fully developed the interracial prolabor argument that the Civil War for the first time made available, if not exactly inevitable (Wages 87, 174). Shortly after the war, in 1867, Karl Marx wrote that in the “United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.” How could any but these words from Capital form the appropriate ending to my story? Marx’s image of labor as a great Blakean body, with certain of its parts immobilized owing to the shackling of others, gestures to the immensity of the “emancipation” these words invoke: not mere trade union unity—even less bourgeois “tolerance”—but a visionary conception of human collectivity.

Notes

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Introduction

3. I am thinking here of Stuart Hall, “The Meaning of New Times” and “New Ethnicities”; Dick Hebdige, Hiding in the Light; Andrew Ross, No Respect; Mary Childers and bell hooks, “A Conversation about Race and Class”; and others.
4. This point is made forcefully in David Roediger, “Labor in White Skin,” and Stanley Aronowitz, “Writing Labor’s History.”
5. For some acute remarks on this missed chance, see Mike Davis, Prisoners of the American Dream 18–29.
7. For a reading of Black Like Me, see Eric Lott, “White Like Me.”
11. Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature 133–34, emphasis in original. I use
22. This possibility was suggested to me by a reading of Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs"; see esp. 91.

23. For an analysis of Reagan-Thatcher "authoritarian populism," see Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal*; on the social context of recent cultural theory, see Michael Denning, "The End of Mass Culture."


Chapter 1

1. Each of these positions is of course underwritten by an intellectual tradition as old as "mass" culture itself. The view of capitalist popular culture as a "culture industry" that systematically cretinizes and depoliticizes an even more passive populace is best articulated in the writings of the Frankfurt School; its classic expression is Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry." The populist view of mass culture as a less mediated phenomenon of the "people" is perhaps most forcefully argued by Leslie Fiedler in *What Was Literature?*

2. My theoretical framework is indebted to Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the 'Popular'", Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents;* and T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life* 205–39. More generally these formulations, and many that follow, are drawn from work on culture industry phenomena by scholars associated with the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, including Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*; Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis*; Richard Johnson, "What is Cultural Studies Anyway?"; Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*; and Dick Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light.* Like-minded work in the United States includes Fredric Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture"; Jean Franco, "What's in a Name?"; Tania Modleski, *Feminism Without Women;* and Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood.* The pervasive influence of the work of Steven Marcus should also be acknowledged here, especially his pioneering effort in *The Other Victorians* to make cultural sense of dubious text.

3. As does this ministril conundrum: "Why are minstrel companies like midnight robbers? Because they live by their deeds of darkness" (*White's New Book* 31).

4. "Cuff"—a kind of common-denominator figure of nineteenth-century white fantasy about black people—shows up again in Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Parson's Horse Race" (1878), in which cultural appropriation is revealed to be a one-way street: "Cuff was the doctor's nigger man, and he was nat'tly a drollf proud critter! The way he would swell and strut and brag about the doctor and his folks and his things! The doctor used to give Cuff his cast-off clothes, and Cuff would prance round in 'em and seem to think he was a doctor of divinity himself, and had the charge of all natur'" (472). Obviously this scene is insufficiently ironized—precisely because cultural appropriation is a one-way street; black borrowings from the dominant culture, according to whites, result by definition in absurdity. The scene affords a rather bleak, though probably unconscious, commentary on Reconstruction from the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin.


7. Among these are Al Field, *Watch Yourself Go By* 113, and "Reminiscences" (I am
1. This story has been told best in Perry Miller’s wonderful study *The Raven and the Whale.*

2. I am indebted to T. J. Clark’s suggestive use of this essay in his discussion of the French *café concert* in *The Painting of Modern Life* 216–17. Gramsci’s term “national-popular” is an analytical device of variable definition in the *Prison Notebooks.* Politically it was developed to conceptualize the ways in which the fascist ascendency in Italy might be combated, not by directly seizing power (which was impossible) but by securing a cross-class alliance in a mass party that would contest its hegemony—a transitional stage ultimately leading to socialist democracy. Culturally it sought to articulate elements of an indigenous culture to a national will or mass desire for historical change. My use of the term emphasizes this connection between indigenous cultural forms and political formations—between, in particular, vernacular elements and the idea of the nation—though it will become clear how many contradictions accrue to such a notion in the American context. That, indeed, is one reason for my use of it. See Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings* 196–286, and David Forgacs, “National-Popular.”

