

Anotated biliography



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Achebe, Chinua. 1992. *Things Fall Apart*. New Jersey: Everyman's Library.

This is a gripping novel about the problem of European colonialism in Africa. The story relates the cultural collision that occurs when Christian English missionaries arrive among the Ibos of Nigeria, bringing along their European ways of life and religion.

Angelou, Maya. 1986. *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes*. New York: Random House.

This book provides a first-hand opinions and feelings of black Americans who, living through the racial crisis of the 1960's, came to Africa in search of their historical, spiritual and psychological home. Readers will appreciate the means in which Maya Angelou relates her conflicts with some Ghanaians; her romance with African Muslim; her trip to Germany, where she joins an American acting troupe and confronts her own prejudices; and her struggle to accept her son's manly independence. The light Maya sheds on emerging Africa and the American black community, makes for absorbing readings.

Ball, Edward. 1998. *Slaves in the Family*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc..

This is a nonfiction story of a man's journey into his family's past as slave owning people. He's goal was to find the descendants of the slaves who lived on his family's plantation. Ball chronicles the lives of people who lived on his ancestors' lands. In his research Bell discovered that there was a highly successful slave trader company owned by his family as well. His family kept excellent records and through these records he was able to trace the

offspring of slave women and Ball men, which resulted to between 75, 000 and 100, 000 people currently living, and located the ones currently living. Their story represents that of many African Americans.

Berlin, Ira, Steve f. Miller and Marc Favciac, eds. 1941 1998. Remembering Slavery. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Press.

A collection of 124 transcripts of former slaves interviewed in the 1920's and 1930's. They are accompanied by recently restored recorded interviews that have been in the Library of Congress since 1941. This collection of interviews present voices that describe family life, work ethic and recreational patterns, religious ethos and resistance. The interviews were conducted by white interviewers. The two 60 minute cassettes have dramatic readings by James Earl Jones, Melba Moore, and Debbie Allen, as well as excerpts from the original recordings. This book accompanied by the tapes is the best illustration of the period of slavery.

Boyd, Todd. 1997. Am I Black Enough For You? Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Todd Boyd has true understanding of the cultural evolution of the " new" black aesthetics. From the start of this book the reader will be mesmerized by the " new jack" style, which takes lyrics by Tupac, Curtis Mayfield, Dr. Dre, Arrested Development, Ice Cube, Snoop Doggy Dog, and other rap rhythm and blues stars and intertwines them into an extraordinary work on how blacks lyricism influences the cultural, economic, and political systems

of the US society. Boyd challenges blacks to continue to articulate their cultural impressions as his final word.

Campbell, BeBe M.. 1995. *Brothers and Sisters*. Berkley, CA: Berkley Publishing Group.

This book centers around a black woman who has a promising career in a downtown Los Angeles bank. A new vice president's behavior forces the woman, Esther Jackson, to confront with a sexual harassment suit. Esther is soon torn between her ambition to succeed professionally and her loyalty to her black "brother". This book also takes place in the aftermath of the Rodney King Riots. Campbell's intriguing cast of characters reveal the fears and hopes of people caught in the position of shrinking opportunities and institutionalized stereotypes of race, gender, and class.

Campbell, BeBe Moore. 1995. *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine*. New York: Ballentine Books, Inc.

This is a fictional book based on the racial injustices of the south. It appears to be based on the true story of Emmet Till, a 14 year-old boy who was brutally murdered in Mississippi in 1955 for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Set in the 1950's in Mississippi, *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine* begins with the murder of Armstrong Todd. The lives of everyone involved in the incident, both black and white are changed forever. This book is a compelling reminder of the racism and brutality blacks faced in the South.

Cleaver, Eldridge. 1984. *Soul on Ice*. New York: Laurel.

This book enables the reader to crawl inside the mind of a black revolutionary. Cleaver tackles issues pertaining to everything from the corruption of the US government, to his feelings about convicted rape of a white woman. He discusses his imprisonment, his life thereof and how he ended up in prison. This is a must read.

