Whiteness Studies: Anything Here for Historians of the Working Class?

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Abstract

This response takes up four of Eric Arnesen's many objections to whiteness research: (1) the fuzziness of the definitions for "whiteness"; (2) the notion of a process by which European immigrants "became white"; (3) the sloppy research methods; and (4) the political posturing of some authors. Although I consider a range of works, I concentrate mainly on those of David Roediger. A serious analysis of the roots of white working-class racism was long overdue, and Roediger and his colleagues have advanced this study significantly. They have demonstrated the severe social limits and the racist implications of labor republicanism, an organizing principle for so much nineteenth-century labor history. They have placed racial identity at the center of class analysis and focused attention on the racialized character of class experience and consciousness. The notion of socially constructed understandings of race has also stimulated a more interethnic approach in studies of immigrant workers, and helped to bridge the obvious divisions between labor history and African-American, Asian-American, and Latina/o history. The study of whiteness has helped us to "denaturalize" race and look much more closely at the whole idea of white identity. We are due for a critical evaluation of this literature from the perspective of labor history, but it is far too early to discard the concept of "whiteness." On the contrary, the most important work, in the form of rigorous studies of particular workplaces, unions, and communities, is really just beginning. In the meantime, the work has stimulated some much-needed rethinking.

We *are* due for a critical evaluation of this literature from the perspective of labor history and I share some of Eric Arnesen's concerns. I regret the tone of the piece, however, which conveys as much personal animus as scholarly concern. Arnesen's objections to this new work are legion. Reading his critique, it is difficult to understand why so many scholars have climbed eagerly into this leaky boat. I will briefly consider four major concerns that emerge from Arnesen's welter of criticisms: (1) the fuzziness of the definition for whiteness; (2) the faulty notion of whiteness as a process, that is, the idea that European immigrants or other groups could "become white" over time; (3) the sloppy research methods; and (4) the political posturing of some whiteness authors. One can certainly find culprits in each case amidst the large and rather diverse group of scholars Arnesen takes within his sights. He also has some problems with W. E. B. Du Bois, the acknowledged inspiration for some of the best of this work, but these are perhaps best left to some of the other respondents. For want of space, I will focus mainly on David Roediger's work as an example of this genre and end by

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posing the obvious question Arnesen leaves out: What, if anything, does this research offer to labor historians and others concerned with the historical problem of racism among white workers?

Defining the scope of the field seems to be part of the problem. Some of those Arnesen cites as practitioners of whiteness studies would certainly not welcome the label, instead seeing their efforts as part of a new broader field of critical race studies. While including a very large group of people with quite diverse approaches, Arnesen excludes or ignores some of the most influential work, notably by Alexander Saxton and Michael Rogin. Arnesen is more partial to Saxton than to Roediger, but their studies are, in fact, quite comparable. As Thomas Holt noted, the central problem in *both The Wages of Whiteness* and *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic* is, "How is racism reproduced and what role does the working class play in its construction?"[1]

The term's definition is indeed too slippery, particularly if one employs it in such a wide range of venues and attributes to it as profound an explanatory power as suggested by Arnesen's survey. The fact that the authors have had some trouble defining whiteness, however, is in part at least a reflection of the changing and confusing historical usage of the term "white." And this is part of the problem to which Roediger and others have tried to call our attention. It was not whiteness theory but an analysis of the confusion surrounding the ascribed status of "new immigrant" workers and their own ignorance and ambivalence regarding racial conventions in the United States that led Roediger and I to conceive of these groups as "in between." Likewise, studies of the legal status of immigrants have emphasized both a highly racialized status hierarchy and a chaotic effort to decide, in the legal discourse of the day (not simply in the minds of historians), who was "white."[2] A great deal was at stake in answering that question, but a mountain of legal and other evidence shows that the answer was not always clear.

