**Tennessee State University 2011 Common Reader**

**Gary Younge’s *No Place Like Home:***

***A Black Briton’s Journey through the American South***

**Study Guide and Curriculum Plan—**This guide is not intended to dictate how to teach the text, but to offer suggestions and provide resources. Feel free to direct questions and suggestions to either Dr. Erik Schmeller eschmeller@tnstate.edu or Dr. Rebecca Dixon rdixonk@tnstate.edu

**Discussion Questions**

1. Younge writes a fair amount the how popular culture (television shows, movies, music, sports, etc.) that he enjoyed and that influenced him in his youth. What would you say influenced you growing up? Is there a difference between what white and black Englishmen and women watched? Is there a similar difference in the United States?
2. How was Younge’s childhood different or similar to your own? Or, how do you think Younge’s childhood was different from your own parents?
3. In what ways is race regarded differently in the United States than in Britain?
4. How do you define what it means to be an American? A Southerner? How do you define the South? In what ways does the author define the South?
5. Is the Civil Rights movement over today as Younge presents it? Or has it transformed into something else? What divisions within the black (or white) community does Younge discover during his travels? In what ways does travel impact Younge’s perception of America?
6. Do you think things have changed regarding race in America since Younge retraced the Freedom Rides in 1997? Has a racial gulf in perception developed? Has a generational gulf developed in how black and white people view race in America?

**Civil Rights Timeline**

 <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/aaworld/timeline/civil_01.html>

**Terms**

The following are terms from the book which may be unfamiliar.

**Caned—**corporal punishment in English boarding schools using a cane or rod

**Chip shop or chippy**—also known as a “chipper,” is a fish and chips (American French-fries) shop that serves a variety of fried foods besides fish and has limited seating space. Americans would consider this more of a carry-out fast-food restaurant.

***Cheggers Plays Pop***—a 30 minute British children’s show where teams of two students from schools competed to complete physical and mental challenges. The show was on the air between 1978 and 1986 and also featured musical performances by popular music artists.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgJjhT1Qe4k>

**CND**—Formed in 1957, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament works non-violently to encourage British nuclear disarmament. The CND is known in England for large public marches to achieve their goals.

**a Coen brothers movie**—Ethan and Joel Coen’s films are often darkly humorous, but they have made a wide range of movies including: *The Big Lebowski, Fargo, True Grit, Barton Fink, Raising Arizona, No Country for Old Men, and O Brother Where Art Thou.*

***Desmond’s***—British sitcom from 1989-1994 that featured a largely West Indian (black) cast set in a barbershop.

**Dorp**—Afrikaans for small village or town.

**East Enders**—very popular grim British soap opera on BBC/London.

**Enfield, Harry/Loadsamoney**—English comedian who created a character called “Loadsamoney.”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ON-7v4qnHP8>

**Grapelli, Stéphane**—born in France in 1908 to a French mother and Italian fater, he is considered the grandfather of jazz violin. He cofounded one of the first all string jazz group, Quintette du Hot Club de France, with guitarist Django Rheinhardt.

**Harris, Keith and Orville in Panto**—the title of a 2002 documentary about ventriloquist Harris that had his own show on the BBC (British Broadcasting Company) from 1982-1990. One of his puppets was Orville the Duck.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QL0k3ISzEjM>

**Home Counties**—the south east counties of England, many of which border London, but do not include London.

***It’s a Knockout***—television show where people dressed up in silly costumes doing crazy stunts to earn their team points.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wuPlYg5nGQ>

**Jumper**—a long-sleeved sweater.

**Labour MP**—a British member of Parliament (their representative body) that is a member of the Labour (or Labor in American English) Party. Labour is a center to left of center political party with socialist ties and was formed in 1900. Most recent Prime Ministers from the Labour Party are Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. <http://www.labour.org.uk/what_is_the_labour_party>

***Melody Maker***—founded in 1926, it is one of the world’s oldest weekly newspapers devoted to music.

**Off-license**—the equivalent of an American liquor or beer store, where bottles are sold and are not to be consumed on site. Some pubs in Britain that are “on-license” (alcohol can be purchased or consumed on site) also offer off-license sales.

**O levels and A levels; sixth form**—admission to higher education in England was determined by your exam scores at age 16 on your Ordinary Level (O levels). If scores were appropriately high, you advanced to sixth form to study for two years for your Advanced Level (A levels). Again, if your scores were high enough you advanced to a University or Polytechnic (primary focus on engineering and applied science).

**Paisley, Ian**—cofounder of the Democratic Unionist Party

**Pimms**—a gin based drink that often includes some fruit.

**Pound—**England’s currency as it did not adopt the Euro. 1 £ (pound) is equivalent to $1.64 (as of August 2011)

**Powell, Enoch**—British politician from the Conservative Party. He served as a member of Parliament from 1950-1974, and is most well known for his “Rivers of Blood” speech where he warned of mass immigration from British Commonwealth nations. He was the first major British politician to play on the racial fears of a white Britons.

**Skip—**a large trash container, to “hire a skip” is the same as paying to have a dumpster delivered to your home and then removed once filled with garbage.

**Tannoy**—Scottish company known for its audio speakers both in the home and for public announcements. It is also slang for an announcement over a public address system.

## Thatcher, Churchill, Wellington, Queen Victoria—Winston Churchill from the Conservative Party served as British Prime Minister during World War II and is one of the most influential British men in the 20th century. Margaret Thatcher, also from the Conservative Party, served as British Prime Minister from 1979-1990 and was the first woman Prime Minister. Born Arthur Wellesley in Dublin, Ireland in 1769, he was created the Duke of Wellington after his successful defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte. Wellington went on to serve as a Tory Prime Minister who favored strong authoritarian government and opposed popular reform. Queen Victoria was Britain’s longest reigning monarch from 1837-1901. During her reign the British Empire was at its peak. The “Victorian Era” saw tremendous change in wealth and access to power, and was also seen as a prudish and repressed society.

***Top of the Pops***—a weekly television show that ran form 1964-2006. It counted down popular music for that week and featured artists playing their respective hits.

**Tory**—older traditionalist and conservative British political party that merged with another party to form the Conservative party in 1912. “Tory” is still used colloquially to refer to members of the modern Conservative party.

**Trainers—**term for athletic shoes, most frequently running shoes.

**Tranche**—a portion or installment, usually of a loan.

**Trotskyite**—a supporter of Leon Trotsky’s theory that socialism is to be established worldwide through continuing revolution.

**The tube**—slang term for the English subway system.

**A *Viz*-like character**—*Viz* is a funny adult humor magazine in the style of *MAD* or *National Lampoon*.

**Winklepicker shoes** —a style of shoe first popular in the 1950s with a long pointed toe.

**Wog or woggy**—derogatory and racist slang term referring broadly to people with darker skin color.

**Zimmer**—a trademark for a lightweight metal tubular frame with four rubber-tipped legs, designed to support somebody who needs help in walking.

**Other books by Gary Younge**

*Stranger in a Strange Land: Encounters in the Disunited States*. New York & London: The New Press,

2006. Print.

*Who Are We—And Should It Matter in the 21st Century?* New York: Avalon Publishing Group, 2011. Print.

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