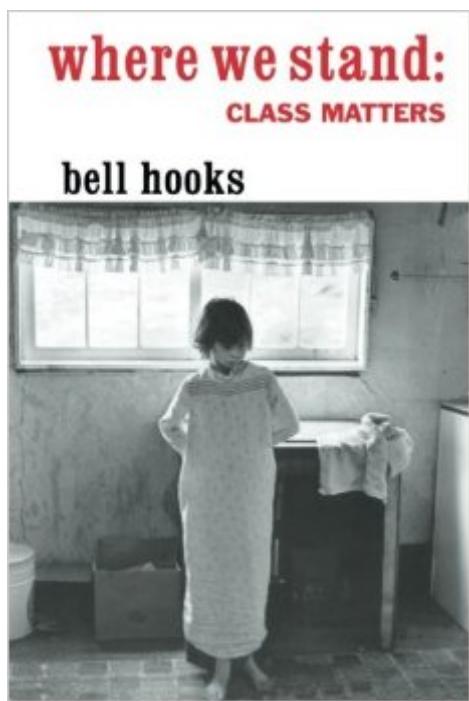


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# Where We Stand: Class Matters



## **Synopsis**

Drawing on both her roots in Kentucky and her adventures with Manhattan Coop boards, *Where We Stand* is a successful black woman's reflection--personal, straight forward, and rigorously honest--on how our dilemmas of class and race are intertwined, and how we can find ways to think beyond them.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

bell hooks is ahead of the curve again. Class studies seems sure to supersede race and gender studies as the next big thing in academia (and thus, eventually, more widely--at least I hope so). Hooks writes wonderfully here and elsewhere about issues that most academics write about in prose that is certainly more difficult than necessary. As before, at least for me, she's at her best here when she writes about the details of her own life, her own growing class awareness. In doing so, she manages to show just how much American consciousness has changed regarding the poor and the rich, and especially, how individuals decide where they "stand" in relation to the two. Getting rich has become the highest goal in America, even more so than it ever was, and the poor are more disregarded and even despised than ever. hooks reminds us (and, hopefully, the newly triumphant Christian right) that the Bible, and much traditional Christian teaching, holds the poor up, rather than the rich, as examples of how we all should live. A shift in perspective has gradually crept upon us--while Americans used to cite many features that constituted a "good life," loads of money has come to the fore as the defining tool toward living "well," and for many it seems to be the only thing

that would make life better. hooks writes "movingly" (a cliche, but it's true) of how all these changes FEEL; she clarifies for me, for instance, the way the widening availability of gambling is making more and more of us dissatisfied with our current lives because they seem to pale so in comparison to the lives we "could" lead if we could just buy that right lottery ticket.

Where We Stand: Class Matters by bell hooks All books written by bell hooks are powerful, direct, and very brave. Exactly when I was hoping bell would write a book about class, I discovered this one. Her writings about love lead to exploration of capitalism and its social structure more in depth, to strengthen points about the ways class loyalties and antagonisms prevent love ethic from becoming embraced by the society as a whole. What I especially appreciate in Where We Stand are the two quite extraordinary qualities: a) bell showed us that we can talk and write about class without using "post-modern" or difficult to comprehend terminology, and b) she is not afraid to call to action, to change this depressing and unjust, cruel and senseless system into "a world where we can all have enough to live fully and well." She started the book with self-critique, almost apologizing for not having enough theoretical knowledge to talk about class issues. However, bell is able to discuss very different aspects of class, such as class ideology (or the dominant social ideology being the ideology of the ruling class), class consciousness of the working class and intellectuals, intersections of class, race and gender, crossing class boundaries, and a vision of a classless society--society--without class hierarchies or antagonistic classes. I read somewhere that some book reviews called this book a "novel". Where We Stand is not a novel, but I prefer to see this as compliment. bell masterfully intertwined her personal experiences and her family stories into the general discussion about class.

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