It is only fair that colleagues working in this field explain the definitions they employ. My own encounter with the field had more to do with an old interest in white racism—particularly with understanding its reproduction among recent working-class immigrants—than with "whiteness studies," however defined. Trying to understand the process of racism, I naturally asked questions about the formation of racial identity among white workers and quickly encountered the work of Saxton, Roediger, and others. I have my doubts about some of the works under review, but these historians were among the first to interrogate the conventional wisdom about white workers' racial identities. Many of the rest of us assumed that we knew what this term "white" meant; some of us are still making that assumption. I have learned a great deal from the historians of whiteness and I am surprised to see that Arnesen finds so little of value here.

He is concerned that whiteness is "sufficiently elastic as to resist any effort to give it formal or permanent shape." Yet when Roediger and I considered the idea in the concrete and rather well researched case of the 1919 Chicago race riot, Arnesen found the effort not too elastic, but "radically restricted." Our

term "abstention from whiteness" may have been clumsy, but the evidence shows that second- and third-generation Irish-American youth played a particularly prominent part in the racist violence, while more recent Slavic immigrants took little role and were, in fact, rather detached from the mainstream obsession with race. We were not simply extrapolating thoughts and values from behavior (although that is certainly common among social historians dealing with anonymous individuals). Yes, racist language and behavior can be read as indicators of racial identity, although they are certainly not the only ones. If we could be criticized for something here, it might be of too much "splitting." We did not homogenize the working-class population, as is common in many studies of racial conflict that tend to settle for one, large, homogeneous group of "white workers." We tried to deconstruct the notion of whiteness in order to explain very different kinds of responses on the part of people from widely divergent ethnic backgrounds who are all described as "white" in other accounts. Such an effort is important to anyone interested in grasping racism as a learned set of values and behavior—as opposed to being the natural result of a racially mixed population. Research on subsequent racial conflict over neighborhood and public housing integration in postwar Detroit, Chicago, and elsewhere strongly suggests that these same ethnic communities had by then come to identify themselves as white in relation to the burgeoning black urban population.[3] It is not necessary to call this process "becoming white," but it is important to understand it and to somehow capture the dynamic involved.

It is sometimes difficult to see whether Arnesen is objecting to labels or the substance of arguments. As he observes with regard to the argument in "Inbetween Peoples," the evidence clearly shows that many of the "new immigrants" were viewed as racially as well as culturally inferior. We do, in fact, present plenty of evidence on *who* viewed them this way—employers and supervisors, government officials and intellectuals, union officials and other workers, *not* just historians of whiteness. Whiteness enters the picture when you consider the standard against which they were judged. As Desmond King has shown, a series of immigration laws, naturalization decisions, and the whole image of these immigrants were based on the notion of a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant standard of "Americanism." To use the language Arnesen prefers, this notion was racialized and these immigrants clearly fell short. The distinction was not one of foreign- and native-born but rather one of racial difference, as understood in this era. On the other hand, they were not at the bottom of the rather elaborate early twentieth-century racial hierarchy to which Arnesen alludes, but rather "in between."[4] It is not essential to apply the term whiteness to this process (although King finds it useful); it is essential to recognize that these immigrants were not part of this white mainstream. Since their ascribed racial status seems to change over time, we thought it was also important to probe the process by which this change occurred.

I share some of Arnesen's reservations regarding specific methods, although I would not necessarily attach the implied moral judgements to my criticisms. Psychological approaches to understanding racism (e.g., whites' projec-

tion of their own fantasies and fears on blacks, a fairly common explanation) tend by nature to be open-ended and speculative, particularly in the setting of the early nineteenth century where the sources for establishing any particular frame of mind are slim. In exploring the racial identities and other more subjective dimensions of workers' lives, I would be happier with the use of diaries, personal narratives, correspondence, and archival materials and with other forms of analysis than I am with strictly psychoanalytic approaches. Yet Roediger's evocation of the Irish immigrants' urban longings for their earlier rural lives and their racialized fears for their present situations struck a responsive chord with readers, and with good reason. He offers a glimpse of a vast subjective dimension of human experience, what Robert Orsi has called the "inner terrain" of social history, that often remains beyond the reach of a strictly materialist approach. Important work by John McGreevey, for example, suggests that racial conflict in urban neighborhoods may have had as much to do with ethnic religious identities and beliefs as with material conditions (although I believe McGreevey would agree that both were critical).[5] I welcome the efforts of the whiteness historians and others to explore this unknown domain even if I may sometimes question their route through it or the instruments they use to chart their way.

