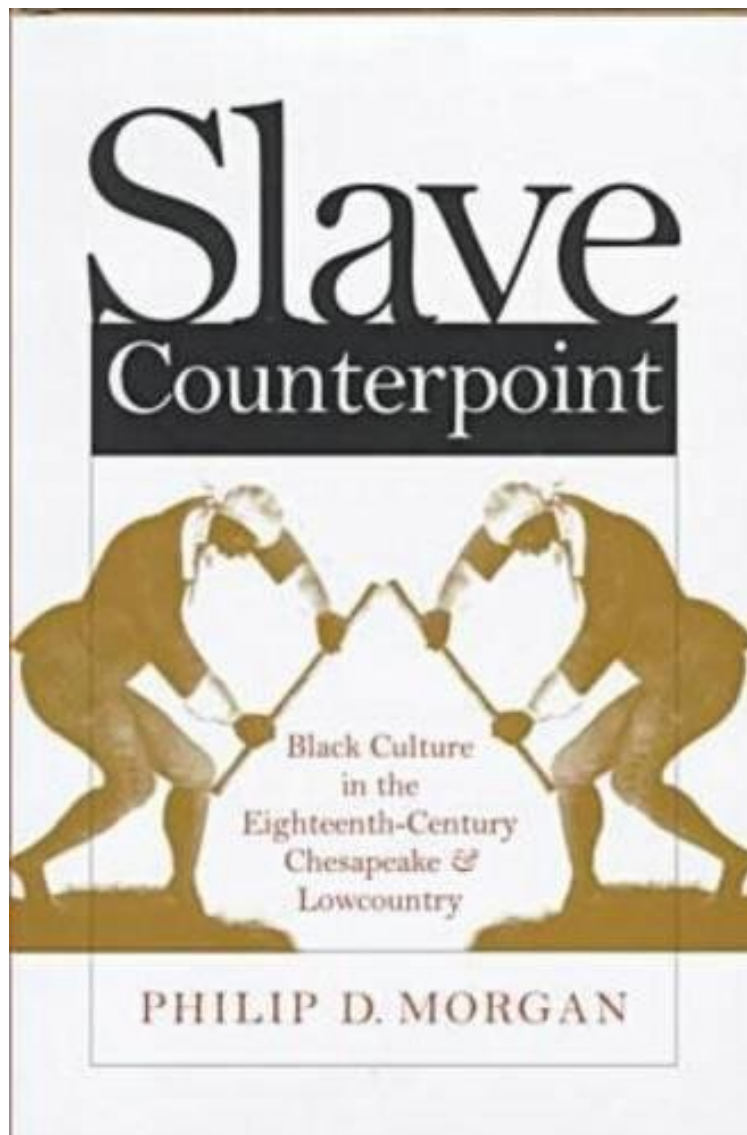


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***Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History ... and the University of North Carolina Press)**

Philip D. Morgan

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Philip D. Morgan : Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry (Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History ... and the University of North Carolina Press) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History ... and the University of North Carolina Press):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. easy to read although a difficult topic
By E. TA monumental study, easy to read although a difficult topic.
6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. superior analysis with an exhausting amount of information
By Robert P. Mills
Morgan's analysis will give anyone who wants to know more about slavery an immense amount of material. Comparing the Chesapeake and Lowcountry areas of the American colonies during the eighteenth century, Morgan discusses the economic and cultural sides of the different slave institutions and discusses black-white encounters. No matter how one may try to define slavery in one, distinct way, Morgan shows there is always an exception to that definition. I know Morgan worked for many years to produce this book and that this book is the culmination of an immense amount of research and analysis, but this book would make a larger impact if it was shorter. By the time I was done reading this mammoth book, I had a hard time remembering all the topics he brought up. For any history student, like me, it is worth reading, but make sure you give yourself plenty of time to understand it.
6 of 13 people found the following review helpful. A Review of *Slave Counterpoint*
By LivI had the pleasure of listening to this author lecture to in class during my senior year of college. Having the opportunity to discuss this book with the author made *Slave Counterpoint* come to life. *Slave Counterpoint* makes the topic of Antebellum slavery captivating for those interested in learning about the early days of slavery in the Chesapeake Bay region. I strongly recommend this book to anyone who has a sharp curiosity about early colonial history and wishes to be engaged in an honest account of events (I would recommend reading this book a couple of chapters at a time).

