

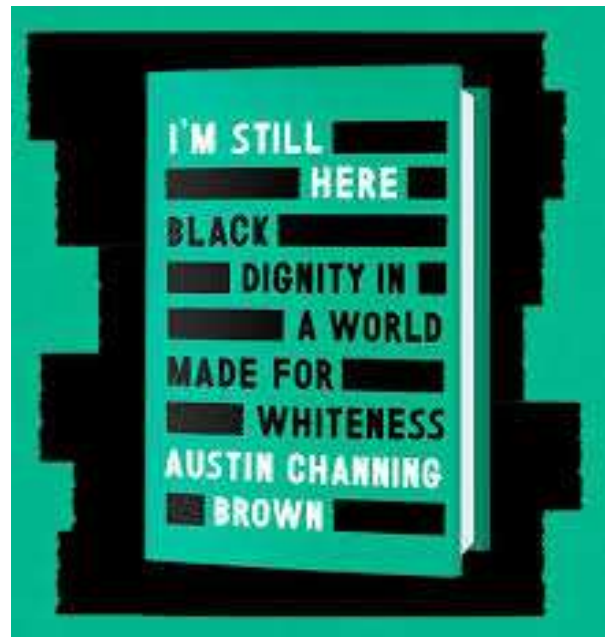
Allison's Book Corner August 2020

[I'm Still Here: Black Dignity In a World Made For Whiteness](#)

by Austin Channing Brown
(Convergent Boks 2018)

I do not read books based on race. I read books based on what appeals to me at that moment. Just like many of you, I read to have a fun escape and become a part of another place.

However, sometimes current events push our reading in another direction. Out of all of the books about race and racism, Austin Channing Brown's book appealed to me the most. Her parents gave her the name of a white man so no one would be able to guess her race before she showed up for a job interview. My sister and I were named for similar reasons. Thankfully, not male names, but names that were "colorless," so to speak. Names that would not be identified with a particular "race" before either of us showed up anywhere. And I carried on that tradition with my own three children. To tell you the truth, by the time it was my turn to do the "naming," it was a reflex. Certainly, I would do the same and not dwell on the significance of it.



Now, here is where it gets a little tricky. This is a very well-written book and I could relate to some of the negative experiences that the author has had with white people in her life. However - and I am going to quote James Baldwin just as this author does in her book - "To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious, is to be in a rage almost all the time. So that the first problem is how to control that rage so that it won't destroy you."

I was not raised to be in a rage all of the time about race. I was raised to enjoy and live my life. You cannot do that if you are in a constant rage. So this book and the experiences shared within made me very angry. It

just made me remember things that I would rather not have to remember. Along with the anger comes a deep sadness in relation to events that affect the black community specifically. For the author it was the 2015 murders of the black church members in Charleston, South Carolina. For me it is the very recent public murder of George Floyd.

The author also has a very informative website. She offers a newsletter for practicing anti-racism. Miss Brown also has an academy in which one can enroll to “take you past the surface of racial justice.” All of her resources appear to be free of charge.

I recommend this book to any people who are not African American and who are open to listening and learning while the United States of America faces a reckoning on race.

To all others who may read this book, dive in knowing that you have to guard your heart.