In *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit,* which brilliantly analyzes urban decline, public policy, and racial conflict largely in structural and spatial terms, Thomas Sugrue makes the mistake of asking what all of his painstaking research suggests about white workers' racial identity. He finds the work of Roediger and other historians of whiteness useful in this regard. In an otherwise very favorable review, Arnesen (who has little tolerance, it seems, for any departure from a rather narrow materialist path) criticizes Sugrue for "occasional forays into cultural theory and history." What I found particularly exciting about Sugrue's work was precisely the combination of a careful investigation of the material world and the effects of industrial and governmental policies with probing questions about identity and consciousness.[6] It is one thing to demand better documentation for some of the more speculative ventures in the whiteness literature but another to declare Orsi's "inner terrain" out of bounds to labor historians simply because it calls for a departure from more typical labor history approaches. An apparent subtext in Arnesen's article is a general disquiet with what might be termed a "softening" of research in labor history, of which the whiteness studies are but one example. It would be interesting to draw him out regarding this concern.

If Arnesen simply wants to test the notion of whiteness in concrete situations with an eye to the material and structural as well as the cultural and subjective, then I agree. But this is precisely what we were attempting in "Inbetween Peoples" with its emphasis on occupational structures, labor markets, union policies, and management practices, as well as on language (actual word usage, not semiotics) and various popular cultural forms. Rather than discard the notion of whiteness prematurely or restrict the research to texts of whatever description, I would suggest we investigate the idea in the everyday lives of work-

ing people. If, as Arnesen fears, whiteness had remained a largely monolithic term employed uncritically, as it is in some cultural studies, then its potential for explaining the dynamic of racism in an ethnically diverse and regionally dispersed working-class population would indeed be limited. In fact, after the burst of enthusiasm Arnesen notes, whiteness theory itself appears to be under deconstruction. In this sense, the research on whiteness is just beginning with a whole series of projects by younger scholars interested in exploring *both* class experience and racial identity in particular places and situations. Some of the studies Arnesen notes are indeed critical of aspects of the whiteness research; others argue for its validity in particular situations, while employing the sort of evidence and research methods he seems to demand.[7] It would be good to think that such work has a place in working class history—even if it does employ some of the language of whiteness studies.

Arnesen finds some of the whiteness research is sloppy, but at least one of his examples is off the mark. Citing newspaper accounts of white attacks "primarily" on black dock workers, Arnesen finds Roediger's argument regarding racial identities and conflict on the mid-nineteenth-century New York waterfront "fictitious." He concludes that "no evidence of Irish-American attempts to expel Germans has been presented at all." Arnesen's text leaves the impression that Roediger has manufactured both the Irish call for an "all-white waterfront" and the attempt to exclude the Germans. For Roediger, the first conveys the strength of Irish racism, while the exclusion of Germans as well as blacks suggests the shifting character of racial identities. His references clearly indicate that he based himself on Iver Bernstein's definitive account of the 1863 New York City draft riots. Arnesen's target here is Roediger, but any concern he has with the interpretation of the newspaper accounts should actually be registered with Bernstein, on whom Roediger is relying for his own description. Arnesen employs this as yet another case of forcing evidence into the whiteness model of racial identity formation. I do not know whether Bernstein misinterpreted the evidence, as Arnesen suggests, but he developed his interpretation in 1988, long before the recent round of whiteness studies. It is difficult to see how this particular example reflects at all on the more recent scholarship.[8]

