

Non-Fiction ADULT BOOKS ABOUT DIVERSITY ISSUES FOR THE HOME LIBRARY

NON-FICTION

An Indigenous Peoples' History of the U.S. (2015 Recipient of the American Book Award)

By Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

The first history of the United States told from the perspective of indigenous peoples. This is a difficult book for people of European descent to read, as are most adult, non-fiction books about the cultural experience of non-white populations. This is a book that will generate significant emotion but it an essential and required read if one is to grasp any comprehension of the great divide between Native Americans and white America.

Dunbar-Ortiz shows how European-Americans have continually reframed Native Americans' role in our national myth-narrative - always with the purpose of maintaining the basic structure of that narrative. That myth-narrative, as she describes it, is the laughable notion of liberty-through-empire - the idea that it is America's divinely appointed duty to violently impose free-market capitalism on the rest of the world's peoples in order to lift them up and liberate them (even though only a relative few ever do well in this system). Provides great and challenging discussion for book clubs!

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of the American Great Migration

By Isabel Wilkerson

From 1915 to 1970, this exodus of almost six million people changed the face of America. Wilkerson compares this epic migration to the migrations of other peoples in history. She interviewed more than a thousand people, and gained access to new data and official records, to write this definitive and vividly dramatic account of how these American journeys unfolded, altering our cities, our country, and ourselves.

With stunning historical detail, Wilkerson tells this story through the lives of three unique individuals: Ida Mae Gladney, who in 1937 left sharecropping and prejudice in Mississippi for Chicago, where she achieved quiet blue-collar success and, in old age, voted for Barack Obama when he ran for an Illinois Senate seat; sharp and quick-tempered George Starling, who in 1945 fled Florida for Harlem, where he endangered his job fighting for civil rights, saw his family fall, and finally found peace in God; and Robert Foster, who left Louisiana in 1953 to pursue a medical career, the personal physician to Ray Charles as part of a glitteringly successful medical career, which allowed him to purchase a grand home where he often threw exuberant parties. Wilkerson brilliantly captures their first treacherous and exhausting cross-country trips by car and train and their new lives in colonies that grew into ghettos, as well as how they changed these cities with southern food, faith, and culture and improved them with discipline, drive, and hard work.

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AWARDS: NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD WINNER; LYNTON HISTORY PRIZE WINNER; HEARTLAND AWARD WINNER ; DAYTON LITERARY PEACE PRIZE FINALIST

NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *The New York Times* • *USA Today* • *O: The Oprah Magazine* • *Amazon* • *Publishers Weekly* • *Salon* • *Newsday* • *The Daily Beast*

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *The New Yorker* • *The Washington Post* • *The Economist* • *Boston Globe* • *San Francisco Chronicle* • *Chicago Tribune* • *Entertainment Weekly* • *Philadelphia Inquirer* • *The Guardian* • *The Seattle Times* • *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* • *The Christian Science Monitor*

Between the World and Me

By Ta-Nehisi Coates

“This is your country, this is your world, this is your body, and you must find some way to live within the all of it.”

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation’s history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of “race,” a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men—bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?

Between the World and Me is Ta-Nehisi Coates’s attempt to answer these questions in a letter to his adolescent son. Coates shares with his son—and readers—the story of his awakening to the truth about his place in the world through a series of revelatory experiences, from Howard University to Civil War battlefields, from the South Side of Chicago to Paris, from his childhood home to the living rooms of mothers whose children’s lives were taken as American plunder. Beautifully woven from personal narrative, reimagined history, and fresh, emotionally charged reportage, *Between the World and Me* clearly illuminates the past, bravely confronts our present, and offers a transcendent vision for a way forward.

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER • NATIONAL BOOK AWARD WINNER • Hailed by Toni Morrison as “required reading,” a bold and personal literary exploration of America’s racial history by “the single best writer on the subject of race in the United States” (*The New York Observer*) NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY*

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One of Us: The Story of Anders Breivik and the Massacre in Norway

By Asne Seierstad.

