

The roots and reality of racism in the United States and Britain

A partial reading list from Heywood Hill, June 2020

Foreword
by
Paul Boateng

Slaves were forbidden access to books and the skills to read them for the very simple reason that there is no more important weapon in the struggle for humanity. This book list is a welcome one in challenging times and a treasure trove well worth dipping into so as to better make sense of the times in which we live.

My own sense of self-worth and identity owes much to many of the books to be found in this list and to the lives of those represented in it. I owe my first name Paul to my parents' hero Paul Robeson and a maxim coined by Frederick Douglass, the freed slave, has guided my life in the law, politics and diplomacy.

Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* and fame as an orator on both sides of the Atlantic made him one of the most photographed Americans of the 19th Century.

I grew up in the Gold Coast later Ghana. My first experience of libraries and the wonderful world of books was when my mother Peggy Boateng, an English teacher, took me to the first dedicated children's Library in Sub Saharan Africa. The books I read then *Orlando* *The Marmalade Cat* and *The Wind in the Willows* were supplied by the Countess Ranfurly Library Trust.

Today this organisation now known as [Book Aid International \(BAI\)](#) continues to open up horizons for millions of people in Africa, in refugee camps, and disaster zones the world over. HRH Prince Philip remains its Patron. [BAI](#) is funded entirely by generous publishers and book lovers and operates often in conflict zones and where necessary with books carried to remote destinations on donkeys and camels.

I graduated in time from AA Milne and the sometimes derided but by me much loved Enid Blyton and of course the Hardy Boys to Chinua Achebe, James Baldwin and WEB Du Bois. Du Bois was a friend of my fathers and I sang at his funeral in Accra.

Books have sustained me and continue to do so. The written word in poetry and prose has provided me with insights and experiences for which I am profoundly grateful.

Allow me to highlight two stand out reads on this list. The novel *The Two Hearts of Kwasi Boachi* by Arthur Japin (Knopf, 2000) is based on a true story of two princelings transported in the 19th century from amongst my father's people in the Ashanti Kingdom of the Gold Coast to the Dutch Royal Court. It explores across two centuries and three continents the issue of identity and the complex relationship between the peoples of Europe and their Empires.

People Like Us by Hashi Mohammed (Profile Books, 2020) brings us face to face with the interwoven complexities of race class and social mobility in contemporary Britain from the perspective of a young Somali refugee who grew up in my former constituency. Hashi Mohammed's story, on the way to becoming a successful lawyer and his insights into what defeats many, is an instructive one.

I believe you will find something in this list that will do the same for you. In any event as we hope and strive for a more just and equitable world that maxim of Frederick Douglass still stands out for me as a clarion call to active citizenship, never more important than now! "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and it never will."

The Rt Hon the Lord Boateng PC DL was a MP and Britain's first black Cabinet Minister. Latterly High Commissioner to South Africa he now chairs [Book Aid International](#), and the International Council of the Duke Of Edinburgh's Award. He is Chancellor of the University of Greenwich and a Vice President of the London Library.

The Roots and Reality of Racism in the United States and Britain

The illusion of race has proved hideously seductive to the human mind and has been the cause of not only incalculable suffering but also persistent discrimination. This reading list examines some of the roots, and some of the reality, of racism in the United States and Britain, then and now.

There is a huge amount of interesting writing on this complex subject, from exceptional contemporary novels to cutting edge academic studies, more general histories, past and present, and some fierce and fresh polemics.

As well as Lord Boateng, and colleagues on the Heywood Hill team, we are also very grateful for their book suggestions to Amelia Gentleman, James Forman Jr. and Brooke Newman, among others.

We are covering too much ground here but so be it. We have limited the choice to one book per author. An asterisk (*) denotes fiction, poetry or short stories. Many of the older titles are out of print, but if you would like us to put together a selection of the novels or newer books for you please don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

Native Peoples

Andres Resendez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America*. Mariner, 2016.

Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*. Yale University Press, 2009.

Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart At Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970.

John Ehle, *Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation*. Anchor, 1989.

Gregory Smithers, *The Cherokee Diaspora: An Indigenous History of Migration, Resettlement, and Identity*. Yale University Press, 2015.

Peter Cozzens, *The Earth is Weeping: The Epic Story of the Indian Wars for the American West*. Alfred Knopf, 2016.

David Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*. Oxford University Press. 1993

Arthur Japin, *The Two Hearts of Kwasi Boachi*. Knopf, 2000.*

The Atlantic Slave Trade

Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. Harvard University Press, 2007.

Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1440 – 1870*. Simon & Schuster, 1997.

Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution*. BBC Books, 2006.

David Eltis and David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. Yale University Press, 2015.

