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White Out: Understanding White Privilege and Dominance in the Modern Age by Christopher S. Collins and Alexander Jun
(review)

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White Out: Understanding White Privilege and Dominance in the Modern Age

Christopher S. Collins and Alexander Jun
New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2017,
124 pages, \$20.95 (softcover)

Reviewed by Keith E. Edwards,
Independent Speaker, Consultant, and Coach

In *White Out*, professors, trainers, and facilitators Christopher S. Collins and Alexander Jun offer some new approaches to discuss key concepts around Whiteness, racism, privilege, and dominance. In particular, they focus on common pushback when White dominance is named and address how to respond to that pushback. They offer new metaphors and new vocabulary to help those learning about White dominance. These new approaches can also serve as tools for those educating about Whiteness and White supremacy. They also use a current mindset and recent examples throughout the book to make the conversation with the reader accessible and relevant.

The authors begin by explaining the systemic nature of White supremacy and how it is internalized in their opening chapter. They offer new metaphors for thinking about systemic Whiteness. They also include succinct and clear introductions of key concepts like the social construction of Whiteness, implicit bias, systems of White supremacy, internalized Whiteness, moving beyond the Black-White binary, and exploring White dominance. In the second chapter, they explore the dynamics of White people sharing their hurts and pains in response to hearing People of Color share their experiences of racism. They explain that there are an infinite number of reasons why White people might share pain in response to hearing about the pain of racism, but this often results

in minimizing People of Color's experiences and ignores the systemic nature of racism.

In chapter 3, the authors explore White privilege through the metaphor of a virus they call "Whitefluenza." They use this metaphor to point out that White privilege is constant, but the symptoms and how it shows-up change with context and time. They use current and timely examples of White privilege throughout the book including Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Rachel Dolezal, and the 2016 presidential election in the United States. In chapter 4, they explore the tensions White people can experience in feeling they should speak up, take a stand, and confront their White peers and simultaneously they should not take up space, listen, and do not re-center Whiteness. The authors make a good case for why White people should avoid approaching being an ally to be the savior, hero, or rescuer. A deeper exploration of how to navigate the complexity of these substantive, complex, and important tensions would have been helpful.

The next three chapters explore some of the harm White people can inflict when they engage around race and racism in general. In chapter 5, the authors discuss the ways that White people sometimes feel hurt experiencing slurs because they are White. The authors explain that intentionally hurting someone through a racial slur should be avoided. However, focusing on these experiences minimizes the experiences of racism by people of color and ignores the systemic nature of White supremacy. In chapter 6, they explore White anger, especially White men's anger, and how it shows up in violence, politics, social movements, public policy, campus groups, police shootings, and more. In chapter 7, they explore ways White people express, consciously

and unconsciously, that they are oppressed now with suggestions for how to correct this inaccuracy and engage White people in these conversations.

The final two chapters offer ways to understand White identity development and ways to move this learning forward. In chapter 8, the authors share the findings from their research and the cycle of consciousness for White people. In the final chapter, the authors reflect succinctly on how they have tried to offer a new vocabulary to understand and address White dominance.

The strengths of *White Out* are in the authors' current examples and mindsets, the new metaphors and language they offer for established concepts, the personal voice and perspectives of their identities as White and Korean, Asian American, and the "way forward" sections at the end of each chapter that seek to provide helpful guidance. They discuss, unpack, and challenge some common ways that White people might push back in conversations on Whiteness. The authors offer less in terms of deep analysis of these dynamics. They also offer less in terms of exploring the challenges more racially aware or conscious White people might experience. These strengths and limitations make *White Out* an accessible and helpful choice for undergraduate or master's students to explore Whiteness and White dominance. This could be a great option for those who have used *White Like Me* (Wise, 2005) and are looking for a different approach. *White Out* could be a great tool for an on-going group discussion around issues of Whiteness. For more serious scholars of race, racism, Whiteness, and social justice education with an existing and deep knowledge of these dynamics, *White Out* may be less of a source for expanding their own understanding. These folks may find *Understanding White Privilege* (Kendall, 2013) to be a better source for their own learning and *White Out* a useful tool

for them to help facilitate the learning and development of others.

REFERENCES

- Wise, T. (2005) *White like me*. Brooklyn, NY: Soft Skull Press.
 Kendall, F. E. (2013). *Understanding White privilege: Creating pathways to authentic relationships across race* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.



College Student Leadership Development

Valerie I. Sessa

New York, NY: Routledge, 2017, 213 pages,
\$49.95 (softcover)

Reviewed by Paige Haber-Curran,
Texas State University

Informed by her research on college student leaders, Valerie I. Sessa focuses *College Student Leadership Development* on how students can learn leadership and develop as leaders. The book serves as a resource to college students, providing a learning model for intentionally guiding one's leadership development. In acknowledging that many skills-based models of leadership exist, Sessa aims to focus less on *what* one should learn (i.e., skills and behaviors) and more on *how* one can learn leadership.

Sessa has a background in industrial and organizational psychology and has experience as a faculty member in academia, a research scientist and director at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), and an organizational consultant. The definition of leadership presented in the book, "accomplishment of three tasks: direction, alignment, and commitment" (p. xiv), is influenced by the CCL's approach to leadership. This definition allows for individuals, regardless of whether or not they hold a positional role, to participate in the tasks of leadership through developing direction and vision, working together through alignment, and committing to the vision by making it a priority.