life beyond the few blocks she roamed as a child only to later feel responsibility to reach back from those who weren't able to make it out like she did. This is something that resonated with me as I've felt these same feelings of shame but, like, Esperanza, chose to remain and elevate my neighborhood and have learned to appreciate its resilience and vibrant culture.

The Souls of Black Folk (W.E.B. DuBois)

W.E.B. DuBois, in this collection of essays, calls out the immorality of American society in the early 20th century. In this book, he advocates for African Americans and pinpoints all of the ways in which society continues to hold the community back. He puts forth progressive ideas like improving access to education. He's also critical of Booker T. Washington's complacent approach to race relations, which was to conform and remain separate just as long as white people allowed black progress, with an emphasis on advancement through agriculture.

DuBois asserted that, while Washington's work is significant to African American history, it stunts long-term progress. DuBois calls for advancement through education and equality. This is a great read for those seeking a more sociological approach to understanding inequity.

Black Feminist Thought (Patricia Hill Collins)

A longer read, but worth the time commitment, is Black Feminist Thought. It was my introduction to Black Feminism and the need for it. It provided analysis how black women have unique struggles that many white women might not experience. It stresses the need for intersectionality in feminism due to the fact that women, depending on their race, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, etc. have a different experience of the world and oppression. Acknowledgement of

these experiences is central to creating a more just society for both women and men.

Americanah (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie)

Drawing loosely on her own experience immigrating to the United States from Nigeria and being struck with the label of Black American, Adichie writes about this navigation of racial identity through the novel's protagonist, Ifemelu. Other themes covered include the politics of black hair, privilege, race and identity. This is a contemporary novel that offers a lot of cultural references that are very relevant to our society today.

I hope that these books can help reframe and challenge some of your own ideas about the state of race equity in America. I encourage you to also reflect on your own biases as you read these works and open yourself up to understanding these diverse experiences.

To take it a step further, share your favorites from these foundational books with your own network to expand the understanding gained from these works.

Do you have a favorite book on racial lived experiences? Let us know by tweeting [@Living_Cities](#) with the hashtag #books4race

This piece was originally published on the [Living Cities blog](#).

BLOGS



Applause from Ratna Gill



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Nov 8 · 3 min read

#GoodReads: Blogs We're Reading on Racial Equity

Blogs to Learn About the Lived Experiences of Marginalized People



One of the vital aspects of being a good ally or supporter in the struggle for social justice is understanding the lived experiences of those who have been and continue to be marginalized. We have to understand that the way in which every person interacts with the world and is perceived is dependent on their race, gender, and sexuality. In understanding where I fit in the struggle for social justice, one of the best ways I've come to understand my identity and the experiences of others and what that means in relation to the movement is by reading thinkpieces and blogs, having conversations, and simply asking questions.

Blogs in particular provide spaces for folks who are marginalized to tell their own stories. Many bloggers combine critical analysis of current events with their own personal opinions, which are extremely important to reflect.

I have found that reading the blogs below is a great way to understand different perspectives and the lived experiences that are so critical to understand in order to be a good ally and supporter to marginalized peoples in the movement for social justice.

Feminista Jones

This blog features writings on Black Feminism, Black American culture, intersectionality, and women. Apart from being an award-winning blogger, Feminista Jones is also a social worker and activist. Her blog is the only one on our list with a sole contributor. Check it out if you're interested in hearing her personal insights on all things from Issa Rae's [Insecure](#) to her analysis and breakdown of stereotypical images thrust upon black women like the Mammy image.

Feministing

A community of bloggers with various contributors, this platform features writings on politics, pop culture, and civil rights. This is one of my favorite platforms because it features many young feminists whose perspectives I feel I can relate to, who meanwhile often open my eyes to experiences or ideas that were previously unknown to me. Beyond that, they cover issues that are relevant and timely to the political climate we are living in like coverage on the debates of trans rights and reproductive rights for all women. I think they truly live the value of intersectionality as evident in their content. I've found that reading this blog is one of the easiest ways for me to stay informed and understand the opinions of other women of color.

The Establishment

Described as a multimedia company funded by women, [The Establishment](#) is another community of contributors whose work centers on a myriad of topics ranging from wellness to politics, literature, and pop culture. What's most enjoyable about this blog is the variety of content. It features artists, writers and creators of all kinds who produce audio, visual, and written content.

BGD

I had to include this platform because of its intentionality as a space for Queer and Trans People of Color to express themselves and share their stories and experiences. It's the only platform of its kind despite the fact that such a platform is so necessary. It was started by Mia McKenzie in an effort to amplify the voices of QTPoC and it has done just that. Reading this blog is an amazingly powerful way to understand the lived experiences of Queer and Trans People of Color.

Given the current political climate we are experiencing, it most important now for us, as allies of the marginalized and victims of marginalization, to never stop learning and listening to those who are most affected.

This piece was originally published on the [Living Cities](#) blog.