Book List: Diversity and Justice

Literature with Powerful Messages on Diversity and Justice

Narrative Non-Fiction, Fiction, and Social Analysis/Activism

**Narrative Non-Fiction**

Memoirs, ethnographies, investigative journalism

*The journeys of people who navigate social barriers*


**Compassionate Confinement: A Year in the Life of Unit C**, by Laura S. Abrams and Ben Anderson-Nathe (Rutgers University Press, 2013).


Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison, by Bruce Western (Russell Sage Foundation, 2018).


In the Country We Love: My Family Divided, by Diane Guerrero (Henry Holt and Co., 2016).

The Line Becomes a River: Dispatches from the Border, by Francisco Cantú (Riverhead Books, 2018).


My (Underground) American Dream: My True Story as an Undocumented Immigrant Who Became a Wall Street Executive, by Julissa Arce (Center Street, 2017).

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America, by Barbara Ehrenreich (Metropolitan Books, 2010).


Notes from a Young Black Chef: A Memoir, by Kwame Onwuachi and Joshua David Stein (Knopf, 2019).
One Time, One Place: Mississippi in the Depression: A Snapshot Album, by Eudora Welty (University Press of Mississippi; Silver Anniversary edition, 1996). [Photo essay]

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates, by Wes Moore (Spiegel & Grau, 2010).


The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace: A Brilliant Young Man Who Left Newark for the Ivy League, by Jeff Hobbs (Scribner, 2014).

Travels with Lizbeth: Three Years on the Road and on the Streets, by Lars Eighner (St. Martin's Griffin, 2013; first published in 1993).


What the Eyes Don’t See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City, by Monna Hanna Attisha (One World, 2018).


Graphic Non-fiction

To read graphic novels see the pictures first, and then read what’s on the page. Graphic novels share elements of prose, screenwriting, and visual arts.


Good Talk: A Memoir in Conversations, by Mira Jacob (One World, 2019).


America is Not the Heart: A Novel, by Elaine Castillo (Viking, 2018).


The Gone Dead: A Novel, by Chanelle Benz (Ecco, 2019).

The Hate U Give, by Angie Thomas (Balzer + Bray, 2017).


Homegoing: A Novel, by Yaa Gyasi (Vintage, 2017). YA


1 What Is a Modern Classic?

On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous: A Novel, by Ocean Vuong (Penguin Press, 2019).

The Other Americans: A Novel, by Laila Lalami (Pantheon, 2019).

The Poet X: A Novel by Elizabeth Ace (HarperTeen, 2018). (A verse novel) YA


Piecing Me Together, by Renée Watson (Bloomsbury, 2018). YA

A Place for Us: A Novel, by Fatima Farheen Mirza (SJP for Hogarth, 2018).


There There: A Novel, by Tommy Orange (Knopf; 2018).


We Need New Names: A Novel, by NoViolet Bulawayo (Hachette UK, 2013).


Sci-Fi, Cli-Fi* & Fantasy

*Cli-Fi: Climate Fiction (takes on what might happen to our planet due to global warming)


Children of Blood and Bone (Legacy of Orisha), by Tomi Adeyemi (Square Fish, 2019). YA

²This book is a retelling of 24 black American folk tales originating in slavery. Although it’s a collection of separate narratives, I am including it, because it is an interwoven story related through oral tradition.


*The Fifth Season: Every Age Must Come to an End*, by N.K. Jemisin (Orbit, 2015).


*The Necessary Beggar*, by Susan Palwick (Tor, 2005).

*Parable of the Sower*, by Octavia E. Butler (Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993).

*Trail of Lightning (The Sixth World)*, by Rebecca Roanhorse (Saga Press, 2018). [Cli-Fi]


*We Cast a Shadow: A Novel*, by Maurice Carlos Ruffin (One World, 2019).


*Wild Seed*, by Octavia Butler (Doubleday, 1980).

**Graphic Novels**

To read graphic novels see the pictures first, and then read what’s on the page. Graphic novels share elements of prose, screenwriting, and visual arts.

*Aya: Love in Yop City (Volume 2)*, by Marguerite Abouet and Clément Oubrerie, translated from the French by Helge Dascher (Drawn and Quarterly, 2013).


Zahra's Paradise by Khalil, author, and Amir, illustrator, both anonymous (First Second, 2011).

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Social Analysis

Historical, research, policy, and community-based analyses

Issues, activism, and visions for social change

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As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock, by Dina Gilio-Whitaker (Beacon Press, 2019).

Barbara Jordan: Speaking the Truth with Eloquent Thunder, by Barbara Jordan (University of Texas Press, 2007).


Becoming Transnational Youth Workers: Independent Mexican Teenage Migrants and Pathways of Survival and Social Mobility, by Isabel Martinez (Rutgers University Press, 2019).


Beyoncé in Formation: Remixing Black Feminism, by Omise’eke Natasha Tinsley (University of Texas Press, 2018).

Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity, by Bruce Bagemihl (Stonewall Inn Editions, 2000).


The Case Against Free Speech: The First Amendment, Fascism, and the Future of Dissent, by P.E. Moskowitz (Bold Type Books (2019)).

The Class Ceiling: Why It Pays To Be Privileged, by Sam Friedman and Daniel Laurison (Policy Press, 2019).


Exile and Pride: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation, by Eli Clare (Duke University Press, 2015).


For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood... and the Rest of Y'all too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education, by Christopher Emdin (Boston: Beacon Press, 2016).


Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror, by by Mahmood Mamdani (Pantheon, 2004).

The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present, by David Treuer (Riverhead Books, 2019).


Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade Against Child Labor, by Russell Freedman (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1994). [Photo Essay]


Light of the Stars: Alien Worlds and the Fate of the Earth, by Adam Frank (W. W. Norton & Company, 2018)


Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis, by Vandana Shiva (South End Press, 2008).


Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America, by Ibram X. Kendi (Bold Type Books, 2017). [608 pages]


Until We Are Free: My Fight for Human Rights in Iran, by Shirin Ebadi (Random House, 2016).

We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: Inner Light in a Time of Darkness by Alice Walker (The New Press: 2007).


When They Call You a Terrorist. A Black Lives Matter Memoir by Patrisse Khan-Cullors (St. Martin's Press, 2018).