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Black And White Styles In Conflict

Black and White

Styles in Conflict

Thomas Kochman
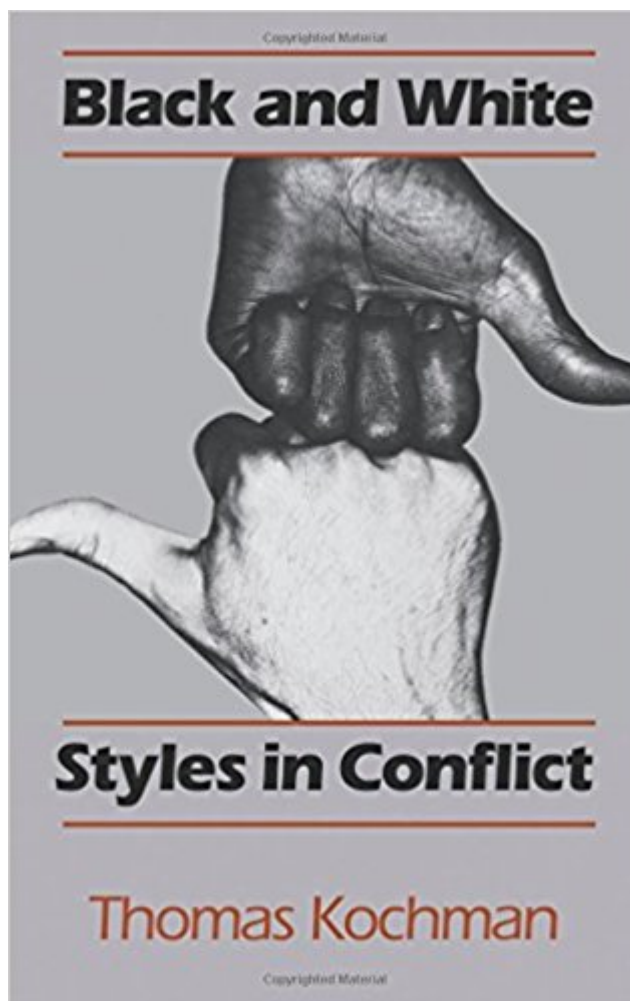
Synopsis

"Goes a long way toward showing a lay audience the value, integrity, and aesthetic sensibility of black culture, and moreover the conflicts which arise when its values are treated as deviant version of majority ones."Ã¢â ¬â •Marjorie Harness Goodwin, American Ethnologist

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this book, the author draws attention to a rarely acknowledged problem in inter-ethnic communications: A difference in means (or style) rather than ends (or goals) impedes many attempts at communications among Americans...His thesis is convincing and his demonstrations impress the reader with the range and importance of stylistic conflicts...The potential for conflict and misunderstanding which inheres in these stylistic differences has alarming implications.

Very informative and a great read.

Interesting read...albeit not QUITE as all-encompassing as it COULD be. Nonetheless, a good book.

Informative.

I read Kochman's book back in the late 90s.I think he did a pretty decent job, but the book should ONLY be used as an "exploratory text."He compared the communication styles of "Whites" with

what he calls "community Blacks."Upon reading the book, I found out that "community Blacks" are actually poor Blacks....and the Whites...are members of the White middle class.If he had included the communications styles of poor Whites (are not passive communicators...some may be, but most are not)and middle class Blacks, the book would have been much, much richer and sophisticated. (and even better if the styles of Asian-/Latino-/ and "Native"-American groups were included.)That's the problem when Blacks and Whites and other groups are compared. Researchers, journalists, etc., often use the umbrella terms "Black, White, Asian, etc.," which project the idea that "all members of this group are the same"...no matter their educational achievement, economic status, geographical location, etc. That is very wrong.Although Kochman provided a lot of good information, the book simply reinforces the "racial" dichotomy: White and Black, good and bad, rich and poor, etc.The data about "how different cultural (not "racial") groups interpret information at public meetings was very informative, as well as differences in the coaching styles of Black and White coaches. I was able to immediately see what he was writing about when White fans at the University of KY would criticize Coach Tubby Smith's methods, etc.Very well done.The information about "how middle class Whites tend to wrongly believe that --when a discussion between Blacks and Whites becomes heated...violence will be next".... was right on the money.As long as people are talking, violence is most likely not to occur.However, when people STOP talking...that's when violence may occur. Hence, it's not the angry words you have to be aware of...but instead "quietness and silence."Good job, Mr. Kochman!!!I noticed that some of the other people who left comments specifically referred to "Black culture."Black culture is just as much about "community Blacks" as it is about middle- and upper-class Blacks...groups who are FREQUENTLY EXCLUDED when "race" and culture are written about by the overwhelming majority of White researchers, journalists, historians, etc.When the "Blacks are poor" and "all Whites are middle class" approach is utilized, it appears the only thing being done is to ILLUMINATE differences among the two groups and ignoring commonalities.Much better research methods and variables need to be implemented, which is the subject of a book titled, "White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology," edited by Tukufu Zubieri and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2008).

Insightful

Excellent!

As a white woman from a small town who's madly in love with a black man from a big city, this book

really helped articulate some of the communication differences that have plauged us. I strongly believe that perception is a person's reality; however, those perceptions can be changed if one becomes aware of the origin of those perceptions. The only negative to this book is that it comes off as "textbook" at times. I especially recommend this book to caucasions who have never been immersed in black culture.

This book changed my life for the better. I highly recommend it, but it needs to be read carefully and with understanding.Kochman examines several differing cultural "styles" of American Blacks and Whites. Then he shows how people can misinterpret these stylistic differences and thereby reinforce their own stereotyped views of the other group - usually without realizing that they have made an interpretation, let alone a misinterpretation!I have been in discussions where people complained that Kochman himself was making racist generalizations. That complaint is based on a failure to read the book carefully and with understanding.Kochman explains that cultural styles are NOT inborn and NOT uniformly expressed by every member of the group in question. But cultural styles do exist, and are assumed by many people to be inborn "racial" characteristics. The whole point is to understand how cultural styles work, to recognize them and not to misinterpret them.Kochman's writing is brilliant and valuable. It deserves careful attention.

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