Translated by Sarah Death. In this masterpiece of reportage, Seierstad, a Norwegian journalist, explores the dark side of Scandinavia through the life and crimes of Anders Behring Breivik, who, on July 22, 2011, killed 77 people, most of them teenagers, as a protest against women's rights, cultural diversity and the growing influence of Islam. As she weaves the stories of the teenagers with the central narrative about Breivik and his disturbing, alienated childhood, the book attains an almost unbearable weight. This tragedy isn't literary and symbolic; it's the real thing.

On July 22, 2011, Anders Behring Breivik detonated a bomb outside government buildings in central Oslo, killing eight people. He then proceeded to a youth camp on the island of Utøya, where he killed sixty-nine more, most of them teenage members of Norway's governing Labour Party.

What made Breivik, a gifted child from an affluent neighborhood in Oslo, become a terrorist?

As in her bestseller *The Bookseller of Kabul*, Seierstad excels at the vivid portraiture of lives under stress. She delves deep into Breivik's troubled childhood, showing how a hip-hop and graffiti aficionado became a right-wing activist and Internet game addict, and then an entrepreneur, Freemason, and self-styled master warrior who sought to "save Norway" from the threat of Islam and multiculturalism. She writes with equal intimacy about Breivik's victims, tracing their political awakenings, aspirations to improve their country, and ill-fated journeys to the island.

By the time Seierstad reaches Utøya, we know both the killer and those he will kill. We have also gotten to know an entire country—famously peaceful and prosperous, and utterly incapable of protecting its youth.

A harrowing and thorough account of the massacre that upended Norway, and the trial that helped put the country back together. What leads people into becoming terrorists? Another book to be read and discussed by a group. Be prepared for challenging reading.

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness

By Michele Alexander- updated edition

Why are young people marching in the streets shouting, "Black Lives Matter?" Why are families of color questioning police action in ways that challenge police departments around the country? This study of the mass incarceration of people of color is not the cause of such a movement, but it certainly provides a background on why communities of color are asking questions of the American legal system.

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Praised by Harvard Law professor Lani Guinier, *The New Jim Crow*, is "brave and bold. This book directly challenges the notion that the election of Barack Obama signals a new era of colorblindness."

With dazzling candor, legal scholar Michelle Alexander argues that "we have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it." By targeting black men through the War on Drugs and decimating communities of color, she argues, the U.S. criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control—relegating millions to a permanent second-class status—even as it formally adheres to the principle of colorblindness. What is surprising is that lawyers and political leaders around the country, while not endorsing Ms. Alexander's conclusions do agree on the statistics and are engaging in action to address those statistics.

Called "stunning" by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Levering Lewis, "invaluable" by the *Daily Kos*, "explosive" by *Kirkus*, and "profoundly necessary" by the *Miami Herald*, *The New Jim Crow*, now with a foreword by Cornel West, is a must-read for all people of conscience.

It is not only a best-selling book for the general public, *The New Jim Crow* has won several awards associated with law and sociology including:

- Winner, NAACP Image Awards (Outstanding Non-fiction, 2011)
- Winner of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency's Prevention for a Safer Society (PASS) Award
- Winner of the Constitution Project's 2010 Constitutional Commentary Award
- 2010 IPPY Award: Silver Medal in Current Events II (Social Issues/Public Affairs/Ecological/Humanitarian) category
- Winner of the 2010 Association of Humanist Sociology Book Award
- Finalist, Silver Gavel Award
- Finalist, [Phi Beta Kappa](#) Emerson Award
- Finalist, Letitia Woods Brown Book Award

A study guide to this book can be found online and used for group discussion.

This book has been criticized by James Forman, a leader of the Civil Rights movement as a "strained analogy" at Jim Crow. Political sociologist Joseph D. Osel criticizes the book because, he argues, "it has not a single reference to the modern economic paradigm". Other criticisms are that Ms. Alexander does not include the work and influence of radical, black leaders in identifying the context of the issue of mass incarceration and that she backs away from calling non-white populations to revolution.

There are dozens of presentations and speeches by Ms. Alexander on Youtube. She has been interviewed by a number of respected celebrity journalists and commentators including them, Charlie Rose and Bill Moyers. Those, too, can be found on Youtube.