

present a comprehensive examination of its subject matter. In my opinion, Desai's book underscores the continuing relevance of examining the past to understand the intricacies of race, class, and colonial legacies that persist today. Therefore this work stands as an invaluable asset for readers who are interested in understanding the complexities of anticolonial discourses within transnational frameworks. It casts light on the root of transnational ideologies of racism and exclusion from India (which we may read as the United States of India) that eventually constituted the development of the image of the United States of America we see today.

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William L. Andrews, *Slavery and Class in the American South: A Generation of Slave Narrative Testimony, 1840–1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019, \$42.95). Pp. 389. ISBN 978 0 1909 0838 6.

The substantial scope signaled by this book's title points to its central remarkable feature: William L. Andrews discusses the entire field of slave narratives written between 1840 and 1865 while at the same time offering thickly textured close readings. This combination of breadth and depth proves crucial, as the issue of class in the US slave system presents a tricky subject. While race unified those enslaved in the South, class distinctions within that system undermined solidarity, so that the very benefits that enslaved people desired, such as literacy and trade skills, could also separate them from enslaved friends and family. By examining the sixty-one extant narratives written in the twenty-five years before the Civil War, Andrews locates common threads in the writings of the most fortunate class of all: those who escaped. These threads reveal that escapees were generally former household workers who took pride in both their skills and the cunning needed to escape, but were at the same time careful not to denigrate those who remained behind in slavery.

Andrews finds that most of the narratives “read like classic American success stories” (81). The writers had often worked their way into better positions in slavery as household workers or skilled laborers before they eventually gained the means to buy their way out or the requisite knowledge to plan an escape. Austin Steward, for instance, served as a waiter for his Virginia slave-owner before he escaped and eventually started his own meat market. Portraying themselves with a virtuous work ethic, the writers correspondingly show a universal disdain for the laziness of slave-owners who cannot work for themselves and must rely on a system of bondage. Andrew Jackson, for example, writes that without slavery, the owners would starve because of their idleness. Although the writers boast of their attainment of class and freedom, they also often report being careful not to be labeled by whites as “impudent,” the sin of thinking oneself above station whether of class or race. Andrews traces this repeated story of carefully obtained privilege to reveal one of his key points: the class system not only was a crucial dimension of slavery, but also determined who eventually was able to gain freedom.

In balancing breadth with depth, the book also delves into the complexities that different situations posed for individual writers. Some narrators discuss how the pride an enslaved person took in gaining status or rewards was countered by the accusation of complicity with white oppression, so that resentment or envy “could erode

community among the enslaved" (67). Andrews writes, for example, of a cook named Aunt Katy in Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*, who was in charge of apportioning food to the plantation children and chose to favor her own in the allotment. Other narratives lead Andrews to complicate common conceptions about the slave system, such as the assumption that household workers were far better off than field workers. Although household workers had distinct advantages, Andrews explains that the relative benefits could come with costs. Those working in the house were always on call and often exposed to the desires or tempers of the white family, including devastating physical and sexual abuse. Lewis Clarke, for example, writes of constant sleep deprivation as a household worker, and Andrews explains that Clarke's life actually improved when he was sold to work in the tobacco fields. Yet another nexus of complexity arises from the relationship between enslaved people and poor whites. In several instances, the enslaved writers speak of sharing food with hungry white people, although in other cases Blacks like Lunsford Lane, who was enslaved to a wealthy slave-owner, were the subject of hatred and abuse from jealous white people with less food and fewer resources. By teasing out the complexity in individual situations, Andrews's study reveals that class and race mixed together to create a tangled and treacherous environment.