Arnesen seems uncomfortable with the mixture of politics and history in whiteness studies (a mixture not unknown in labor history), yet the political implications of the research also worry him. "Positioning themselves as hardheaded progressives," he writes, "these academics have dismissed the significance of earlier cross-race alliances and instead champion a politics built around identity and race." Perhaps some whiteness studies *have* tended to change the tone in working-class studies "from one of celebration to one of condemnation," as David Montgomery notes, but they have also "served us well by drawing our attention sharply to the racialized nature of class."[9] I am less comfortable than Arnesen with characterizing the political perspectives of all these people; my impression is that they are far more mixed in this regard than he suggests. David Roediger, for example, has taken a special interest in cross-race alliances, while emphasizing the damaging effects of racism.[10] He has spent more of his schol-

arly energies on the study of labor radicalism than on white racial identity.[11] His considerable political efforts have come largely in behalf of various labor causes. If this is what Arnesen calls "identity politics," then we can use a lot more of it. Roediger has employed the notion of whiteness both to understand racism as a historical problem and to help subvert it as a contemporary political problem. It is difficult to see how either his scholarly work or his personal politics betray "a deep cynicism about the role of white labor." We have some political posturing in labor history, but I would locate it in different places than Arnesen does.

While Arnesen equates Roediger's criticisms with Herbert Hill's far more expansive attack on labor history for its "race problem," the two approaches are quite different. As several critics have noted, Roediger writes from well within the Thompsonian traditions of the new labor history. "Restoring to workers a role in their own history," Rogin writes, "Roediger encounters whiteness."[12] Writing in the 1980s, as he began the work on *Wages,* Roediger was more critical of the treatment of race by labor historians, although he credited early labor historians who engaged the issue. His most critical comments in this earliest assessment were reserved for Steven Ross's community study of industrializing Cincinnati and for Sean Wilentz's award-winning *Chants Democratic.* Wilentz analyzed working-class formation in antebellum New York City with little discussion of slavery, black wage earners, race relations, or ethnic difference in the city's increasingly diverse white working-class population. These lapses in an otherwise excellent study of the ideology and politics of an emerging labor movement were noted also in other reviews. Roediger appears to share Arnesen's assessment that within the past decade "the scholarship on race and labor . . . has become one of the most dynamic within labor history."[13]

"Roediger's *Wages m*ight better be read as posing a set of questions that historians might now fruitfully investigate," Arnesen has observed, "rather than as a definitive word on the making of white working-class racial consciousness." This is clearly what Roediger had in mind: "*Wages* was designed as a provocation, with both its gaps and its more considered analyses awaiting elaboration, challenge and correction."[14] Certainly the book has provoked Arnesen, and apparently others. Judging from the most recent research in the field, this process of elaboration and challenge is well under way. Given the enthusiasm Arnesen notes for *Wages* and other studies of whiteness, what have we realized from the provocations of the scholars of whiteness? If the concept and its implications are so troubling, then why all the interest? Is this simply, as Arnesen seems to suggest, the latest academic fad?

First, labor republicanism, long an organizing principle for so much nineteenth-century labor history, will never quite be the same. At the very least, Saxton, Roediger, and others have demonstrated the severe social limits of the ideology and indeed its racist implications.[15] Second, the best of these studies have not only placed race and racial identity at the center of class analysis but have focused us on the racialized character of class itself—the experience and consciousness of class—in the United States. If earlier labor historians have "tiptoed past the undoubted evidence of racism among nineteenth century work-

ers," as David Brody has argued, "henceforth, there will be no evading the question of racism in one's contemplation of working class formation in America."[16] Recent work, focused increasingly on the twentieth century, has employed the notion of whiteness critically to probe not only the racial status and consciousness of various European immigrants, but also of Latina/os, Asian Americans, and others. In the case of immigration history, the notion of a constructed racial and ethnic identity promises to facilitate a model of ethnic interaction and the study of a multicultural dynamic in industrial cities and elsewhere.[17]

