autobiography of malcolm x

autobiography of malcolm x stands as one of the most influential and enduring works of African American literature, chronicling the life and transformation of Malcolm X from his troubled youth to his emergence as a powerful voice for civil rights and black empowerment. This article explores the origins, structure, major themes, and lasting impact of the autobiography, as well as its relevance in contemporary discussions about race, identity, and social justice. Readers will gain insight into the collaboration between Malcolm X and journalist Alex Haley, the personal and political evolution documented within the pages, and the book's reception since its publication. Whether you are a student, educator, or lifelong learner, this comprehensive overview of the autobiography of Malcolm X provides essential knowledge and context for understanding one of the twentieth century's seminal texts.

- Background and Creation of the Autobiography
- Structure and Narrative Style
- Major Themes Explored in the Autobiography
- The Collaboration Between Malcolm X and Alex Haley
- Impact and Reception of the Autobiography
- Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

Background and Creation of the Autobiography of Malcolm X

The autobiography of Malcolm X was published in 1965, marking a significant milestone in American literature and civil rights history. The book is the result of a collaboration between Malcolm X and journalist Alex Haley, who later became renowned for his work on "Roots." The autobiography traces Malcolm X's journey from his early years in Omaha, Nebraska, through his experiences with crime and incarceration, his conversion to the Nation of Islam, and ultimately, his transformation into one of the most dynamic advocates for racial justice and black empowerment.

Work on the autobiography began in 1963, with Malcolm X and Haley engaging in a series of extensive interviews. Haley's role was not only that of a chronicler but also a mediator, helping Malcolm X articulate his evolving beliefs and philosophies. The book was completed shortly before Malcolm X's assassination in February 1965, adding a sense of urgency and poignancy to its publication.

- Published in 1965, following Malcolm X's assassination
- Collaborative effort between Malcolm X and Alex Haley
- Based on over two years of interviews and discussions
- Offers a firsthand account of key moments in American history

Structure and Narrative Style

The autobiography of Malcolm X is organized chronologically, guiding readers through the formative stages of Malcolm X's life. The book's structure reflects his personal evolution, with distinct sections capturing his childhood, youth, prison years, involvement with the Nation of Islam, and eventual break from the organization. Each chapter presents a candid, unfiltered perspective, revealing the complexities of Malcolm X's character and the internal struggles that shaped his worldview.

The narrative style is direct and conversational, blending Malcolm X's powerful voice with Haley's editorial guidance. This approach creates a compelling and authentic reading experience, drawing readers into the intimate details of Malcolm X's life while situating those experiences within broader social and historical contexts.

- 1. Childhood and family history
- 2. Life in Boston and Harlem
- 3. Prison years and education
- 4. Nation of Islam involvement
- 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca and transformation

Major Themes Explored in the Autobiography

Identity and Transformation

One of the central themes of the autobiography of Malcolm X is the concept of identity and personal transformation. The book vividly illustrates Malcolm X's journey from Malcolm Little to Malcolm X, and finally to El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, reflecting his evolving sense of self in response to changing circumstances and beliefs. His story encourages readers to consider the power of education, spiritual awakening, and self-reflection in shaping one's identity.

Racism and Social Injustice

The autobiography provides a raw and uncompromising account of racism and social injustice in America. Malcolm X's experiences with discrimination, violence, and systemic inequality serve as a

microcosm of the broader struggles faced by African Americans throughout the twentieth century. His analysis of white supremacy, institutional racism, and the roots of oppression remains relevant in contemporary discussions about race and justice.

Empowerment and Activism

Malcolm X's story is also a powerful testament to empowerment and activism. The autobiography chronicles his efforts to mobilize black communities, challenge prevailing narratives, and advocate for human rights. His commitment to self-determination and social change inspired generations of activists and continues to influence movements for racial justice worldwide.

- · Identity and self-discovery
- · Religion and spirituality
- Political awakening
- · Social reform and activism
- Legacy and inspiration

The Collaboration Between Malcolm X and Alex Haley

The partnership between Malcolm X and Alex Haley was instrumental in shaping the autobiography. Haley's background as a journalist and his interest in African American history enabled him to capture Malcolm X's voice authentically while providing structure and clarity to the narrative. Their working relationship was characterized by mutual respect, though it was not without tension, as Haley often probed Malcolm X's beliefs and motivations to present a complete picture.