Delany, Sarah Louise, and Elizabeth Delany. 1994. *Having Our Say*. California: Dell Publishing Company.

This oral history novel is about the lives of two black sisters, the Delany sisters, ages 101 and 103, that reflect on their family life and their professional life. Both sisters are living records of the seismic changes that have affected black America since Emancipation. The Delany sisters voice that they are not optimistic about the future of race relations, and stating that the momentum of the civil rights struggle was taken away by the Vietnam War.

Graham, Lawrence. 1998. *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

This is a non-fiction book about the upper-echelon blacks of the community. The book sheds light on the world of the black upper class that is characterized as living awkwardly between white America and mainstream black America. *Our Kind of People* talk about the debutante cotillions, arranged marriages, trips to Martha's Vineyard and Sag Harbor, memberships

in the Links, Deltas, Boul, or Jack and Jill, and million dollar homes to mention but a few topics. Graham profiles upper-class families and institutions in New York, New Orleans, Chicago, Atlanta, Washington, D. C., Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, Nashville, and Memphis. Graham being an attorney, an insider, helps to expose the inside the real world of the black elite in a historical perspective, as well as the social side of this social group.

Franklin, John H. and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. 1994. *From Slavery To Freedom*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc..

This is a book that provides a plethora of information for those who want to continue the struggle of African Americans. Every aspect of black history is explored, everything from the civilizations in Africa, to the struggle for freedom in the West Indies, Latin America, and the United States. The full color inserts featuring the work of contemporary African American artist is an added plus in the seventh edition.

Griffin, John H. 1996. *Black Like Me*. Glencoe, IL.: Free Press.

John Griffin did something most whites would have never dreamed of, especially in the South when segregation was thriving. By changing his skin to black, he became nothing but an inferior servant in the eyes of whites, regardless of his education or upbringing. I highly recommend this book to those who are intolerant of racial injustice.

Haley, Alex. 1964. *Malcolm X*. New York: Random House.

This book is the story of the Martyred Militant who emerged from the heart of the black ghetto to fight against racial segregation and oppression. In 1965 at the peak of his power, his fears of his assassination came true. It shows how the prison system is set up to trap African Americans. This system takes the place of another system in society that could benefit the black community. Malcolm X used prison to get back into the system where he could make a difference.

Hunter-Gault, Charlayne. 1992. *In My Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Girous.

This book illustrates the trials and tribulations Charlayne Hunter-Gault experienced throughout her life. This was clear to see by her being one of two black students to desegregate the University of Georgia. Her aspiration was to be a journalist, and she achieved her dream by serving as a national correspondent for the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) on the MacNeil, Lehrer News Hour. This book serves as a reminder that if you listen to what people tell you what you can not do, you will never succeed in your future endeavors.

Little, Benilde. 1996. *Good Hair*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

The subject of this book is "marring well". It also exposes a race and class of the characters in order to reveal them in their most simple form. Through this process Little shows that these characters are human beings acting as human beings tend to act. Through these characters identity, infidelity, and race relations are explored. Little's ability to show a woman struggling to be who she is while trying to fit an image of who she should be is powerful. By

the end of this book, *Good Hair* is more than a love story between man and woman.

Liu, Eric. 1998. *The Accidental Asian*. New York: Random House.

This is a book of a series of essays that answers the questions facing Asia Americans. The bottom line of the essays in this book is the question of assimilation related to Asian Americans. Liu asks questions such as: Is whiteness America's fundamental race problem? Are Asian Americans real New Jews? What might intermarriages mean for Asian Americans-and for the future race itself? He explores his identity as a second-generation Chinese American. He is a former speech writer for President Clinton, and now a law student at Harvard University. *The Accidental Asian* deals with the often overlooked struggles of Asian Americans faced with their identity in America.

Parks. Gordon. 1992. *The Learning Tree*. Demco Media: London.

