Annotated Bibliography on Revealing the Obvious: Reviewing Standards That Structure Our Everyday Lives

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By reviewing standards we are informing ourselves on why we function in these everyday structures. We as Americans live under a system that was founded by white men. This “obvious” that I talk about stems from the fact that these standards directly influence our lives in so many ways throughout the day so we don’t even question it. We ignore it because that’s what we are trained to do through advertisements, movies, television, media and academia. The biggest trick is making us believe that it doesn’t exist. White is the standard, white is the norm. Everyone else is raced. Everyone else is exotic.

Throughout this bibliography I include books, television shows, and artist that I felt deeply informed my research as well as my studio practice. Television shows like “The Tyra Banks Show” had moments in it that informed my question in other ways that became very important both in my studio practice and my research. Painters like Fairfield Porter also are in because of his subject matter and how he chooses to paint it. To me these artists are parallels to the writers that I found during my research.

This annotated Bibliography operates as a list of ideas that circle around ideas of Standards. This bibliography exists as research that timelines my mode of thinking throughout the course of this semester. The sources that are listed shows a range in steps and angles that were token during this process of researching.
Bibliography


Dyer talks about how whiteness maintains its dominance over the other races. He says that whites established their selves as the norm so they can talk for all the races but other races can only speak for their race. He goes on to show how white’s position as the norm is maintained by using examples from movies. One of the examples is a movie called “Jezabel”. He explains how the main character in the movie is looked at negatively by the others in her community because of she is not following the standard way of living. The movie also shows her being influenced by the help (which all are black by the way).

Ligon, Glen. **Untitled: Four Etchings.** 1992

Glen Ligon’s “Untitled: Four Etchings” contains quotes that are just printed multiple times on a sheet of paper. One of the quotes was originally from Zora Neal Hurston. “I don’t always feel colored; I feel most colored when I’m stuck against a sharp white background”. That quote to me illustrates how I became really aware of my blackness. It was by comparing me to whiteness. When you are surrounded by whiteness it is then when you realize your blackness.

“The Racial Contract” is book that talks about white supremacy as a powerful political system that stays unnamed. Mills talks about why it is unnamed and how it being unnamed isn’t an accident. The fact that it is unnamed just reflects the fact that textbooks and course have been written, taught and designed by whites, which take their racial privilege so much for granted that they do not even see it as political. Because this unnamed political system goes unnoticed it becomes the background for other systems that are seen as political.


On this particular episode there was a guest who was both black and white but she despised her black roots. She completely disowned this part of her because she felt that they were mean, “unpredictable” and “did their own thing”. She also had pictures of her with a white sheet over her head and a miniature baseball bat that she called her “nigger beater”.

Greenfield-Sanders, Timothy. The Black List. HBO Documentary Film series, 2008

“The Black List” is a documentary in which powerful black people talk about their experiences in their respected fields. Two of the people that really struck me in the documentary were Al Sharpton and Chris Rock. Al Sharpton talked about African American Art and how they focused too much on the current situation today, (mainly the negative parts). He said that we should talk about possibilities for the future, what we can possibly achieve. Chris Rock talked about equality. He said that he was taught to always work twice as hard just to be noticed along
with white people in his same field. He talks about how in his neighborhood there are only three blacks. There is Jay Z, Mary J. Blige and him, but his next door neighbor is an average white dentist. The three black people had to be the greatest at what they do while the white dentist live there just being average.


This book had plates of a lot of his paintings throughout his whole career as a painter. These plates of his work were very instrumental in my studio practice because he did paintings of some of the very things that were discussed in my research by Richard Dyer. I was able to analyze his style and color choices when he painted those scenes.


This book showed works of art from Wayne Thiebaud. Looking at his paintings gave me a lot of ideas on how repetition could play a big role in my studio practice. Through repetition every object became the same in his paintings even if there were change between the objects that he depicted.