Haley's editorial influence is apparent in the book's organization and tone, helping to bridge Malcolm

X's personal story with broader social and political themes. The final chapters, written after Malcolm X's pilgrimage to Mecca, reflect significant changes in his worldview, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, unity, and international solidarity. Haley's epilogue provides additional context, detailing the final days of Malcolm X's life and the challenges faced during publication.

Impact and Reception of the Autobiography

Upon its release, the autobiography of Malcolm X received widespread acclaim for its candor, insight, and literary merit. The book quickly became a bestseller and has remained in print for decades, reaching millions of readers worldwide. Scholars, activists, and educators have praised its contributions to understanding race relations, civil rights, and African American history.

The autobiography has also been the subject of debate, with critics examining its reliability, narrative style, and political implications. Nonetheless, its influence is undeniable, shaping public perceptions of Malcolm X and providing a blueprint for future memoirs and autobiographical works. The book's adaptation into film and other media further cemented its status as a cultural landmark.

- · Critical acclaim and bestseller status
- · Influence on civil rights discourse
- Debates over accuracy and interpretation
- Adaptations in film, theater, and education

Legacy and Contemporary Relevance

The legacy of the autobiography of Malcolm X extends far beyond its initial publication. The book remains a foundational text in courses on African American studies, history, and literature, offering vital

perspectives on identity, resistance, and social change. Its themes resonate with contemporary movements for racial justice, equity, and empowerment, providing inspiration and guidance to new generations of readers.

As social and political landscapes continue to evolve, the autobiography's exploration of transformation, activism, and the search for truth remains timely and significant. The work encourages critical engagement with pressing issues, fostering dialogue and understanding across communities.

Malcolm X's life story, as presented in the autobiography, stands as a testament to resilience, courage, and the enduring quest for dignity and justice.

Trending Questions and Answers about the Autobiography of Malcolm X

Q: Who wrote the autobiography of Malcolm X?

A: The autobiography was written by Malcolm X in collaboration with journalist Alex Haley, who helped compile and edit the book based on interviews and discussions with Malcolm X.

Q: What are the major themes in the autobiography of Malcolm X?

A: Major themes include identity and transformation, racism and social injustice, empowerment and activism, religion, and the quest for self-discovery.

Q: When was the autobiography of Malcolm X published?

A: The autobiography was published in 1965, shortly after Malcolm X's assassination.

Q: How did Malcolm X's beliefs change during his life as described in the autobiography?

A: Malcolm X's beliefs evolved from radical black nationalism and separation, influenced by the Nation of Islam, to a more inclusive and internationalist perspective after his pilgrimage to Mecca.

Q: Why is the autobiography of Malcolm X considered an important work?

A: It is considered important for its honest portrayal of Malcolm X's life, its impact on civil rights discourse, and its role in shaping understanding of race relations and social activism.

Q: What impact did the autobiography have on American society?

A: The autobiography influenced the civil rights movement, inspired generations of activists, and contributed to greater awareness and dialogue about racial injustice and empowerment.

Q: Is the autobiography of Malcolm X a reliable source of historical information?

A: While the autobiography provides invaluable firsthand insight, some scholars debate its accuracy due to the subjective nature of memoir and editorial influence, but it remains a foundational text.

Q: How did Alex Haley contribute to the autobiography?

A: Alex Haley conducted interviews with Malcolm X, structured the narrative, and wrote the epilogue, providing context and continuity to Malcolm X's life story.

Q: Has the autobiography of Malcolm X been adapted into other media?

A: Yes, it has been adapted into film, theater productions, and educational materials, most notably Spike Lee's 1992 film "Malcolm X" starring Denzel Washington.

Q: What lessons can modern readers learn from the autobiography of Malcolm X?

A: Modern readers can learn about resilience, the importance of self-education, the struggle for justice, and the power of transformation and activism in effecting social change.