Enslavement in America

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*. Knopf, 1987.*

Colson Whitehead, *The Underground Railroad*. Doubleday, 2016.*

Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing*. Viking, 2017.*

Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké, and Sarah Grimké, *American Slavery as It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses*. American Anti-Slavery Society, 1839.

Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. Hachette Group, 2016.

Lawrence Hill, *The Book of Negroes*. Harper Collins, 2007.*

Charles Johnson and Patricia Smith, *Africans in America America's Journey Through Slavery*. Harcourt Brace, 1998.

Gregory O'Malley, *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619-1807*. University of North Carolina Press, 2014.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. John P Jewitt, 1852.*

Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave*. Derby & Miller, 1853.

Harriet A Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*. Thayer & Eldridge, 1861.

Enslaved People and the American Founders

Erica Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*. Simon and Schuster, 2017.

Ron Chernow, *Washington: A Life*. Penguin, 2010.

Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*. Norton, 2009.

Joseph Ellis, *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*. Knopf, 1996.

Paul Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson*. Routledge, 2014 (3rd edition).

Colonial Slavery (and Rebellion), Religion and Racial Constructs

Brooke Newman, *A Dark Inheritance: Blood, Race and Sex in Colonial Jamaica*. Yale University Press, 2018.

A M Belisario, *A Report on the Trial of Arthur Hodge*. Tertius Dunning, 1812.

James Walvin, *Britain's Slave Empire*. Tempus, 2000.

Katharine Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018.

Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia*. John Hopkins, 2012.

Michael Guasco, *Slaves and Englishmen: Human Bondage in the Early Modern Atlantic World*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

C L R James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. Secker & Warburg, 1938.

Abolition

Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Epic Story of the Underground Railroad, America's First Civil Rights Movement*. Harper Collins, 2005.

Michael Vorenberg, *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Angela Y Davis, *Women, Race and Class*. Random House, 1981.

Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition*. Yale University Press, 2017.

Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains: The British Struggle to Abolish Slavery*. Macmillan, 2005.

William Hague, *William Wilberforce: The Life of the Great Anti-Slave Trade Campaigner*. Harper Collins, 2008.

Sian Rees, *Sweet Water and Bitter: The Ships that Stopped the Slave Trade*. Chatto & Windus, 2009.

Slavery and its Impact in the UK

Catherine Hall, et al., *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain*. Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain*. Cornell University Press, 2012.

Catherine Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony: Encountering Atlantic Slavery in Imperial Britain*. Harvard University Press, 2012.

Michael Bundock, *The Fortunes of Francis Barber: The True Story of the Jamaican Slave Who Became Samuel Johnson's Heir*. Yale University Press, 2015.

Sara Collins, *The Confessions of Frannie Langton*. Penguin, 2019.*

Civil War America, Reconstruction and beyond

Esi Edugyan, *Washington Black*. Harper Collins, 2018.*

Tyehimba Jess, *Olio*. Seattle Wave Books, 2016.*

David Brion Davis, *Antebellum American Culture: An Interpretive Anthology*. Penn State University Press, 1979.

Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*. W. W. Norton & Co., 2010.

Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*. W W Norton, 1996.

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. J. B. Lippincott, 1937.

Douglas A. Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name: The re-enslavement of black Americans from the civil war to World War Two*. Doubleday, 2008.

Henry Louis Gates Jr., *Stony the Road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow*. Penguin, 2019.

W E B Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. A & C McClurg, 1903.

Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States*. W W Norton, 2018.

Richard Bell, *Stolen: Five Free Boys Kidnapped into Slavery and Their Astonishing Odyssey Home*. Simon and Schuster, 2019.

David Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Profit of Freedom*. Simon and Schuster, 2018.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave Written By Himself*. Anti-Slavery Office, Boston, 1845.

Amy Murrell Taylor, *Embattled Freedom: Journeys Through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps*. University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

20th Century: Segregation and Civil Rights; Windrush and Integration

Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*. Random House, 2010.

Langston Hughes, *The Ways of White Folks*. Alfred A Knopf, 1934.

Richard Wright, *A Native Son*. Harper and Brothers, 1940.

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*. Random House, 1952.*

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*. The Dial Press. 1963.

Maya Angelou, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*. Random House, 1969.

Harper Lee, *To Kill A Mockingbird*. J.B. Lippincott Company, 1960.*

Darryl Pickney, *High Cotton*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1992.*

Jacqueline Woodson, *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Nancy Paulsen Books, 2014.*

Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982.*

Yusef Komunyakaa, *Neon Vernacular: New and Selected Poems*. Wesleyan University Press, 1993.*

Sue Monk Kidd, *The Secret Life of Bees*. Viking, 2002.*

Margo Jefferson, *Negroland*. Pantheon, 2015.

