

Southern History Across the Color Line. By Nell Irvin Painter. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. 247 pp. Introduction, notes, acknowledgments, index. \$27.50 cloth, \$17.95 paper.)

Professor Nell Painter's recent publication is a collection of six essays that span her distinguished academic and professional career. The title of the collection refers to color caste in Southern and American society, including the academy, and how these essays, written by a black woman scholar, transgress traditional conventions of race and historiography. Her methodology in studying Southern history includes race, class, and gender; material conditions of "wealth and income, work, the distribution of power in the political economy, and white supremacy"; the beaten enslaved body; cultural symbolism; and Freudian analysis to interrogate the Southern preoccupation with sexuality (2).

The first essay, "Soul Murder and Slavery: Toward a Fully Loaded Cost Accounting," reprints an important essay from the early 1990s in which Painter examined the legacy of violence inherent in slavery. For those unfamiliar with this article or who have had difficulty in finding it, this collection fortunately offers it. In it, Painter suggests that greater attention to the archival record of pain and violence is needed to reckon a more comprehensive narrative of slavery. The term "soul murder", derived from trauma studies, refers to psychic destruction as a consequence of violent and/or sexual abuse. She questions the legitimacy of historiography that does not include the implications of a violent culture for all Southerners. One of the seminal suggestions of this essay is its complication of the relationship between enslaved and slave-holding women. Painter posits that sources must be more critically examined in order to reveal their implications.

The second essay corroborates Painter's assertion that the violent abuse of slavery affected all Southerners, including those considered most privileged. The forty-one-year journal that Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas maintained illustrates the devices borne of a violent culture that compromised elite white females. The third essay continues Professor Painter's examination of race, class, and gender among Southern women focusing on Gertrude Thomas and her journal, Sue Petigru King's novel and character, *Lily* (1855), and Harriet Jacobs's autobiographical Linda Brent in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Written By Herself* (1861). Her critique questions the usefulness of a single "The South." In the fourth essay, "Social Equality' and 'Rape' in the Fin-de-Siècle South," Painter examines the cultural symbolism of race equality; and of pornographic power. The essay offers a compelling thesis of inquiry.

The last two essays examine politics and patriarchy in the biography of black Communist, Hosea Hudson (1898-1988); and race and sexuality in Wilbur J. Cash's interpretation of Southern history in *The Mind of the South* (1941). Hudson's life reveals the material conditions of working-class status based on race and how those conditions stimulated sustained radical activism. In the last essay, Painter provides a much-needed re-reading of a Southern classic.

Painter's thoughtful collection is the result of a career spent in close examination of Southern history. She demonstrates how that text can still reveal much but only if we sharpen and enlarge our intellectual armamentarium. She challenges us to re-read the sources.

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