Autobiography Of Malcolm X

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The Autobiography of Malcolm X: A Journey of Self-Discovery and Transformation

The Autobiography of Malcolm X, as told to Alex Haley, is more than just a life story; it's a visceral testament to the power of self-reflection, the enduring struggle for racial justice, and the transformative potential of intellectual and spiritual awakening. This post delves into the key themes, enduring impact, and lasting legacy of this seminal work, offering a comprehensive exploration for both seasoned readers and newcomers alike. We'll examine Malcolm X's tumultuous life journey, from his early years steeped in poverty and racism to his rise as a powerful voice for Black empowerment and his eventual embrace of Islam and a more nuanced understanding of racial equality.

Malcolm X's Early Life: Shaping a Revolutionary

Malcolm X's early life, characterized by poverty, racism, and the trauma of witnessing the brutal murder of his father, significantly shaped his worldview. His childhood in Lansing, Michigan, was marked by the pervasive racial prejudice of the Jim Crow South, which seeped into every aspect of his life. This experience fueled his deep-seated anger and resentment towards white society. His self-education, even while incarcerated, became a crucial component of his intellectual development and eventual transformation. This period, often overlooked, is fundamental to understanding his later activism and shift in ideology.

The Prison Years: A Crucible of Change

Malcolm X's imprisonment became, paradoxically, a turning point. Confined within prison walls, he embarked on a rigorous self-education program, devouring books and expanding his intellectual horizons. This self-learning, largely inspired by the letters from his brother Reginald, laid the groundwork for his future intellectual prowess and powerful oratory skills. He transformed from a street hustler into a voracious reader and a thoughtful intellectual, profoundly impacting his later development. The prison years highlight the importance of self-improvement even in the face of adversity, a theme that resonates strongly with readers.

The Nation of Islam: A Path to Empowerment

Upon his release from prison, Malcolm X joined the Nation of Islam (NOI), finding a sense of community and purpose within its ranks. Under the charismatic leadership of Elijah Muhammad, he became a prominent figure, known for his fiery speeches and unwavering advocacy for Black self-determination. This period saw him develop his distinct rhetorical style, captivating audiences with his powerful message of Black pride and resistance to oppression. However, this chapter also underscores the complexities and internal contradictions within the NOI, ultimately leading to his departure.

The Break with the NOI and the Pilgrimage to Mecca

Malcolm X's eventual break with the Nation of Islam marked a crucial turning point in his life. His growing disillusionment with Elijah Muhammad's leadership and his own intellectual evolution led him to question the NOI's teachings. This culminated in his pilgrimage to Mecca, an experience that profoundly altered his perspectives on race and religion. The pilgrimage revealed a global community of Muslims united in their faith, irrespective of race, profoundly shaking his previous beliefs and opening his eyes to a more inclusive vision of racial harmony.

A New Vision: Towards a More Inclusive Understanding of Racial Justice

Following his pilgrimage, Malcolm X embarked on a new chapter, embracing Sunni Islam and

advocating for a broader, more inclusive vision of racial justice. He formed his own organization, the Muslim Mosque, Inc., and rejected the separatist views that had characterized his earlier activism. This transition highlights his intellectual growth and willingness to evolve his beliefs in the face of new experiences and knowledge. He became a symbol of the evolving fight for racial equality, a testament to the power of intellectual flexibility and spiritual growth.

Legacy and Enduring Relevance

The assassination of Malcolm X remains a tragic moment in American history, but his legacy continues to inspire and challenge us. His unwavering commitment to racial justice, his intellectual journey, and his passionate advocacy for Black empowerment remain powerful symbols of resistance and hope. The Autobiography of Malcolm X serves as a constant reminder of the importance of self-reflection, education, and the transformative potential of a commitment to truth and justice. His story transcends racial boundaries, speaking to the human experience of overcoming adversity and striving for self-improvement.

Conclusion

The Autobiography of Malcolm X is a powerful and moving narrative that continues to resonate with readers today. It's a story of transformation, of intellectual growth, and of a lifelong struggle for justice. Malcolm X's journey from a troubled youth to a leading figure in the civil rights movement remains a testament to the power of self-determination and the importance of continuous self-reflection. His life, and his autobiography, serve as a critical examination of race, religion, and the ongoing pursuit of equality.