While Arnesen finds a lot of pessimism and even cynicism in this work, the notion that the social construction of race involves human agency opens a universe of possible reactions on the part of white workers—and people of color. In this first generation, the scholars of whiteness may have overstated the depth of white workers' hostility to racial outsiders, or at least based too much of their analysis on such hostility. This seems most true perhaps of Bruce Nelson's work on the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) where, as Montgomery puts it, "to empower white rank-and-filers is to unleash racism." There is clearly evidence to counter such a view, and the same might turn out to be the case for Roediger's observations regarding nineteenth-century Irish immigrants. But surely an investigation of widespread racism among white workers was due.[18]

The broader significance of the argument regarding whiteness, its limits as well as its strengths, emerges most clearly in the classroom. In my own experience, white students can turn the idea rather easily toward complacency: "See, we've all had it tough; some people just work harder than others." Whiteness can even become another species of ethnic studies, a celebration of "white" ethnicity that can justify rather than challenge racism. But this position has little to do with the project of Roediger and the historians of whiteness, and most students have a very different reaction. When they take it seriously, they find the concept liberating, an invitation to think much more critically about an identity and its implications which they had always held to be *natural.* Arnesen may be right in arguing that the notion of socially constructed racial identities was well established among historians and other social scientists before the current crop of whiteness studies, but I think we are just beginning to work out the implications of this observation. Labor historians themselves have used racial categories uncritically in the past; most of our students have not even considered the ramifications of the new theory.

Roediger and his colleagues have also directed our attention to the historical quality of racism, its metamorphosis and the process by which it insinuated itself, not just into labor markets and unions, but into every dimension of peoples' lives. "An historicized, social process allows space for agency and choice at the individual level," Thomas Holt writes of Roediger's work, "yet individual behavior does not arise out of some naturalized psychological process but is 'determined' in the arena of social relations. . . . [T]his approach suggests that we need to conceptualize racist practice in relation to all manner of other ordinary human intellectual, cultural and social practices. Thus, racism is not seen as some

kind of abnormality, . . . a [sic] historical wrong turn. Produced in the social world, its potential is ever present."[19]

By far the most important contribution of the whiteness historians is their successful effort to "denaturalize" race, to get us to look critically at the whole notion of white identity. "Despite all the talk within the academy of 'hybridity' and 'socially constructed identities,'" Orlando Patterson has observed, "most citizens of this country view race as rooted in nature, like sex or age . . . . The proposition that whiteness has no content but is rather a negation, the identity of not-being black, is a shocking revelation to most white Americans. . . . Were the nation ever to acknowledge this, the result would be a cultural revolution that would outdo the 1960's."[20] This process of recognition is more advanced among some academics than in the general public, as Arnesen suggests, but the best of this research continues to transform our understanding of workers in important ways. There seems to be a lot at stake here in a field where "none of this is particularly new."

While it has certainly proved useful to a wide range of scholars, the precision of whiteness as a category of analysis has yet to be fully established on the basis of rigorous studies of particular workplaces, unions, and communities. It is far too early to discard the concept; on the contrary, the most important stage in our experiment with whiteness is just around the corner. In the meantime, this work has stimulated some much-needed rethinking in our vigorous but changing field.

NOTES

1. Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York, 1990); Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley, 1996); Thomas Holt, "Racism and the Working Class," *International Labor and Working Class History* 45 (1994):90; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York, 1991).

2. Ian Haney-Lopez, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York, 1996); Mae Ngai, "The Architecure of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *Journal of American History* 86 (1999):67–92; Desmond King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy* (Cambridge, MA, 2000); James R. Barrett and David R. Roeidger, "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the New Immigrant Working Class," *Journal of American Ethnic History 1*6 (1997):9–11.

