

Winner

Yogita Goyal

Title

Runaway Genres: The Global Afterlives of Slavery (New York University Press, 2019)

Citation

What does it mean to cultivate analogies to slavery, and to do so long after slavery has been abolished and the moral issues associated with it, such as they were, have been put to rest? The enterprise seems ethically fraught, if not frankly misguided. It is with the perils very much in view that Yogita Goyal undertakes her lucid, sophisticated, and beautifully written study of how the neo-slave narrative has been applied to the refugee crisis and child soldiering, forced marriage, debt bondage, and imprisonment at Guantanamo Bay—exemplary phenomena of our global age. An original and compelling synthesis of seemingly disparate materials from African, African American, and other literatures, *Runaway Genres* is as illuminating about the materiality of literariness—here, as its title indicates, the continuities and innovations of genre as well as the richness of intertextual dialogue among its chosen writers—as it is about the contemporary historical realities whose urgency provokes these texts into being.