

REIMAGINING EQUALITY

Stories of Gender, Race,
and Finding Home

ANITA HILL

Author of *Speaking Truth to Power*



Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home

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From the heroic lawyer who spoke out against Clarence Thomas in the historic confirmation hearings twenty years ago

At the historic Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings, Anita Hill spoke out courageously about workplace sexual harassment. Now she turns to the topic of home. As our country reels from the subprime mortgage meltdown and the resulting devastation of so many families and communities, Hill takes us inside this “crisis of home” and exposes its deep roots in race and gender inequities, which continue to imperil every American’s ability to achieve the American Dream. In this period of recovery and its aftermath, what is at stake is the inclusive democracy the Constitution promises. The achievement of that ideal, Hill argues, depends on each American’s ability to secure a place that provides access to every opportunity our country offers. Building on the great strides of the women’s and civil rights movements, Hill presents concrete proposals that encourage us to broaden our thinking about home and to reimagine equality for America’s future.

Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home Details

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From Reader Review Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home for online ebook

Afrah says

It felt like something was missing the whole time I was reading it.

Nicholas says

Some combination of my mother and Anita Hill made me a feminist. I was obsessed with the Hill-Thomas hearings in high school and wrote her a letter at the time. I also heard her speak the next year and read her first book, *Speaking Truth to Power*, an account of the hearings and their aftermath. Hill is a contract lawyer by training and teaching, but about ten years ago she got a new job at Brandeis in public policy and women's & gender studies, and so she's writing about other things now too. This book is partially a result of that branching out.

And, I have to say, it's disappointing. Each chapter on its own generally works, but they don't all necessarily work together as a book. It is a rumination on the meaning of "home," particularly for African Americans, women, and African American women. Hill combines the history of her own family's move from Arkansas to Oklahoma in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century with an exploration of the subprime mortgage crisis' effects for blacks and Latinos with stories of black women and "home" with an exploration of the Hansberry family (of *A Raisin in the Sun* fame) with just about everything else you can think of. I'm totally fine with interdisciplinarity and with different kinds of evidence in the same account but by the end Hill was spouting a bunch of platitudes that didn't seem to be anchored in much more than the generic notion that every American deserved a place to call home. I agree, but the book as a whole just didn't feel all that focused. Hill is clearly smart and I agree with her politics, but this felt like a bunch of shorter pieces masquerading as a book.

Heather says

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry Despite that this is a classic that would have been relevant in almost any American Lit class, of which I've been in several between high school and getting an English degree, it only hit my radar on account of *Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home*. The book talks about this play, and its point on the commentary produced about the play is best summed by this quote:

Audiences easily grasp *A Raisin in the Sun*'s statement about the relationship between blacks and whites and their battle over space. However, little attention is paid to its clear statement about women's roles in the struggle for equality.

Personally, I would urge any new readers to remember to think of this as they read it. I certainly had both running through my head, and they are distinct within the play. They are woven together brilliantly. The differences in the generational aspirations also provide tension and remind the reader that the black community in America has endured a lot and that each generation has had an entirely different set of struggles

toward equality to over come, with a few massive surges forward and then long trudge to tell extra stage. This play couples that with the slower trudge of women's places that must deal with more than one culture at a time. The women of each advance within at a different and so the overall progress moves differently. This is expressed well by the play.

Overall, I enjoyed reading the play for all these reasons and I love Ruth and Mama.

Tayari Jones says

I actually read Anita Hill's new book, *Reimagining Equality* this summer, but it was just released yesterday. This is the what I wrote for the back of her book. It doesn't really do justice to this complex and full-of-heart book that is clearly a labor of love.

"Combining the sincerity of memoir and the rigor of sociology, Anita Hill looks at home as a physical space, but also as a microcosm of American society. The women profiled in this engaging and moving book illustrate the challenges of living in America as a raced and gendered person while simultaneously demonstrating the beauty of resistance and the triumphs of family, community, and faith. Hill connects the dots between the home-making efforts of African Americans just after Reconstruction and the heartbreaking (and enraging) consequences of the subprime mortgage scandal. After reading this book, you will never see a house as just four walls and a roof. It is a dream and we, as Americans, are the dreamers."

Christina Boyle says

This was such a moving story regarding Ms. Hill's personal heritage. Her comments on the housing crisis were refreshing and eye-opening. I truly enjoyed the book.

Stefanie says

Excellent compilation of stories, family history, and current information regarding race and gender in America. Highly recommended!

Catherine Gentry says

The second book I've read lately by Anita Hill. I enjoyed it too. Thoughtful and provocative. I'd not realized that the sub-prime victims were mostly women--although I was not surprised. As much as we'd like to think that misogyny is dead, it is alive and thriving--albeit maybe more subtly.

Kathy says

As someone who's never had much interest in being a homeowner, I was only peripherally interested in the

financial meltdown of 2008 and frankly, not only felt it was inevitable but also predicted it (although not to the extent it was actually realized). Like many others, I said afterward, "Yes, there were predatory lenders out there but these people should have known what they were getting into."

Using individual case studies to illustrate her book, Ms. Hill outlines the history of home-ownership in the United States to explain how the concept of home and what it means to own one ultimately wreaked havoc on the lives of millions. But she also uses bankers' and lenders' own words (as well as politicians') to show how Blacks, Latinos, and women were particularly targeted for subprime loans, even those whose incomes were six figures. If you think the quotes from the Enron guys were sickening, take some anti-nausea medicine before reading this book. Some bankers specifically said that if they were trying to sell in a poorer neighborhood, they would add on every "extra" they could, even if the potential buyer's income or financial situation didn't merit it. Further, once the foreclosures started, guess where most of them happened? That's right: neighborhoods that were largely Black or Latino. White suburban homeowners were given much more leeway by the banks -- unless they were single women.

I know I'm lucky to live in this country versus Rwanda or Afghanistan or places like that with regard to the freedoms I have. But the fact that such discrimination still goes unchecked (or later bailed out!) in this country is just inexcusable. The only thing I don't like about Ms. Hill's books is that they're too short. I would love for her to delve even deeper into such topics!

Dawn says

Anita Hill brings up so many thoughts from what happened to women of color after the civil war to their exploitation during the sub prime mortage debacle. She doesn't just talk about problems, but offers ideas to make improvements to ensure home ownership and stable neighborhoods for inner cities that also suffered during the housing market problems.

Mills College Library says

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Kristin says

An important book that situates the housing crisis within a longer history of racial and gender discrimination through exploring the concept of "home" biographically, literally, and legally.

Zandra says

I learned a lot from this book. But it was very slow reading, because there was so much information to take in! I wish I had read it in 2011, or that I could read a "status update" of what's changed since it was published.

Nadine B Hack says

I really loved this book that adeptly weaves personal stories, legal history and important trends. I highly recommend this book.
