

# Between barak and a hard place book report

[Business](#)



Running Head: Between Barak and a Hard Place Book Report Barak and a Hard Place Book Report Ruth Amador Park University - Human Diversity and Social Justice- Professor Esther Palma Race has always been and continues to be a serious and subtle matter in our nation. Racial inequities are explored in *Between Barack and a Hard Place*, by Tim Wise, one of the country's most acclaimed white antiracist activists and educators in the United States.

In this book Tim Wise explains how Barack Obama's political success took the race debate to new levels and how to many whites, validating the American ideology that hard work pays off to anybody and it serves as the perfect example that institutional barriers against blacks no longer exist. But is there any truth in this belief or is it simply a myth? Despite Obama's success, white privilege and discrimination have not yet vanished, and it affects the black community denying opportunities in each social area. Wise gives numerous of examples in his book on how this barriers are still present today.

Tim Wise addresses in this book, the different ways in which racism is still exists in our society. From employment, housing, income, education and even the way in which the black minority are treated when applying for a mortgage to buy a home. Wise gives an anti racist look of what our society has and hasn't changed after Barack Obama's presidential election. Tim Wise starts his book talking about how in the American society, institutional discrimination, bigotry and the traditional way of racism has become what he calls "Racism 2.0".

This term is used by Wise to describe successful individual who are part of a minority but who have "transcended their blackness" which allows whites to

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celebrate the achievements of an individual such as Obama but still show prejudice towards minorities who do not achieve such success. Wise arguments of where we are coming from and where we are when it comes to racism are exceptionally valuable. He talks about “enlightened exceptionalism,” to describe how white people will accept blacks if they are viewed as exceptional to justify they (whites) are not racists as this term has negative connotations.

The author discusses that in our supposedly “post-racial” society those who consider that racism still exists are seen as irrational. Wise reminds us that racism is still a reality and has not to this day disappeared, it’s just “become more sophisticated.” (Wise, 2009).

The following paragraph Wise suggests a way in which we can help often the differences between the majority and the racial minorities; “Whites must learn to listen to (and believe) what people of color say about racism, especially in their own lives...

And not just those persons of color who reassure us of how wonderful our nation is, or who make us feel good, as is the case, apparently, with Obama, but black and brown folks who have no desire to soft-pedal the truth for whatever purposes, personal or political.” (Wise, 2009) Tim Wise goes on in his book stating that Barak Obama has gain some white acceptance due to the fact that he dresses, looks and behaves “a certain way” concluding in that whites need to take responsibility for racism.

Racism, according to Wise, it is still remain nowadays a serious and harmful issue, that serves as an advantage to the whites (white privilege). As a

consequence blacks are still struggling due to the fact that they are not seen as equal in the American Society, and therefore whites continue to take advantage from what he calls a system of “ entrenched privileges” that keeps African Americans down. For centuries Black Americans have to prove themselves just for the fact of being of color.

Wise reveals in his book the truths of a society that continues to fail to understand its legacy of racist discrimination and oppression. I think it is worth mentioning the importance of the title of this book; “ Between Barack and a Hard Place. ” Why a hard place? Wise gives plenty examples (such as the large number of African Americans in jail, criminal record on black male impact in finding jobs vs.

criminal record of whites, mortgage approval...) of racial inequality in today’s that bring out the point of why we are still dealing with racism today.

The election of a black president to Wise does not suppose in any way the end of racism, he even questions whether black success is truly making it. Stereotypes surrounding the black minority still present today making racism prevalent and hard to diminish. Successful black people are still seen as an “ exception” in white eye and to the majority Obama “ acceptable” because he seems “ different than most blacks,” who are still viewed too often as the dangerous and inferior ” (Wise, 2009) So instead of seeing Obama’s political success as a positive sign towards overcoming racism he sees it as a potential distraction as he states that “ The meaning of Obama remains to be seen (...) but we can and must expect those with an interest in papering over racism and changing the subject to use him for precisely those purposes. “(Wise, 2009) Even though Wise’s writing style was somehow <https://assignbuster.com/between-barak-and-a-hard-place-book-report/>

difficult to read and understand to me as he uses a lot of rethoric connotations and too much of an ellaborate language, I found Wise's book to have deep meaning on the truth of white privilege and racism.

Even though his white privilege message is overly repeated, I believe that this book's materia is definitely relevant at this time to create awareness of today's negative impact of racism.

The postulation of " Racism 2. 0" is genius, I must say. Most of the people I know think that Obama extinguished racism in today's society shutting their eyes to the reality that racism remains an issue for those suffering with the consequences of white privilege every day at their work setting, schools or out in the streets.

I am extremely thankful that I was given the oportunity to read Wise's book, because it is through people like him who step out and give us a realistic picture with documented data of truthful racial facts that can get into my consciousness and made me gain self awareness of the reality of racism today and how it impacts the lives of millions of African Americans. Racism will never end unless people gain awareness, and gets educated on how we belittle people for having a different skin color, and I say different because that is how many others see it. What is it trully different?

Who states that? Why are white " normal" and all the other minorities " different"? I think it is time that everyone stops reinforcing the " old" negative views of the minorities, for they are no longer valid, nor were they ever.

Lets pake a post racial United States a reality, and not and imagined nation, as it is the only way we can say there will be justice for all.

References Rothenberg, P. (2007). Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: 6th Edition. New York, NY: Worth Publishers. Wise, T.

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