On the eve of the American Revolution, nearly three-quarters of all African Americans in mainland British America lived in two regions: the Chesapeake, centered in Virginia, and the Lowcountry, with its hub in South Carolina. Here, Philip Morgan compares and contrasts African American life in these two regional black cultures, exploring the differences as well as the similarities. The result is a detailed and comprehensive view of slave life in the colonial American South. Morgan explores the role of land and labor in shaping culture, the everyday contacts of masters and slaves that defined the possibilities and limitations of cultural exchange, and finally the interior lives of blacks--their social relations, their family and kin ties, and the major symbolic dimensions of life: language, play, and religion. He provides a balanced appreciation for the oppressiveness of bondage and for the ability of slaves to shape their lives, showing that, whatever the constraints, slaves contributed to the making of their history. Victims of a brutal, dehumanizing system, slaves nevertheless strove to create order in their lives, to preserve their humanity, to achieve dignity, and to sustain dreams of a better future.

South Carolina in the 18th century was a colony that had been built on the back of slave labor. By contrast, Virginia only began to "recruit" slaves in large numbers at the beginning of that century. Consequently, although there were some similarities in the black cultures that emerged in the two regions, there were also substantial differences. Philip D. Morgan, a history professor at William and Mary, has produced an intricately detailed comparison of the Lowcountry and Chesapeake cultures that tells us much about the way of life of some of the earliest African Americans. Looking at everything from the types of work the slaves performed to the houses in which they lived to the food they ate, Morgan reveals the patterned differences between the two slave societies; all slaves were exploited, but not all slaves were exploited alike. He also shows the differences within the societies; the slave experience would be much different for somebody who arrived directly from Africa than it would be for somebody who'd first spent time in the West Indies. There are even some surprises: relations between the races in early Virginia, for example, were rather flexible, as black slaves came into regular contact with white indentured servants, and as Morgan writes, "the level of exploitation each group suffered inclined them to see the others as sharing their predicament." Furthermore, although there was sexual exploitation of black female slaves by their white masters, there was also a significant amount of consensual interracial sex, among white women and black men as well as white men and black women. That would change as the use of indentured servants declined while large quantities of slaves were imported directly from Africa and as various initiatives were launched by authorities to promote the social separation of the races. Chronicling the visible results of these and other phenomena in straightforward prose that is precise when possible and admits ambiguity when necessary, Morgan makes a crucial element of early American history far less remote to the modern reader. ...Morgan's synthesis draws upon a wealth of social, political, legal, economic, literary, religious and anthropological sources to illuminate through a variety of prisms what he calls "the core contradiction of slavery--treating persons as things," which guaranteed that master and slave would be thrust apart, even as they were bound inextricably together. -- The Los Angeles Times, Benjamin Schwarz
The finest, most comprehensive work we have in