FAQs

- 1. What makes the Autobiography of Malcolm X so significant? Its significance lies in its raw honesty, its unflinching portrayal of racism, and its depiction of a transformative personal journey, making it a powerful and lasting contribution to understanding the Black experience in America.
- 2. How did Malcolm X's views change over time? Initially advocating for Black separatism, his pilgrimage to Mecca significantly shifted his perspective, leading him to embrace a more inclusive vision of racial justice and interfaith understanding.
- 3. What is the role of self-education in Malcolm X's life? Self-education was pivotal in his transformation. His voracious reading while incarcerated fundamentally changed his intellectual capabilities and shaped his activism.
- 4. Why is the Autobiography of Malcolm X still relevant today? The book's themes of racial injustice, self-determination, and the power of education remain acutely relevant in contemporary society, prompting ongoing discussions about equality and social justice.

5. What is the significance of Malcolm X's pilgrimage to Mecca? His pilgrimage was a profound turning point, significantly altering his understanding of race and religion, leading to a more inclusive approach to racial justice and a rejection of racial separatism.

autobiography of malcolm x: The Autobiography of Malcolm X Malcolm X, 1992-01-15 ONE OF TIME'S TEN MOST IMPORTANT NONFICTION BOOKS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY In the searing pages of this classic autobiography, originally published in 1964, Malcolm X, the Muslim leader, firebrand, and anti-integrationist, tells the extraordinary story of his life and the growth of the Black Muslim movement. His fascinating perspective on the lies and limitations of the American Dream, and the inherent racism in a society that denies its nonwhite citizens the opportunity to dream, gives extraordinary insight into the most urgent issues of our own time. The Autobiography of Malcolm X stands as the definitive statement of a movement and a man whose work was never completed but whose message is timeless. It is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand America. Praise for The Autobiography of Malcolm X "Extraordinary . . . a brilliant, painful, important book."—The New York Times "This book will have a permanent place in the literature of the Afro-American struggle."—I. F. Stone

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wider currents of American history. Bookended by essays from Tamara Payne, Payne's daughter and primary researcher, who heroically completed the biography after her father's death in 2018, The Dead Are Arising affirms the centrality of Malcolm X to the African American freedom struggle.

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Revolution" in the Abyssinian Baptist Church.

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Baldwin's screenplay based on Alex Haley's now classic The Autobiography Of Malcolm X makes immediate and terrfyingly real the stunning events that gave birth to a forceful, determined man . . . and created the atmosphere of hate that ultimately murdered him. Juxtaposing eloquence and violence, the highest of human ideals with the basest of human violence, this rare screenplay recreates Malcolm X as a symbol for his times . . . and as a flesh and blood black man who feels, loves, hates, and forgives through a life torn by pain, healed by faith, and finally ended by the bullets from a black brother's gun.

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them before they fall off a cliff into adulthooda. The novel ends with Holden in a mental institution, where he is being treated for a nervous breakdown. He expresses some hope for the future, indicating a possible path to recovery..

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autobiography of malcolm x: Heart: A History Sandeep Jauhar, 2018-09-18 The bestselling author of Intern and Doctored tells the story of the thing that makes us tick For centuries, the human heart seemed beyond our understanding: an inscrutable shuddering mass that was somehow the driver of emotion and the seat of the soul. As the cardiologist and bestselling author Sandeep Jauhar shows in Heart: A History, it was only recently that we demolished age-old taboos and devised the transformative procedures that have changed the way we live. Deftly alternating between key historical episodes and his own work, Jauhar tells the colorful and little-known story of the doctors who risked their careers and the patients who risked their lives to know and heal our most vital organ. He introduces us to Daniel Hale Williams, the African American doctor who performed the world's first open heart surgery in Gilded Age Chicago. We meet C. Walton Lillehei, who connected a patient's circulatory system to a healthy donor's, paying the way for the heart-lung machine. And we encounter Wilson Greatbatch, who saved millions by inventing the pacemaker—by accident. Jauhar deftly braids these tales of discovery, hubris, and sorrow with moving accounts of his family's history of heart ailments and the patients he's treated over many years. He also confronts the limits of medical technology, arguing that future progress will depend more on how we choose to live than on the devices we invent. Affecting, engaging, and beautifully written, Heart: A History takes the full measure of the only organ that can move itself.

