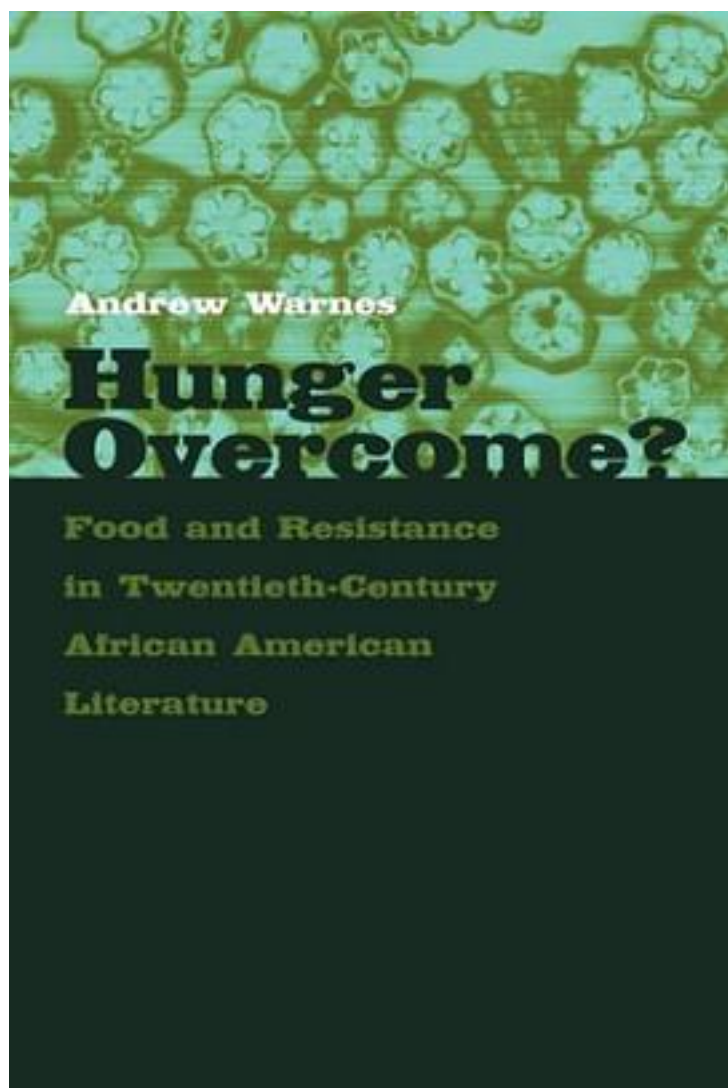


Hunger Overcome?



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著者:Warnes, Andrew

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Ever since slaves in America labored to produce food surfeit while enduring personal food shortage, says Andrew Warnes, African American writers have consistently drawn connections between hunger and illiteracy, and by extension between food and reading. This book investigates the juxtaposition of malnutrition and spectacular food abundance as a key trope of African American writing. Focusing on works by Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, and Toni Morrison, Warnes considers how black characters respond with a wide variety of counter maneuvers to whites' attempts at regulating access to nourishment, whether physical or intellectual. What makes this trope so powerful, Warnes argues, is that it implicitly politicizes hunger, revealing it to be an avoidable, imposed condition. In Hurston's scenes of feasting and plenty in the utopian, all-black community of Eatonville; in Wright's refusal of stale bread and spoiled molasses from his white employer; and in Morrison's depiction of her characters' strategies of pilfering and foraging, we witness the implications of a kind of hunger that could be abolished were it not useful as a means of enforcing acquiescence, dependency, and docility. Throughout "Hunger Overcome?" Warnes relates his readings to the wider culture by drawing on such diverse sources as the slave autobiography "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass," Ntozake Shange's cookbook "If I Can Cook / You Know God Can," Horace Cayton and St. Clair Drake's sociological study "Black Metropolis," and Stanley Kramer's film "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?"

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