the field of early American slavery.-- s in American HistoryThis book is without question the most comprehensive and richly documented account of African American life in the eighteenth-century plantation South. Philip Morgan examines all aspects of the black experience in Virginia and South Carolina, shows the myriad ways in which slavery shaped and contoured social relations in both places, and demonstrates how the slaves created a distinctive culture in the teeth of oppression. A must read for all early American historians!--Richard S. Dunn, University of PennsylvaniaBuilding on an extraordinary scholarly legacy, a prodigious amount of primary research, and a hallowed set of historiographical problems, Philip D. Morgan has written a book that is destined to be read and reargued for some time to come. . . . The most comprehensive social history of slavery yet written. . . . It is, then, as much for the extraordinary stories he tells as for the scholarly arguments he makes that Morgan is to be commended.--American Historical Only a historian at the top of his profession could have produced such a sweeping comparison of the development of the 'peculiar institution' in Tidewater Virginia and the South Carolina Low Country prior to 1790.--The HistorianOne of the most important books on unfree labor in the past twenty-five years. Every historian of early America will need to read it.--Journal of the Early RepublicA work of prodigious research and writing . . . sets a lofty standard for early Americanists in terms of interdisciplinary research methodology, expository writing, and balance between large themes and microscopic detail.--William Mary QuarterlyThe Chesapeake Bay Area and the Low Country. . . . are described in encyclopedic detail, with an exhaustive mastery of sources that is truly unprecedented. The author has utilized them all in a masterly way, including the most recent archaeological findings. His book immediately becomes the starting point for anyone interested in knowing what the North American colonial South was actually like.--Journal of American HistoryWith a book of such outstanding merit, it is difficult to know where to begin or where to end. It is in every respect a terrific piece of work. Far and away the fullest and most comprehensive analysis of the two principal colonial American slave societies, it is breathtaking in its scope.--Jack P. Greene, Johns Hopkins UniversityAuthoritative and detailed. . . . Morgan's synthesis draws upon a wealth of social, political, legal, economic, literary, religious and anthropological sources to illuminate through a variety of prisms what he calls 'the core contradiction of slavery--treating persons as things,' which guaranteed that master and slave would be thrust apart, even as they were bound inextricably together.--Los Angeles Times Book (Best Nonfiction Books of 1998 issue)A major reinterpretation of early American history that should attract a wide readership.--ChoiceA monumental social history of slavery in the eighteenth-century Chesapeake region and in the Carolina and Georgia low country.--Robert L. Paquette, Washington TimesThe most comprehensive documentary study ever written on slavery in eighteenth-century North America. . . . A landmark in the historiography of North American slavery. In this work, the author offers a clearly written, deeply researched, balanced, and nonsentimental account of the origins and development of plantation slavery in the two most important slave societies in North America.--Journal of Interdisciplinary HistoryThe closest [examination] yet made of slave life anywhere before the nineteenth century. . . . Morgan's account is exhaustive . . . in its detail, but it is more than a recovery of hard-to-find facts. It is informed throughout by Morgan's recognition that slavery, as an extreme form of domination, resonates with the ambiguities present in all human relations.--New York of BooksA master of the historian's craft, Morgan demonstrates truly breathtaking range and originality. His command of contemporary sources and the scholarly literature is second to none. Future studies of the origins of slavery in North America will necessarily take *Slave Counterpoint* as their point of departure.--Journal of Southwest Georgia HistoryA genuine glimpse of what it felt like to be a slave and an admiration for slaves' determination to shape their own destinies in the face of overwhelming barriers to autonomy.--Obsidian II: Black Literature in A successful and enduring analysis. . . . Vital to a balanced understanding of slave culture.--Southern HistorianScholars who have long been tantalized by Philip Morgan's many essays on slavery can now see the bigger picture to which these pieces belong. His book is a painstaking comparative study, rich in detail and deft in its use of the secondary literature.--Joyce E. Chaplin, Vanderbilt UniversityAn exhaustive and authoritative synthesis of slavery in the Chesapeake (Virginia and Maryland) and the South Carolina Lowcountry, *Slave Counterpoint* is also a fine example of comparative history.--Richmond Times-DispatchProvides the fullest and closest examination of slave life in America since Eugene D. Genovese's monumental work *Roll, Jordan, Roll*.--Journal of Southern HistoryPhilip Morgan's *Slave Counterpoint* should prove a landmark in the study of southern slavery. Supported by an impressive command of the sources, primary and secondary, Morgan's judicious, sometimes bold interpretations inspire confidence. And, as a bonus, this well-written book is refreshingly free of jargon and cant.--Eugene D. GenoveseThe first comprehensive work to synthesize the wealth of documentary sources with the range of recent studies by archaeologists, architectural historians, anthropologists, and folklorists of African American culture in the Chesapeake and Lowcountry.--Winterthur PortfolioA massive reconstruction of life in the 18th-century American South. . . . [Morgan] sets out to provide 'a balanced appreciation for the oppressiveness of bondage and of the ability of slaves to reshape their lives.' He has succeeded splendidly, and in the process reminded modern readers that the world of the 18th century is not so distant as they sometimes imagine.--New York Times Book A bold and comprehensive examination of colonial slavery, and a welcome addition to scholarship.--Left HistoryThis thorough and elegantly written analysis of two American cultural regions is a remarkable scholarly achievement. It will take its place alongside the most important and influential books on American slavery and the origins of the Old South.--Virginia