While previous scholars have explored this mixture in fictional works about slavery, Andrews's work breaks new ground in its exploration of class divisions within first-person accounts. Andrews attributes the previous lack of attention to the critical focus on the best-known works in the period, written by Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, and Harriet Jacobs. These writers treat class with a lighter touch than the lesser-known narrators that Andrews discusses, who are more direct in their comments about class differences among enslaved people. In 2002, when Henry Louis Gates published the recently discovered text of Hannah Crafts's *The Bondswoman's Narrative*, he correctly argued that one of its key contributions to the existing archive is its strikingly blatant discussion of class, as the narrator expresses her revulsion towards the field laborers she encounters on a plantation. Andrews's exploration of the sixty-one texts, though, shows that the archive has thus far been too narrowly focussed and that Crafts's comments are not that unusual. Andrews discusses, for example, how William J. Anderson in his narrative admits that he was both appalled and repelled when he was sold down the river and saw "men and women reduced to the hardships of cattleism" (quoted at 270). Andrews's broad survey shows that attaining and marking class were key parts of the slave system.

In analyzing this body of slave narratives, Andrews remains ever mindful that even though these texts are autobiographies and histories, they were carefully shaped for specific audiences. Andrews helpfully delineates the writers' challenging contexts in telling their stories. In addition to nearly always coming from the more "privileged" levels of slavery, the writers' successful escapes to freedom rendered them unusual and unrepresentative of the race they meant to champion by writing their narratives. Andrews explains how they had to portray themselves as smart enough or lucky enough to be in the position to write a slave narrative without denigrating those left behind as not worthy of the same liberty. Harriet Jacobs and William Wells Brown are among those who attribute their good fortune to God's Providence. By paying close attention to the writers' situations, Andrews reveals not just what they say, but also how they cautiously construct what they say, as he also alerts his reader to the perspectives not available. None of the narrators, for example, were from the states of

Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, or Florida, so the narratives as a group largely illuminate the mixed agriculture and urban centers of the Upper South more than the plantation-based cotton farming of the Deep South. Andrews's study thus reveals that our view of the past remains incomplete: shaped by the writers' need to craft narratives attuned to their readers and partial because the extant archive reflects the relative ability of these writers due to location to gain passage to the North.

*Slavery and Class in the American South* lives up to the promise of its sweeping title, as it gives its readers a fully drawn picture of the extant slave narratives in this period. Andrews presents a meticulously researched and masterfully crafted analysis of a body of work crucial to our understanding of our history and ourselves. As Andrews argues, "Today the United States is still swimming – and trying not to drown – in the noxious backwash of slavery" (xi).

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Alexander Laban Hinton, *It Can Happen Here: White Power and the Rising Threat of Genocide in the US* (New York: New York University Press, 2021, \$19.95). Pp. 233. ISBN 978 1 4798 0803 8.

Anthropologist Alexander Laban Hinton's reflective analysis takes its title from Sinclair Lewis's 1935 novel *It Can't Happen Here* to sound the alarm against the contemporary white power movement in the United States and its potential for mass violence. Hinton, as a specialist in the Cambodian genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge, addresses this topic in an unconventional yet inviting style. The book interweaves accounts of key moments of Donald Trump's campaign and presidency and Hinton's testimony at the trial of Nuon Chea with discussions of teach-ins delivered to help his students understand and process events such as the 2017 Charlottesville rally or the 2018 Tree of Life attack. It is this eclectic approach that allows Hinton to advance his central thesis that elements of the contemporary political landscape of the United States resemble those that led to the Cambodian genocide, and that Americans must not ignore the fact that such horrors could happen again in the United States in their lifetime.

*It Can Happen Here* is one of many works published by academics and journalists since the 2016 election that so shocked many pundits and observers, which all seek to clarify how Trump has been able to gain the upper hand within the Republican Party and how the white power movement has been reenergized by this seismic shift. Like Rory McVeigh and Kevin Estep's *The Politics of Losing: Trump, the Klan, and the Mainstreaming of Resentment* (2019), Hinton looks to America's past to explain this contemporary phenomenon. Whereas McVeigh and Estep seek to compare the historical and structural conditions between the Trump campaign and the 1920s, when millions of white Americans joined the Second Ku Klux Klan, Hinton instead focusses on the United States's longer history of genocides against indigenous communities and the brutal racial oppression against Black people during enslavement and segregation, and thereafter. More importantly, as a specialist on genocides, Hinton also looks to the future. Through the discussions with his students, he outlines the warning signs for potential mass violence in the United States and the strategies needed to avert such brutality, including remembrance, reconciliation, and