autobiography of malcolm x: Alex Haley and Malcolm X's The Autobiography of Malcolm X Harold Bloom, 1999 Bloom's Reviews are a acclaimed advancement to the standard chapter-by-chapter plot summaries provided by most study guides. Each Review saves a student time by presenting the latest research, from noted literary scholars, in a practical and lucid format, enabling students to concentrate on improving their knowledge and understanding of the work in question.

autobiography of malcolm x: If the Oceans Were Ink Carla Power, 2015-04-07 PULITZER PRIZE FINALIST • NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST • Hailed by The Washington Post as "mandatory reading," and praised by Fareed Zakaria as "intelligent, compassionate, and revealing," a powerful journey to help bridge one of the greatest divides shaping our world today. If the Oceans Were Ink is Carla Power's eye-opening story of how she and her longtime friend Sheikh Mohammad Akram Nadwi found a way to confront ugly stereotypes and persistent misperceptions that were cleaving their communities. Their friendship-between a secular American and a madrasa-trained sheikh-had always seemed unlikely, but now they were frustrated and bewildered by the battles being fought in their names. Both knew that a close look at the Quran would reveal a faith that preached peace and not mass murder; respect for women and not oppression. And so they embarked on a yearlong journey through the controversial text. A journalist who grew up in the Midwest and the Middle East, Power offers her unique vantage point on the Quran's most provocative verses as

she debates with Akram at cafes, family gatherings, and packed lecture halls, conversations filled with both good humor and powerful insights. Their story takes them to madrasas in India and pilgrimage sites in Mecca, as they encounter politicians and jihadis, feminist activists and conservative scholars. Armed with a new understanding of each other's worldviews, Power and Akram offer eye-opening perspectives, destroy long-held myths, and reveal startling connections between worlds that have seemed hopelessly divided for far too long. Praise for If the Oceans Were Ink "A vibrant tale of a friendship.... If the Oceans Were Ink is a welcome and nuanced look at Islam [and] goes a long way toward combating the dehumanizing stereotypes of Muslims that are all too common.... If the Oceans Were Ink should be mandatory reading for the 52 percent of Americans who admit to not knowing enough about Muslims."—The Washington Post "For all those who wonder what Islam says about war and peace, men and women, Jews and gentiles, this is the book to read. It is a conversation among well-meaning friends—intelligent, compassionate, and revealing—the kind that needs to be taking place around the world."—Fareed Zakaria, author of The Post-American World "Carla Power's intimate portrait of the Quran, told with nuance and great elegance, captures the extraordinary, living debate over the Muslim holy book's very essence. A spirited, compelling read."—Azadeh Moaveni, author of Lipstick Jihad "Unique, masterful, and deeply engaging. Carla Power takes the reader on an extraordinary journey in interfaith understanding as she debates and discovers the Quran's message, meaning, and values on peace and violence, gender and veiling, religious pluralism and tolerance."—John L. Esposito, University Professor and Professor of Islamic Studies, Georgetown University, and author of The Future of Islam "A thoughtful, provocative, intelligent book."—Diana Abu-Jaber, author of Birds Of Paradise and The Language of Baklava

autobiography of malcolm x: The Autobiography of Malcolm X Malcolm Little, Malcolm X., Alex Haley, 1981

autobiography of malcolm x: The Autobiography of Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley (MAXNotes Literature Guides) Anita Aboulafia, 2013-01-01 REA's MAXnotes for Alex Haley's The Autobiography of Malcolm X MAXnotes offer a fresh look at masterpieces of literature, presented in a lively and interesting fashion. Written by literary experts who currently teach the subject, MAXnotes will enhance your understanding and enjoyment of the work. MAXnotes are designed to stimulate independent thought about the literary work by raising various issues and thought-provoking ideas and questions. MAXnotes cover the essentials of what one should know about each work, including an overall summary, character lists, an explanation and discussion of the plot, the work's historical context, illustrations to convey the mood of the work, and a biography of the author. Each chapter is individually summarized and analyzed, and has study questions and answers.