3. Barrett and Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples," 31–32. The standard account is William Tuttle, *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (New York, 1970); cf. James R. Barrett, *Work and Community in the Jungle: Chicago's Packinghouse Workers, 1894–1922* (Urbana, 1987), 221–224. Dominic Pacyga, "To Live Among Others: Poles and Their Neighbors in Industrial Chicago, 1865–1930," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16 (1996):66–68. On blue-collar ethnics in the postwar racial violence around residential integration, see Arnold Hirsch, *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940–1960* (New York, 1983; second edition, 2000); Arnold Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumble Park, Chicago, 1953–1966," *Journal of American History* 82 (1995):551–578; Thomas Sugrue, "Crabgrass Politics: Race, Rights, and Reaction Against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940–1964, *Journal of American History* 82 (1995):522–550; Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, 1996).

4. King, *Making Americans.*

5. Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem,*

1880–1950 (New Haven, 1985), 150; John McGreevey, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, 1996). See also Gerald Gamm, *Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston and the Catholics Stayed* (Cambridge, MA, 1999).

6. Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis;* Eric Arnesen, "Putting History First: Urban Poverty in Perspective," *Labor History* 83 (1998):46.

7. Gabriella Aredondo, "'What! The Mexicans, Americans?' Race and Ethnicity, Mexicans in Chicago, 1916–1939," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1999); Caroline A. Waldron, "'The Great Spirit of Solidarity': The Illinois Valley Mining Communities and the Formation of Interethnic Consciousness, 1889–1917," (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2000); Thomas A. Guglielmo, "White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color, and Power in Chicago, 1890–1945," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2000); Jennifer M. Guglielmo, "Negotiating Race, Gender, and Coalition: Italian Women and Working Class Politics in New York City, 1880–1945," (Ph.D. diss. in progress, University of Minnesota). While Arnesen prefers the more "nuanced understandings" of John Hartigan, Jr., in *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit* (Princeton, 1999) to other literature on whiteness, this contemporary ethnographic study seems to me to offer less than the work of the young social historians cited above. In each of these cases, the author locates her/his discussions of racial identity in both the community and workplace dimensions of working class life. Hartigan includes fascinating observations on three communities in Detroit, but no discussion of the racialized politics in Detroit's workplaces or unions.

8. Roediger, *Wages,* 148, fn. 79, 161. "But the most intriguing clue to motivation was the demand for an all-white waterfront," Bernstein writes. "The Longshoremen's United Benevolent Association was an exclusively Irish organization. . . . In the fifties and sixties its 'all white' provision seems to have meant all Irish; conversely, the 'non-white' longshoremen barred from the docks included German as well as Black workmen. The use of the term 'white' in this classification was continued into the early part of the next century." Bernstein concludes by observing that dock workers from later immigrant groups were likewise considered non-white. In footnote 98, Arnesen argues that "neither the secondary literature nor primary sources support Roediger's claims." I have not had access to the New York newspapers that Arnesen cites, but the secondary source Roediger cites is Bernstein. Bernstein's interpretation, which cites primary sources, clearly supports Roediger's use of the term "all-white waterfront" and his contention that the Irish intended to exclude the Germans. My point is not that Bernstein is correct, though he may be, but that Roediger did have evidence for his statements. See Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York, 1990), 120.

9. David Montgomery, "Empire, Race and Working-class Mobilizations," in *Racializing Class, Classifying Race: Labor and Difference in Britain, the USA and Africa,* ed. Peter Alexander and Rick Halpern (New York, 2000), 14.

10. See, for example, Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness,* 167–176; "Introduction" in Covington Hall, *Labor Struggles in the Deep South* (Chicago, 2000); David R. Roediger, "Gaining a Hearing for Black-White Unity: Covington Hall and the Complexities of Race, Gender, and Class," in David R. Roediger, *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Politics, and Working Class History* (New York, 1994), 127–180.

11. See, for example, David R. Roediger and Franklin Rosemont, eds., *The Haymarket Scrapbook* (Chicago, 1986); David R. Roediger, ed., *Fellow Worker: The Memoirs of Fred Thompson* (Chicago, 1993); David R. Roediger and Don Fitz, eds., *In the Shell of the Old: Essays on Workers' Self-Organization* (Chicago, 1990).

