

## Charles Johnson Middle Passage

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*Charles Johnson Middle Passage*

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### ALEXIS BLACKBURN

*A Study Guide for Charles Johnson's "Middle Passage"* Modern Library

Chronicles the lives of Africans as slaves in America through the eve of the Civil War.

*Soulcatcher* Texas A&M University Press

When a slaveowner and his African-American butler drunkenly decide to switch places in each other's beds, the result is a hilarious imbroglio and an offspring, Andrew Hawkins, whose life becomes the "Oxherding Tale," a deliciously funny, bitterly ironic account of slavery, racism, oppression--and the African-American spirit--in the Old South.

*Charles Johnson's Novels* Harvard University Press

"A work from the Johnson Construction Co."

**Middle Passage** Simon and Schuster

A collection of thoughts and insights from one of America's keenest observers

**The Coming** University of Washington Press

Examines how contemporary Black artists envision the Middle Passage as an original site of social death and a space of potential rebirth.

*Middle Passage* Simon and Schuster

Draws on three decades of research to chart the history of slave ships, their crews, and their enslaved passengers, documenting such stories as those of a young kidnapped African whose slavery is witnessed firsthand by a horrified priest from a neighboring tribe responsible for the slave's capture. 30,000 first printing.

*Re-forming the Past* Simon and Schuster

Known for his blending of philosophy, spirituality, humor, and a rollicking good story, Charles Johnson is one of the most important novelists writing today. From his magical first novel, *Faith and the Good Thing*, to his decidedly philosophical *Oxherding Tale*; from his swashbuckling indictment of the slave trade in the National Book Award-winning *Middle Passage*, to his more recent imaginative treatment of Martin Luther King Jr. in *Dreamer*, Johnson has continually

surprised, instructed, and entertained his many avid readers. As this collection of interviews suggests, the novelist is as multifaceted and complex as his novels. Trained in cartooning and philosophy, martial arts and meditation, and producing teleplays, photobiographies, and literary criticism in addition to fiction, Charles Johnson represents a model of what he calls "life as art." Alluding to the "Three Gates" of Buddhist "Right Speech," the title of this volume aptly captures the generous spirit that characterizes Charles Johnson's work. An indispensable resource for all of Johnson's many readers, *Passing the Three Gates* represents both the transformation of the artist over time and the continuity and endurance of his aesthetic and spiritual vision.

*Middle Passage* Scribner

This bold, innovative book promises to radically alter our understanding of the Atlantic slave trade, and the depths of its horrors. Stephanie E. Smallwood offers a penetrating look at the process of enslavement from its African origins through the Middle Passage and into the American slave market. *Saltwater Slavery* is animated by deep research and gives us a graphic experience of the slave trade from the vantage point of the slaves themselves. The result is both a remarkable

transatlantic view of the culture of enslavement, and a painful, intimate vision of the bloody, daily business of the slave trade.

*Taming the Ox* Simon and Schuster

Celebrating Fifty Years of Picador Books Winner of the National Book Award 1990 The Apocalypse would definitely put a crimp in my career plans. Rutherford Calhoun, a puckish rogue and newly freed slave, spends his days loitering around the docks of New Orleans, dodging debt collectors, gangsters, and Isadora Bailey, a prim and frugal woman who seeks to marry him and curb his mischievous instincts. When the heat from these respective pursuers becomes too much to bear, he cons his way on to the next ship leaving the dock: the Republic. Upon boarding, to his horror he discovers that he is on an illegal slave ship embarking on the Middle Passage, the portion of the triangular trade route that saw slaves transported from Africa to the US. Staffed by a crew of criminals and degenerates, the Republic is on a mission to enslave members of the legendary Allmuseri tribe, while the sadistic yet philosophical Captain Falcon has a secondary objective: securing a mysterious cargo that possesses a terrifying and otherworldly power. What follows is a story of Rutherford's battle for survival, as he finds himself juggling loyalties between the ship's crew and the enslaved passengers, and is forced to use every ounce of the charm and cunning that he possesses to endure the desperate conditions and battle the myriad deadly forces on the high seas. A masterful blend of allegory, black comedy, naval adventure and supernatural horror, Charles Johnson's wildly inventive Middle Passage is a true modern classic. Part of the Picador Collection, a series showcasing the best of modern literature.

