

Thompson, C. Bradley ed. *Antislavery Political Writings, 1833-1860: A Reader*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2004. Pp. 320. Paper, \$25.95; ISBN 0-7656-0403-5.

C. Bradley Thompson combines breadth and depth with the publication of this primary source reader on political and moral approaches to antislavery. Thompson's purpose is to present the best antislavery minds, show factionalism within the movement, reflect wide-ranging goals of theory and practice, and invite students to think critically about compromise, moral suasion, and political action. In the preface he poses numerous questions such as, "Is compromise ever permissible in a conflict between two antagonistic moral systems, or is it inherently corrupting?" Another begs the question, "Can people advance a moral cause politically without diluting one's principles?" A final query asks, "Is violence justified in abolishing slavery?" These questions serve as the broad ideological net Thompson hopes readers will cast while engaging the text. However compelling, these questions might be better presented at the beginning or end of each section instead of in the preface where they are easily overlooked. In doing so, students could read with greater clarity and gain a better understanding of the complex issues at hand for abolitionists acting within the American political arena.

Guiding Thompson is the relationship between moral principle and political practice. He believes students can read and understand more than the equivalent of a thirty-second sound byte. Therefore, most documents are presented in full, with most selections running approximately fifteen to twenty pages. Although most students would not read this text cover to cover, a comparative approach utilizing several of the selections would remain very beneficial for both students and instructors for class reading and discussion.

Thompson divides the text into eight sections, with two to four primary sources in each. His organization remains both interesting and effective as Thompson addresses the many attitudes and approaches debated and presented by the abolitionist movement. He includes the writings of many familiar historical figures such as William E. Channing, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Abraham Lincoln. However, Thompson also weaves into the antislavery rhetorical fabric the lectures and speeches of lesser-known participants such as Henry Highland Garrett, who writes an address directly to the slaves of the United States, and William I. Bowditch, who examines the constitutionality of slavery. The sources reveal the intense debate within the abolitionist movement regarding issues of political party involvement, plans for emancipation, reactions to southern defenses of slavery, and the mutually exclusive nature of Christianity and slavery. For example, Lydia Maria Child's "Talk About Political Party" shows that many abolitionists believed that their political participations diminished their cause. As Child states, "[W]e work *through* both parties, but not *with* them. They do *our* work; we do not *theirs*" (101). Other sources shed light on the reality of American popular culture, revealing to students that even in the North only five percent favored immediate abolition, twenty percent had no public opinion, and

seventy percent opposed slavery but were unwilling to become active in the movement or challenge the legality of slavery.

As a whole, *Antislavery Political Writings* would fit nicely with American History survey courses as well as any upper-level course concentrating on American race/politics, social reform, or nineteenth century issues. Despite a typo on page x and the almost hidden guiding questions in the preface, Thompson has edited and presented a valuable set of sources that treats the abolitionist movement as it should, a complex debate involving morality, politics, ideals, reality, and compromise.

Georgia State University

Mary Ellen Pethel

David W. Southern. *The Progressive Era and Race: Reaction and Reform, 1900-1917.* Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2005. Pp. 239. Paper, \$15.95; ISBN 0-88295-234-X.

In *The Progressive Era and Race: Reaction and Reform*, David W. Southern makes an impressive and solid contribution to the study of U.S. race relations from Reconstruction through the First World War. His book, part of the American History Series, presents a broad, multi-layered textual analysis that follows thematic and chronological lines of organization.

From Reconstruction through World War I, Southern argues, the history of African-Americans has always involved two sides: what whites have thought about, or done to, blacks and the aspirations and strivings of blacks to make their lives better in a "hostile white world." In short, Southern suggests that while they might not always have been successful, African-Americans have made mostly valiant efforts in a society that culturally and legally constrained them because of their race.

This theme of unmet expectations begins with the failed promises of Reconstruction. Despite the rhetoric of Lincoln and the Radical Republicans, Southern notes, "Radical Reconstruction was too radical for the American people and yet not radical enough to ensure the lasting rights and security of African Americans. This was the real tragedy of Reconstruction."

Similarly, Southern notes the conservative tendency of most progressives on the race issue, in the midst of what promised to be an enlightened period of economic and political reforms. Except for a "handful" of progressives, most did not have sufficient "progressive conscience" to challenge the "color line." Indeed, Southern argues that because progressivism never truly included ideas of racial equality, African-Americans experienced their lowest point of "post-emancipation life" in the early twentieth century. The problem was even more acute in the South, where regional progressive leaders, deeply imbued with the "Lost Cause" mentality, stubbornly clung to a doctrine of white supremacy.