



Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past (American Crossroads)

David R. Roediger

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David R. Roediger's powerful book argues that in its political workings, its distribution of advantages, and its unspoken assumptions, the United States is a "still white" nation. Race is decidedly not over. The critical portraits of contemporary icons that lead off the book--Rush Limbaugh, Bill Clinton, O.J. Simpson, and Rudolph Giuliani--insist that continuities in white power and white identity are best understood by placing the recent past in historical context. Roediger illuminates that history in an incisive critique of the current scholarship on whiteness and an account of race-transcending radicalism exemplified by vanguards such as W.E.B. Du Bois and John Brown. He shows that, for all of its staying power, white supremacy in the United States has always been a pursuit rather than a completed project, that divisions among whites have mattered greatly, and that "nonwhite" alternatives have profoundly challenged the status quo.

Colored White reasons that, because race is a matter of culture and politics, racial oppression will not be solved by intermarriage or demographic shifts, but rather by political struggles that transform the meaning of race--especially its links to social and economic inequality. This landmark work considers the ways that changes in immigration patterns, the labor force, popular culture, and social movements make it possible--though far from inevitable--that the United States might overcome white supremacy in the twenty-first century. Roediger's clear, lively prose and his extraordinary command of the literature make this one of the most original and generative contributions to the study of race and ethnicity in the United States in many decades.

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