**Turning the Wheel** Scribner Book Company

From National Book Award winner Charles Johnson, "the celebrated novelist, short story writer, screenwriter, and essayist...comes a small treasure, one to be read and considered and reread" (The New York Times Book Review), showcasing his incredible range and resonant voice. Charles Johnson's Night Hawks presents an eclectic, masterful collection of stories tied together by Buddhist themes and displaying all the grace, heart, and insight for which he has long been known. Spanning genres from science fiction to realism, "Johnson's writing, filled with the sort of long, layered sentences you can get happily lost in, conveys a kindness; a sense that all of us...have our own stories" (The Seattle Times). In "The Weave," leesha and her boyfriend carry out a heist at the salon from which she has just been fired—coming away with thousands of dollars of merchandise in the form of hair extensions. "Night Hawks," the titular story, draws on Johnson's friendship with the late playwright August Wilson to construct a narrative about two writers who meet at night to talk. In "Kamadhatu," a lonely Japanese abbot has his quiet world upended by a visit from a black American Buddhist whose presence pushes him toward the awakening he has long found elusive. "Occupying Arthur Whitfield," about a cab driver who decides to rob the home of a wealthy passenger, reminds readers to be grateful for what they have. And "The Night Belongs to Phoenix Jones" combines the real-life story of a "superhero" in the city of Seattle with an invented narrative about an aging English professor who decides to join him. With precise, elegant, and moving language, Johnson creates an "arresting" array of "indelible moments that show Johnson to be a master of the short form" (Library Journal, starred review). Night Hawks is "a masterpiece...[that] ultimately offers a message of empowerment and hope" (Oprah.com).

*The Eightfold Path* Simon and Schuster

Short stories inspired by the history of slavery in America, by the National Book Award-winning author of Middle Passage. Nothing has had as profound an effect on American life as slavery. For blacks and whites alike, the experience has left us with a conflicted and contradictory history. Now, famed novelist Charles Johnson, whose Middle Passage won the National Book Award, presents a dozen tales of the effects and experience of slavery, each based on historical fact, and each about those Africans who arrived on our shores in shackles. From Martha Washington's management of her slaves, bequeathed to her at the death of the first president, to a boy chained in the bowels of a ship plying the infamous passage from Africa to the South laden with human cargo, from a lynching in Indiana to a hunter of escaped slaves searching the Boston market for his quarry, from an early Quaker meeting exploring resettlement in Africa to the day after Emancipation—the voices, terrors, and savagery of slavery come vividly and unforgettably to life. "[These] highly detailed short historical fictions bring to life this most shameful period in our nation's history."

—The New York Times Book Review

[Deconstructing Eurocentric Representation in Charles Johnson's "Middle Passage"](#) Vintage

Research Paper (postgraduate) from the year 2015 in the subject American Studies - Literature, grade: 16/20, , course: Afro-American literature, language: English, abstract: In many ways, Charles Johnson's novel "The Middle Passage" (1990) can be considered a subtle rewriting of slavery and a meticulous rethinking of the Eurocentric representations of blacks. Through the journey of an ex-slave, Calhoun Ruthford, stowing away on a ship to escape a forced marriage, Charles Johnson weaves a postmodern slave narrative told from the perspective of a black protagonist to question the tropes of white superiority. In every twist and turn of the plot, Calhoun's reflective Journey underlies different sites of deconstruction against white paradigms, artistically masterminded to unveil significant moments of self-contradictory essentialist Eurocentrism. With a counter-discourse advocating inter-subjectivity, human interconnectedness, subjective mobility and third spaces, the middle passage, as this essay argues, enacts different deconstructive strategies involving anti-Eurocentric cultural politics with rebellious Afro-American poetics

**The Way of the Writer** Indiana University Press

A twenty-fifth anniversary edition of Charles Johnson's National Book Award-winning masterpiece—"a novel in the tradition of Billy Budd and Moby-Dick...heroic in proportion...fiction that hooks the mind" (The New York Times Book Review)—now with a new introduction from Stanley Crouch. Rutherford Calhoun, a newly freed slave and irrepressible rogue, is lost in the underworld of 1830s New Orleans. Desperate to escape the city's unscrupulous bill collectors and the pawing hands of a schoolteacher hellbent on marrying him, he jumps aboard the Republic, a slave ship en route to collect members of a legendary African tribe, the Allmuseri. Thus begins a voyage of metaphysical horror and human atrocity, a journey which challenges our notions of freedom, fate and how we live together. Peopled with vivid and unforgettable characters, nimble in its interplay of comedy and serious ideas, this dazzling modern classic is a perfect blend of the picaresque tale, historical romance, sea yarn, slave narrative and philosophical allegory. Now with a new introduction from renowned writer and critic Stanley Crouch, this twenty-fifth anniversary edition of Middle Passage celebrates a cornerstone of the American canon and the masterwork of one of its most important writers. "Long after we'd stopped believe in the great American novel, along comes a spellbinding adventure story that may be just that" (Chicago Tribune).

