

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910462098803321
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Titolo	Abandoning the Black Hero : Sympathy and Privacy in the Postwar African American White-Life Novel / / John C. Charles
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New Brunswick, NJ : , : Rutgers University Press, , [2012] ©2012
ISBN	1-283-68407-1 0-8135-5434-9
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (278 p.)
Collana	The American Literatures Initiative
Disciplina	813.5409896073
Soggetti	American fiction - African American authors - History and criticism American fiction - 20th century - History and criticism African Americans - Intellectual life - 20th century White people in literature Race in literature Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- 1. "I'M Regarded Fatally As A Negro Writer": Mid-Twentieth-Century Racial Discourse And The Rise Of The White-Life Novel -- 2. The Home And The Street: Ann Petry's "Rage For Privacy" -- 3. White Masks And Queer Prisons -- 4. Sympathy For The Master: Reforming Southern White Manhood In Frank Yerby's The Foxes Of Harrow -- 5. Talk About The South: Unspeakable Things Unspoken In Zora Neale Hurston's Seraph On The Suwanee -- 6. The Unfinished Project Of Western Modernity: Savage Holiday, Moral Slaves, And The Problem Of Freedom In Cold War America -- Conclusion -- Notes -- Works Cited -- Index -- About The Author
Sommario/riassunto	Abandoning the Black Hero is the first book to examine the postwar African American white-life novel-novels with white protagonists written by African Americans. These fascinating works have been understudied despite having been written by such defining figures in the tradition as Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, Ann

Petry, and Chester Himes, as well as lesser known but formerly best-selling authors Willard Motley and Frank Yerby. John C. Charles argues that these fictions have been overlooked because they deviate from two critical suppositions: that black literature is always about black life and that when it represents whiteness, it must attack white supremacy. The authors are, however, quite sympathetic in the treatment of their white protagonists, which Charles contends should be read not as a failure of racial pride but instead as a strategy for claiming creative freedom, expansive moral authority, and critical agency. In an era when "Negro writers" were expected to protest, their sympathetic treatment of white suffering grants these authors a degree of racial privacy previously unavailable to them. White writers, after all, have the privilege of racial privacy because they are never pressured to write only about white life. Charles reveals that the freedom to abandon the "Negro problem" encouraged these authors to explore a range of new genres and themes, generating a strikingly diverse body of novels that significantly revise our understanding of mid-twentieth-century black writing.