autobiography of malcolm x: Life Is So Good George Dawson, Richard Glaubman, 2013-05-07 One man's extraordinary journey through the twentieth century and how he learned to read at age 98 "Things will be all right. People need to hear that. Life is good, just as it is. There isn't anything I would change about my life."—George Dawson In this remarkable book, George Dawson, a slave's grandson who learned to read at age 98 and lived to the age of 103, reflects on his life and shares valuable lessons in living, as well as a fresh, firsthand view of America during the entire sweep of the twentieth century. Richard Glaubman captures Dawson's irresistible voice and view of the world, offering insights into humanity, history, hardships, and happiness. From segregation and civil rights, to the wars and the presidents, to defining moments in history, George Dawson's description and assessment of the last century inspires readers with the message that has sustained him through it all: "Life is so good. I do believe it's getting better." WINNER OF THE CHRISTOPHER AWARD "A remarkable autobiography the feel-good story of the year."—The Christian Science Monitor "A testament to the power of perseverance."—USA Today "Life Is So Good is about character, soul and spirit. . . . The pride in standing his ground is matched—maybe even exceeded—by the accomplishment of [George Dawson's] hard-won education."—The Washington Post "Eloquent . . . engrossing . . . an astonishing and unforgettable memoir."—Publishers Weekly Look for special features inside. Join the Circle for author chats and more.

autobiography of malcolm x: Autobiog Malcolm X Malcolm X, 1973-05-12

autobiography of malcolm x: They Called Me Number One Bev Sellars, 2013 Xat'sull Chief Bev Sellars spent her childhood in a church-run residential school whose aim it was to civilize Native children through Christian teachings, forced separation from family and culture, and discipline. In addition, beginning at the age of five, Sellars was isolated for two years at Coqualeetza Indian Turberculosis Hospital in Sardis, British Columbia, nearly six hours' drive from home. The trauma of these experiences has reverberated throughout her life. The first full-length memoir to be published out of St. Joseph's Mission at Williams Lake, BC, Sellars tells of three generations of women who attended the school, interweaving the personal histories of her grandmother and her mother with her own. She tells of hunger, forced labour, and physical beatings, often with a leather strap, and also of the demand for conformity in a culturally alien institution where children were confined and denigrated for failure to be White and Roman Catholic. Like Native children forced by law to attend schools across Canada and the United States, Sellars and other students of St. Joseph's Mission were allowed home only for two months in the summer and for two weeks at Christmas. The rest of the year they lived, worked, and studied at the school. St. Joseph's Mission is the site of the controversial and well-publicized sex-related offences of Bishop Hubert O'Connor, which took place during Sellars's student days, between 1962 and 1967, when O'Connor was the school principal. After the school's closure, those who had been forced to attend came from surrounding reserves and smashed windows, tore doors and cabinets from the wall, and broke anything that could be broken. Overnight their anger turned a site of shameful memory into a pile of rubble. In this frank and poignant memoir, Sellars breaks her silence about the institution's lasting effects, and eloquently articulates her own path to healing.

autobiography of malcolm x: Assata Assata Shakur, 2016-02-15 'Deftly written...a spellbinding tale.' The New York Times In 2013 Assata Shakur, founding member of the Black Liberation Army, former Black Panther and godmother of Tupac Shakur, became the first ever woman to make the FBI's most wanted terrorist list. Assata Shakur's trial and conviction for the murder of a white state trooper in the spring of 1973 divided America. Her case quickly became emblematic of race relations and police brutality in the USA. While Assata's detractors continue to label her a ruthless killer, her defenders cite her as the victim of a systematic, racist campaign to criminalize and suppress black nationalist organizations. This intensely personal and political autobiography reveals a sensitive and gifted woman. With wit and candour Assata recounts the formative experiences that led her to embrace a life of activism. With pained awareness she portrays the strengths, weaknesses and eventual demise of black and white revolutionary groups at the hands of the state. A major contribution to the history of black liberation, destined to take its place alongside The Autobiography of Malcolm X and the works of Maya Angelou.

autobiography of malcolm x: $\underline{\text{Malcolm X}}$ $\underline{\text{Malcolm X}}$ $\underline{\text{Malcolm X}}$ ocllection of 71 speeches, debates, and interviews by and with one of the most prominent African-American leaders of the 20th century.

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