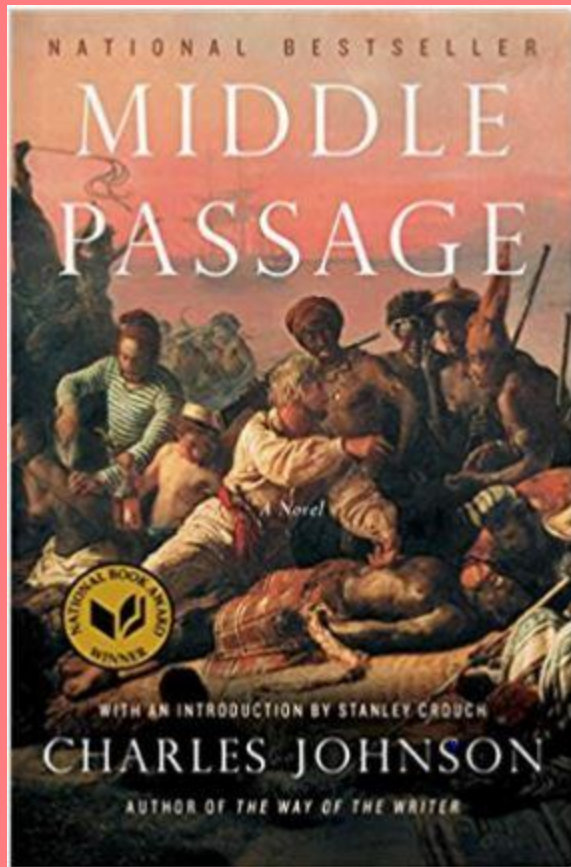


Rutherford Calhoun, a newly freed slave and irrepressible rogue, is lost in the underworld of 1830s New Orleans. Desperate to



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.