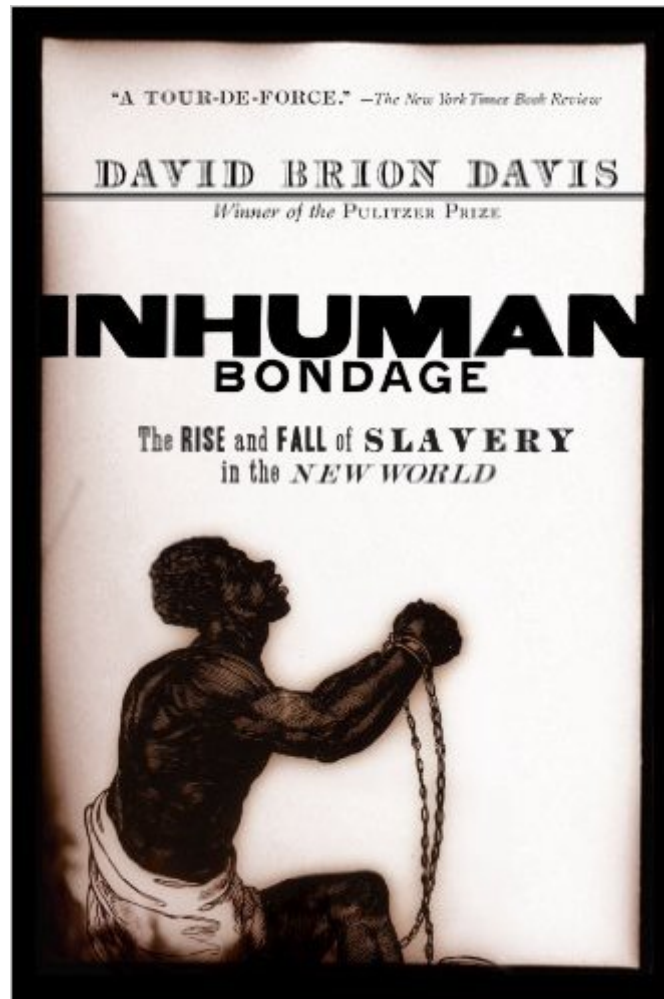


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Inhuman Bondage: The Rise And Fall Of Slavery In The New World



Synopsis

David Brion Davis has long been recognized as the leading authority on slavery in the Western World. His books have won every major history award--including the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award--and he has been universally praised for his prodigious research, his brilliant analytical skill, and his rich and powerful prose. Now, in *Inhuman Bondage*, Davis sums up a lifetime of insight in what Stanley L. Engerman calls "a monumental and magisterial book, the essential work on New World slavery for several decades to come." Davis begins with the dramatic *Amistad* case, which vividly highlights the international character of the Atlantic slave trade and the roles of the American judiciary, the presidency, the media, and of both black and white abolitionists. The heart of the book looks at slavery in the American South, describing black slaveholding planters, the rise of the Cotton Kingdom, the daily life of ordinary slaves, the highly destructive internal, long-distance slave trade, the sexual exploitation of slaves, the emergence of an African-American culture, and much more. But though centered on the United States, the book offers a global perspective spanning four continents. It is the only study of American slavery that reaches back to ancient foundations (discussing the classical and biblical justifications for chattel bondage) and also traces the long evolution of anti-black racism (as in the writings of David Hume and Immanuel Kant, among many others). Equally important, it combines the subjects of slavery and abolitionism as very few books do, and it illuminates the meaning of nineteenth-century slave conspiracies and revolts, with a detailed comparison with 3 major revolts in the British Caribbean. It connects the actual life of slaves with the crucial place of slavery in American politics and stresses that slavery was integral to America's success as a nation--not a marginal enterprise. A definitive history by a writer deeply immersed in the subject, *Inhuman Bondage* offers a compelling narrative that links together the profits of slavery, the pain of the enslaved, and the legacy of racism. It is the ultimate portrait of the dark side of the American dream. Yet it offers an inspiring example as well--the story of how abolitionists, barely a fringe group in the 1770s, successfully fought, in the space of a hundred years, to defeat one of human history's greatest evils.

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Customer Reviews

My only regret is that I did not buy this in hard copy. The next time I read it, and I will read it again, it will be in hard copy so that I can make notes and take more time to analyze and study the information. Do not be afraid of the academic founding of this book. It is thought provoking, enlightening, challenging, and the passion of the author is evident. I have traveled a great deal around the world and the issue of poverty, especially extreme poverty, and slavery straddles a fine line. When a person, child or adult, is desperate for food, shelter, and a future it is very easy for them to be taken advantage of and placed in bondage and potentially in slavery. One of the key actions in this book is to define slavery and one definition stood out remarkably to me - "denial of a social identity". Removing a person's "social identity" denies that person human rights - such as the untouchables in India- denies them a voice in "democratic" countries - such as women who have no freedom without the presence of a male relative or the right to vote; denies them a place in society in order to obtain a job, build a home, have a family, and travel freely - as happened in the economically and politically motivated Apartheid of the United States and South Africa (that only came to a legal end in SA in 1994). Denial of Social Identity is only one aspect of the many nuances of slavery. The author also separates slavery from racism. It is possible to be racist without the presence of slavery, but slavery, or the history of a race can have an enormous impact on how they are perceived in a specific society or cultural group. The author explores these nuances and links the past with the present and on into the future.

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