



## Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity

By John L. Jackson Jr.

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**Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity** By John L. Jackson Jr.

New York's urban neighborhoods are full of young would-be emcees who aspire to "keep it real" and restaurants like Sylvia's famous soul food eatery that offer a taste of "authentic" black culture. In these and other venues, authenticity is considered the best way to distinguish the real from the phony, the genuine from the fake. But in *Real Black*, John L. Jackson Jr. proposes a new model for thinking about these issues—*racial sincerity*.

Jackson argues that authenticity caricatures identity as something imposed on people, imprisoning them within stereotypes: an African American high school student who excels in the classroom, for instance, might be dismissed as "acting white." On the other hand, sincerity, as Jackson defines it, imagines authenticity as an incomplete measuring stick, an analytical model that attempts to deny people agency in their search for identity.

Drawing on more than ten years of ethnographic research in and around New York City, Jackson offers a kaleidoscope of subjects and stories that directly and indirectly address how race is negotiated in today's world—including tales of book-vending numerologists, urban conspiracy theorists, corrupt police officers, mixed-race neo-Nazis, and gospel choirs forbidden to catch the Holy Ghost. Jackson records and retells their interconnected sagas, all the while attempting to reconcile these stories with his own crisis of identity and authority as an anthropologist terrified by fieldwork. Finding ethnographic significance where mere mortals see only bricks and mortar, his invented alter ego Anthroman takes to the streets, showing how race is defined and debated, imposed and confounded every single day.

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

To more effectively delve into the "relationship between race and sincerity" and its implications for the academic and popular debates on who or what is "authentically" black, Duke University cultural anthropologist Jackson regularly assumes the guise of his alter ego, the "ethnographic superhero Anthroman," a cross between "Harry Potter and Huckleberry Finn." Billed as "part conspiracy theory, part rant, part novelistic storytelling, part autoethnography," Jackson's book provides discerning readers with a provocative analysis of contemporary black subcultures: middle class blacks in a gentrifying Harlem who are split between a social justice-minded old guard and a neo-capitalistic new guard, conspiracy theorists, Black Hebrew Israelites of Worldwide Truthful Understanding and hip hop artists as exemplified by Mos Def. The strongest sections are his field interviews with residents of Harlem and Brooklyn, who furnish perceptive and unpretentious observations of their experience. Some of the interactions are thought-provoking: A conversation with a young man convinced that a fruit drink sterilizes black men gives the author pause; he returns the drink for bottled water. Others are more disturbing, such as the arrest of an individual who bares NWA during a neighborhood incident. The author's powers of observation are indisputable; however, his theoretical interpretations, which can be so jargonized that readers may get repetitive stress injuries after reaching for the dictionary so many times, are best savored by specialists.

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## Review

"Expertly weaving theory with analysis, Jackson discovers that identities built around race and class in the quintessential black American neighborhood are far less monolithic than even Harlem residents believe." - Publishers Weekly "Jackson convincingly makes the case that precisely because race and class can be 'done to people,' his behavioural model is 'the only real grounding on which hierarchical notions of race in the United States can ultimately stand.' " - Mireille A. L. Djenno, Times Literary Supplement"

## From the Inside Flap

New York's urban neighborhoods are full of young would-be emcees who aspire to "keep it real" and restaurants like Sylvia's famous soul food eatery that offer a taste of "authentic" black culture. In these and other venues, authenticity is considered the best way to distinguish the real from the phony, the genuine from the fake. But in *Real Black*, John L. Jackson Jr. proposes a new model for thinking about these issues—*racial sincerity*.

Jackson argues that authenticity caricatures identity as something imposed on people, imprisoning them within stereotypes—turning them into racial objects and inanimate things, instead of living, breathing human beings. Contending that such assumptions deny people agency—not to mention humanity—in their search for identity, Jackson counterposes sincerity, an internal and more productive analytical model for thinking about race.

Moving in and around Harlem and Brooklyn, Jackson offers a kaleidoscope of subjects and stories that directly and indirectly address how race is negotiated in today's world—including tales of name-changing hip-hop emcees, book-vending numerologists, urban conspiracy theorists, corrupt police officers, mixed-race neo-Nazis, and high-school gospel choirs forbidden to catch the Holy Ghost. Enlisting "Anthroman," his cape-crusading critical alter ego, Jackson records and retells these interconnected sagas in virtuosic detail and, in the process, shows us how race is defined and debated, imposed and confounded every single day.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Jennifer Darby:**

Do you have favorite book? Should you have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing for us to find out everything in the world. Each book has different aim or maybe goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people sense enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They may be reading whatever they acquire because their hobby is definitely reading a book. How about the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, man feel need book whenever they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you should have this Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity.

#### **Jerry Jackman:**

The guide untitled Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity is the guide that recommended to you to see. You can see the quality of the book content that will be shown to you actually. The language that author use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The article writer was did a lot of analysis when write the book, hence the information that they share to you personally is absolutely accurate. You also could get the e-book of Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity from the publisher to make you a lot more enjoy free time.

#### **Helen Chandler:**

Why? Because this Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap that but latter it will zap you with the secret that inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such awesome way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book possess such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I had been you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

#### **Lena Robertson:**

This Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity is great publication for you because the content that is certainly full of information for you who always deal with world and possess to make decision every minute. This kind of book reveal it details accurately using great manage word or we can say no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read this hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only offers you straight forward sentences but tricky core information with attractive delivering sentences. Having Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity in your hand like obtaining the world in your arm, facts in it is not ridiculous one. We can say that no publication that offer you world throughout ten or fifteen small right but this publication already do that. So , it is good reading book. Hey Mr. and Mrs. active do you still doubt that?

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