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Sommario/riassunto	In the last three decades, a brand of black conservatism espoused by a controversial group of African American intellectuals has become a fixture in the nation's political landscape, its proponents having shaped policy debates over some of the most pressing matters that confront contemporary American society. Their ideas, though, have been neglected by scholars of the African American experience-and much of the responsibility for explaining black conservatism's historical and contemporary significance has fallen to highly partisan journalists. Typically, those pundits have addressed black conservatives as an undifferentiated mass, proclaiming them good or bad, right or wrong, color-blind visionaries or Uncle Toms. In <i>Black Conservative Intellectuals in Modern America</i> , Michael L. Ondaatje delves deeply into the historical archive to chronicle the origins of black conservatism in the United States from the early 1980's to the present. Focusing on

three significant policy issues-affirmative action, welfare, and education-Ondaatje critically engages with the ideas of nine of the most influential black conservatives. He further documents how their ideas were received, both by white conservatives eager to capitalize on black support for their ideas and by activists on the left who too often sought to impugn the motives of black conservatives instead of challenging the merits of their claims. While Ondaatje's investigation uncovers the themes and issues that link these voices together, he debunks the myth of a monolithic black conservatism. Figures such as Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, the Hoover Institution's Thomas Sowell and Shelby Steele, and cultural theorist John McWhorter emerge as individuals with their own distinct understandings of and relationships to the conservative political tradition.

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