Marlon James, *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. Oneworld, 2014.*

Yvonne Battle-Felton, *Remembered*. Little Brown, 2019.*

Gilbert King, *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America*. Harper Collins, 2012.

Robert A Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Path To Power, Means of Ascent, Master of the Senate, Passage To Power*. Alfred A Knopf, 1982-2012.

Harry Belafonte, *My Song: A Memoir*. Knopf, 2011.

Martin Duberman, *Paul Robeson*. Knopf, 1989.

Gary Younge, *The Speech: The Story Behind Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Dream*. Haymarket Books, 2013.

Peniel Joseph, *The Sword and the Shield: The Revolutionary Lives of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.* Basic Books, 2020.

Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. Times Books/Random House, 1995.

Lisa Delpit, *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New Press, 1995.

Beverly Daniel Tatum, *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: A Psychologist Explains the Development of Racial Identity*. Basic Books, 1997.

Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1999.

Derek Walcott, *Omeros*. Faber, 1990.*

Anne Spry Rush, *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain*. Pluto Press, 1984.

Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*. Hutchinson, 1987.

Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain: The Institutional Origins of a Multicultural Nation*. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Stuart Hall (with Bill Schwarz). *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands*. Allen Lane, 2017.

John Belchem, *Before the Windrush: Race Relations in 20th-Century Liverpool*. Liverpool University Press, 2014.

Daivd Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History*. Pan, 2017.

Kathleen Paul, *Whitewashing Britain: Race and Citizenship in the Postwar Era*. Cornell University Press, 1997.

Clair Wills, *Lovers and Strangers: An Immigrant History of Post-War Britain*. Penguin, 2017.

Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*. Longman, 1956.*

Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-Racial Britain*. Harper Collins, 1998.

Ekow Eshun, *Black Gold of the Sun: searching for home in England and Africa*. Pantheon, 2006.

Colin Grant, *Homecoming: Voices of the Windrush Generation*. Jonathan Cape, 2019.

Robert Winder, *Bloody Foreigners: The Story of Immigration to Britain*. Little, Brown, 2004.

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*. Vintage, 2000.*

Andrea Levy, *Small Island*. Picador, 2004.*

Lenny Henry, *Who Am I Again?* Faber, 2019.

Criminal Justice Systems

James Forman Jr, *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017.

David Simon, *Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets*. Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colourblindness*. The New Press, 2012.

Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. Spiegel & Gray, 2014.

Amelia Gentleman, *The Windrush Betrayal: Exposing the Hostile Environment*. Faber, 2019.

Michael Fuller, "Kill The Black One First". 535, 2019.

Contemporary racism: realities and responses

ZZ Packer, *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere*. Riverhead Books, 2003.*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*. Knopf, 2013.*

Jesmyn Ward, *Men We Reaped: A Memoir*. Bloomsbury, 2013.

Paul Beatty, *The Sellout*. Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2015.*

Terence Hayes, *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin*. Penguin, 2018.*

Imani Perry, *Breathe: A Letter to My Sons*. Beacon Press, 2019.

Nic Stone, *Dear Martin*. Simon & Schuster, 2018.

Cornelius Eady, *Brutal Imagination*. Putnam, 2001.*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric*. Graywolf Press, 2014.*

Joshua Bennett, *Being Property Once Myself: Blackness and the End of Man*. Harvard University Press, 2020.

Jason L Riley, *Please Stop Helping Us: How Liberals Make It Harder for Blacks to Succeed*. Encounter Books, 2014.

Jennifer L Eberhardt, *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think and Do*. Viking, 2019.

Afua Hirsch, *Brit(ish): On Race, Identity and Belonging*. Jonathan Cape, 2018.

Akala, *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire*. Two Roads, 2018.

Bernardine Evaristo, *Girl, Woman, Other*. Hamish Hamilton, 2019.*

Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I Am No Longer Talking To White People About Race*. Bloomsbury, 2017.

Audre Lorde, *Your Silence Will Not Protect You*. Silver Press, 2017.

Clint Smith, *Counting Descent*. write bloody publishing, 2016.*

Rachel Edwards, *Darling*. Fourth Estate, 2018.*

Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard For White People To Talk About Racism*. Penguin, 2019.

Layla F Saad, *Me and White Supremacy: How to Recognise Your Privilege, Combat Racism and Change the World*. Quercus, 2020.

Emma Dabiri, *Don't Touch My Hair*. Bloomsbury, 2020.

Kiley Reid, *Such a Fun Age*. Bloomsbury, 2020.*

Adam Rutherford, *How To Argue With A Racist*. W&N, 2020.

Hashi Mohamed, *People Like Us: What It Takes To Make It In Modern Britain*. Profile Books, 2020.

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