

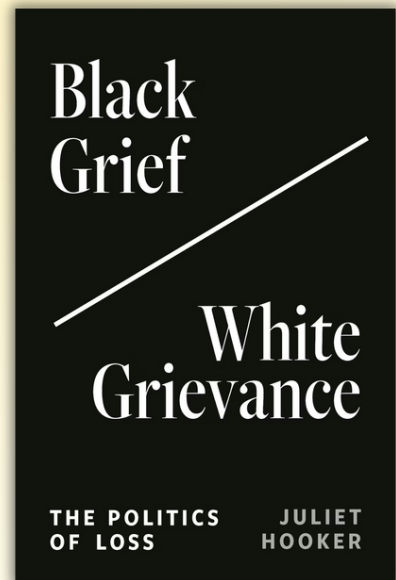
BLACK GRIEF/ WHITE GRIEVANCE

The Politics of Loss

How race shapes expectations about whose losses matter

In democracies, citizens must accept loss; we can't always be on the winning side. But in the United States, the fundamental civic capacity of being able to lose is not distributed equally. Propped up by white supremacy, whites (as a group) are accustomed to winning; they have generally been able to exercise political rule without having to accept sharing it. Black citizens, on the other hand, are expected to be political heroes whose civic suffering enables progress toward racial justice. Black grief is exemplified by current protests against police violence—the latest in a tradition of violent death and subsequent public mourning spurring Black political mobilization. The potent politics of white grievance, meanwhile, which is also not new, imagines the United States as a white country under siege.

Drawing on African American political thought, Hooker examines key moments in US racial politics that illuminate the problem of loss in democracy. She connects today's Black Lives Matter protests to the use of lynching photographs to arouse public outrage over post-Reconstruction era racial terror, and she discusses Emmett Till's funeral as a catalyst for the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. She also traces the political weaponization of white victimhood during the Obama and Trump presidencies. Calling for an expansion of Black and white political imaginations, Hooker argues that both must learn to sit with loss, for different reasons and to different ends.



"Black Grief/White Grievance is every bit as stark and urgent as the moment of racial reckoning that inspired it. Juliet Hooker has brilliantly dissected a fundamental dichotomy of American life—the inequality of loss—and pointed to its damning implications for our democracy. By all indicators, these insights will only grow more relevant with time."

—Jelani Cobb, Columbia Journalism School

"This fascinating book provides a rich and timely dialogical space that goes beyond our polarized politics. Juliet Hooker's subtle analysis gets inside the complex dynamics of the Black and White worlds in order to deepen our commitment to democratic possibilities."

—Cornel West, Union Theological Seminary



Juliet Hooker is the Royce Family Professor of Teaching Excellence in Political Science at Brown University, where she teaches courses on racial justice, black political thought, Latin American political thought, democratic theory, and contemporary political theory.

Price: Hardcover \$29.95

ISBN-13: 978-0-691243-03-0

Publisher: Princeton University Press

Publication Date: October 3, 2023