[Turning the Page](#) Simon and Schuster

"This is truly a major contribution to African American literary criticism, and it promises to elevate Johnson to the place in the literary firmament he so richly deserves." -- Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard University Charles Johnson came of age during the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. His fiction bears the imprint of his formal training as a philosopher and his work as a journalist and cartoonist with a well-honed interest in political satire. Mentored by the American writer John Gardner, Johnson is preoccupied with questions of morality, which are informed by his knowledge of Continental and Asian philosophical traditions. In this book, Rudolph Byrd examines Johnson's four novels -- Faith and the Good Thing, Oxherding Tale, Middle Passage (National Book Award Winner), and Dreamer -- under the rubric of philosophical black fiction, as art that interrogates experience. Byrd contends that Johnson suspends, shelves, and brackets all presuppositions regarding African American life. This bracketing accomplished, the African American experience becomes a pure field of appearances within two poles: consciousness and the people or phenomena to which it is related. Johnson's principal themes are identity and liberation. Intent upon the liberation of perception, for the reader and the writer, Johnson's fiction aims at "whole sight," encompassing a plurality of meanings across a symbolic geography of forms, texts, and traditions from within the matrix of African American life and culture. And like a palimpsest, Johnson's texts contain multiple layers of meaning of disparate origins imprinted over time with varying degrees of visibility and significance. Charles Johnson's Novels will appeal to fans of the writer's work, but it also will serve as a helpful guide for readers newly introduced to this brilliant contemporary American writer.

*Being & Race* Shambhala Publications

Charles Johnson's innovative and richly imagined collection is full of stories -- sly, witty, and

insightful -- that bring the world into focus. Each is a vivid cultural and philosophical portrait that deftly explores issues of identity and race. "Kwoon" follows the spiritual journey of a martial arts teacher on Chicago's South Side. "Sweet Dreams" is a Kafkaesque tale set in a world where dreams are taxed and a man and his dreamlife are being audited. "The Gift of the Osuo" is a fable about the dangers of getting what you wish for. In "Cultural Relativity," a young woman falls in love with the son of the president of an African nation but is forbidden to ever kiss him. The title story is an illuminating and deeply human tale about pre-Montgomery Martin Luther King Jr. and a revelation he had when he looked into his refrigerator late one night. Provocative, engaging, and compassionate, Dr. King's Refrigerator is a superb and important collection from a major American voice.

*Congressional Record* Penguin

"The Coming is powerful. And beautiful...This is a work to be proud of."--Charles Johnson, National Book Award winner for Middle Passage Lyrical, poetic, and hypnotizing, The Coming tells the story of a people's capture and sojourn from their homeland across the Middle Passage--a traumatic trip that exposed the strength and resolve of the African spirit. Extreme conditions produce extraordinary insight, and only after being stripped of everything do they discover the unspeakable beauty they once took for granted. This powerful, haunting novel will shake readers to their very souls. "Part homage to the proud and diverse cultures of Africa, part nightmare of the people stolen from those lands, The Coming seduces us with poetry, then breaks our hearts, but ultimately inspires us to celebrate the indomitable soul of humanity." --George Weinstein, author of Hardscrabble Road

**Dreamer** Simon and Schuster

A fearless experimenter and one of the most important contemporary American writers, Charles Johnson challenges separatist politics and tries to get beyond race as a literary category. In Charles Johnson's Fiction, William R. Nash emphasizes and explores the tensions in Johnson's work between his ideal of race as illusion and his methods of articulating racial grievance. Nash examines Johnson's short stories, novels--Faith and the Good Thing, Oxherding Tale, Middle Passage, and Dreamer--and the nonfiction work Being and Race. Tracing the themes of Johnson's political and artistic concerns as they evolved in his work, Nash locates his fascination with the aesthetics of the Black Arts Movement and his dismissal of separatist black politics and racialist thought. He also considers Johnson's adoption of Western and Eastern philosophies and belief that race is a blinding, limiting category that impedes the exploration of individual and collective identity. In formulating a mode of expression that balances the conflicting demands of race and aesthetics, Johnson crafts a new vision of history and African American identity that signifies on a range of black and white literary predecessors, including Zora Neale Hurston, Theodore Dreiser, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Herman Melville. Nash argues that Johnson's hybrid philosophy of Buddhism and phenomenology defies the basic premises of identity formation and leads to the perception of a different self. Juxtaposed with jarring storylines of racial injustice, Johnson's notion that race is an illusion informs his aesthetic, promotes his strategies for battling oppression, and reminds readers what African Americans have already overcome in the quest to cultivate new visions of identity. Charles Johnson's Fiction also includes eight of Johnson's cartoons published in Black Humor and Half-Past Nation Time in the early 1970s.

*I Call Myself an Artist* Indiana University Press

Title #59. Why do so many go through so much disruption in their middle years? Why then? Why do we consider it to be a crisis? What does the pattern mean and how can we survive it? The Middle Passage shows how we may pass through midlife consciously, rendering our lives more meaningful and the second half of life immeasurably richer.

*Middle Passage* St. Martin's Press

Class of 1967 alumnus, Charles Johnson, examines contemporary African-American fiction.

**Oxherding Tale** Pan Macmillan

A Study Guide for Charles Johnson's "Middle Passage," excerpted from Gale's acclaimed Novels for Students. This concise study guide includes plot summary; character analysis; author biography; study questions; historical context; suggestions for further reading; and much more. For any literature project, trust Novels for Students for all of your research needs.