This book points out some very powerful issues that are still controversial today. Interracial dating, teen pregnancy, and premarital sex are all covered in this novel. Issues of race are also touched upon in this book. This novel brings the reader into the inner lives of a Negro family as they struggle to understand the bitter challenges of life. This writer sees eye to eye with the truth of the matters at hand.

Paton, Alan. 1991. *Cry, The Beloved Country*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman Education.

This is an amazing novel that beautifully weaves the imagery of the land and language of South Africa with dynamic symbolism. It is a story about the injustices of the time in South Africa through the eyes of a Zulu religious figure. This is a timeless novel of racial disparity and hope.

Morrison, Toni. 1987. *Beloved*. New York: Knopf.

This book is a hair raiser. In this novel set in Ohio after the end of the Civil War, Sethe, who eighteen years earlier had fled from slavery on a Kentucky plantation, is haunted by the spirit of Beloved, the two-year-old daughter she had killed when threatened with recapture. Through the different voices and memories of this novel, the reader experiences American slavery as it was lived by those who were involved in it directly.

Rainey, John Calvin. 1997. *The Thang Ate My Granddaddy's Dog*. Sarata, FL.: Pineapple Press.

This is a story of a boy and his dog. This is no *Lasie* tale. Along this journey there are gunshots, drugs, poverty, alligators and industrial sludge. Through all the dangers of life there is a close knit family that protects each other from those dangers. This tale moves through a series of events while illustrating the history of a poor village and its inhabitants.

Stelle, Shelby. 1998. *A Dream Deferred*. New York: HarperCollins.

This is a book of essays addressing needed reforms pertaining to blacks in the United States dealing mainly with public policy and blacks' mentality. Stelle argues that blacks have been betrayed twice. The first is by being oppressed by slavery and segregation, and the second is by government

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mandated group preferences that rob blacks of their self-esteem. He points out that racial policies like affirmative action have been a function of dominance and encourage black feelings of inferiority. This book is a true look inside the mind of Shelby Steele.

Taylor, Mildred. 1972. *The Well*. New York: Viking Penguin

This was a fiction novel about a black family living in the south and the troubles they faced because of their skin color. In 1910, a drought occurred, and the Logan family had the only working well in their part of Mississippi. They shared their well with all their neighbors, black and white, but the Simms put their generosity to the test many a time. The two boys of the Logan family struggled with the fear and anger they experienced due to the injustices and humiliation they suffered because they were black. The characters of the Logan family help to illustrate the undercurrents and overt suspicions that defined race relations in the old South, as well as the heart-rending injustices of the times.

Washington, Booker T.. 1995. *Up From Slavery*. Connecticut: Oxford Paperbacks.

Booker T. Washington wrote a compelling narrative that deserves the attention of today's readers. Washington describes the life of a slave, and explains how he did not know the exact year of his birth, the exact location of his birth, or his father. Throughout Washington's life he achieved an education and a life of helping fellow blacks improve their education and vocational endeavors. This book is a good reminder of the stark conditions and large barriers present for slaves making the transition to free members

of society following the Civil War.

West, Cornel. 1994. *Race Matters*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

A book of eight essays that address controversial issues that face African Americans. West analyzes such subjects as nihilism in black America, the crisis of black leadership, affirmative action, black-Jewish relationships, sexuality, and the legacy of Malcolm X. He also speaks of black poverty, which he states, "is primarily due to the disruption of wealth power and income." He reiterates that capitalism is the root of the American racial dilemma, and that little real change can be achieved without the reorganization of the economy. West's comments about the "new black conservatives" is just one of the groups in black politics that is criticized in this book.

Williams, Dennis. 1997. *Somebody's Child*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

This is a book that tells the important story about the social significance and long-standing implications of fatherless families from a seldom heard point of view. The male siblings are linked by their struggles achieve peace with father and with the women in their lives as they move from adolescence adulthood. This text is filled with rich characterization and visual imagery.