12. David Brody, review of *The Wages of Whiteness* in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24 (1993):378; Michael Rogin, "Black Masks, White Skin: Consciousness of Class and National Culture," *Radical History Review* 53 (1992):146. See also, Roediger, *Wages,* 9–10. Roediger is the only author cited in Arnesen's footnote 6 regarding a more critical perspective on white male workers. For a bracketing of Roediger's work with Hill's, see Eric Arnesen, "Up from Exclusion: Black and White Workers, Race, and the State of Labor History," *Reviews in American History* 26 (1998):147.

13. Arnesen, "Up from Exclusion," 147; Steven J. Ross, *Workers on the Edge: Work, Leisure, and Politics in Industrializing Cincinnati, 1788–1890* (New York, 1985); Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788–1850* (New York, 1984). Compare, for example, Herbert Hill, "The Problem of Race in American Labor History," *Reviews in American History* 24 (1996):180–208, to the following historiographical articles by Roediger: "Labor in White Skin: Race and Working Class History" (1988);

"The Greatness of Herbert Gutman" (1989); "The Crisis in Labor History: Race, Gender and Replotting of the Working Class Past in the United States" (1993), all reprinted in Roediger, *Toward the Abolition of Whiteness.* See also, Roediger, "Afterward to the Revised Edition," *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Remaking of the American Working Class* (New York, 2000), 187–88.

14. Arnesen, "Up from Exclusion," 165; Roediger, "Afterward to the Revised Edition," 185.

15. Republicanism was advanced as the point of departure for a new labor history synthesis in Sean Wilentz, "Against Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 26 (1984):1–24. The exclusionary qualities of labor republicanism were certainly noted earlier. See, for example, David Montgomery, "Labor and the Republic in Industrial America," *Le Mouvement Social* 111 (1980):201–215; and Nick Salvatore, "Some Thoughts on Class and Citizenship in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *A l'Ombre de la Statue de la Liberté: Immigrants et Ouvriers dans la République Americaine, 1880–1920,* ed. Marianne Debouzy (Saint Denis, 1988), 215–230. There is nothing in the earlier literature, however, to match Roediger's careful dissection of republicanism in *Wages of Whiteness,* 43–92, and especially 56–9.

16. Brody, review of *Wages,* 378, 380.

17. George Sanchez, "Race, Nation, and Culture in Recent Immigration Studies," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 18 (1999):69–71; James R. Barrett, "From the Global to the Personal: New Approaches, Old Approaches, and Good Questions in the Study of the 'New Immigrant' Workers, 1880's to 1940's," paper presented at the University of Toronto, October 12, 2000; Barrett and Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples"; Gary Gerstle, "Liberty, Coercion and the Making of Americans," *Journal of American History* 84 (1997):548–557; Charlotte Brooks, "Japanese American Resettlement and Community in Chicago, 1942–1945," *Journal of American History* 86 (2000):1655–1687; Tomas Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: the Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley, 1994).

18. Montgomery, "Empire, Race, and Working-Class Mobilizations," 14; Bruce Nelson, "Class and Democracy in the CIO: The 'New' Labor History Meets the Wages of Whiteness," *International Review of Social History* 41 (1996):351–374, especially 363–369. The debate on the CIO was launched by Michael Goldfield, "Race and the CIO: The Possibilities for Racial Egalitarianism During the 1930's and 1940's," and his respondents in *International Labor and Working-Class History* 44 (1993):1–63, which includes considerable evidence of progressive views and civil rights activism within the CIO. The debate promises to continue with Bruce Nelson, *Divided We Stand: American Workers Struggle for Black Equality* (Princeton, 2001), which arrived too late to be included in this essay.

19. Thomas Holt, "Explaining Racism in American History," in *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past,* ed. Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood (Princeton, 1998), 117.

20. Orlando Patterson, "America's Worst Idea," review of Scott L. Malcomson, *The American Misadventure of Race* (New York, 2000), *New York Times Book Review,* October 22, 2000, 15.