3. Eliot, however, might have; in a deeply felt moment he said that his “nigger drawl” owed to his closeness to his native St. Louis. See Terence Hawkes, *That Shakespeherian Rag* 86.

4. For a similar point, see Andrew Ross, “Ballots, Bullets, or Batmen” 41–44.

5. See the essays in Tony Bennett et al., *Popular Culture and Social Relations.* I take this particular emphasis from Bennett’s essay “The Politics of the Popular” 8, 19.

6. For a theoretical inquiry into the problem of constructing “indigeneity,” see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffen, *The Empire Writes Back* 133–45; see also Timothy Brennan, “The National Longing for Form,” and Homi Bhabha, “DissemiNation.”


9. It might be noted here that many scholars’ overattention to textual evidence—primarily songsters (without music), in effect written “scores” for interactive affairs of performance—has skewed their view both of minstrelsy’s inauthenticity and of the varied effects minstrelsy might have produced in antebellum audiences. My attention to other media in addition to print is an attempt to redress this imbalance.

10. There was indeed a peculiar unevenness in whites’ appropriations of black material, resulting in an art in which black dances survived relatively intact even amid the burlesque of the lyrics. The question is why the racist filter did not produce a more uniform parody of all the “black” elements. My own feeling is that this is evidence, again, of the contradictory relationship whites had to black people and to black culture.

11. For a survey of the debates on the origins of black secular (and religious) music, see Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* 19–30.

deluge of American mass-cultural products—equations by then about a century old. See Dick Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light* 45–76.

32. I am indebted to Bruce Franklin’s provocative discussion of this article, and of the relation of black arts to America’s national culture, in *The Victim as Criminal and Artist* 73–123. Franklin’s book had a formative influence on my project.

33. I have lifted this apt phrase from Berndt Ostendorf, *Black Literature in White America* 67.


37. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings* 349. The “historical origin” or “artistic aspect” of cultural material, Gramsci wrote of popular music, matters less than that a certain group of people has adopted it because it “conform[s] to their way of thinking and feeling” (*Cultural* 195). In this sphere of popular counterfactuals, as Tony Bennett argues in “Marxism and Popular Fiction,” nothing matters but the way certain artifacts momentarily secure their adherents and inspire various popular formations.

38. By contrast, very little cultural appropriation took place in the written form of the slave narrative. Mattie Griffith’s fraudulent 1857 slave narrative, *Autobiography of a Female Slave* (by a planter’s daughter), is a rare exception. Even if we include Harriet Beecher Stowe’s work as an example of such appropriation—her use, for example, of the slave narratives of Henry Bibb and Josiah Henson in writing *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*—suffice it to say that this was a second-order attempt at cultural incorporation, a kind that was far less pervasive than the formal consequences of minstrelsy, which, as we shall see, influenced the stage productions of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* itself.

29. Smith-Rosenberg has demonstrated that the Crockett almanacs, which began to appear after 1835, can be read as a kind of fictional management, through the medium of the body, of antebellum American social dislocation. An out-of-hand adolescent in rebellion against paternal authority, Crockett as he is portrayed in the almanacs is a paragon of orality, scatology, and violent sexuality. Posed in all respects against the formation of an emergent bourgeois respectability, the almanacs nevertheless, according to Smith-Rosenberg, ultimately formed a “peace to the free individual” at a time when America was witnessing the most thoroughgoing institutionalization in its history (107–8) rebelliousness, in short, embodied (provided a Barthesian mythology for) the bourgeois’s belief in unconverted, unfettered selves even as they resisted the material historical developments underwriting this ideology.


32. Stanley Aronowitz, “Defining the Popular”; see also Dominic LaCapra, *History and Criticism* 45–69, for some cautions in regard to Ginzburg’s project, particularly its implicit formulation of peasant culture as a fully reconstructed, static whole. For discussions of the appropriation of English and Native American oral traditions, see Gene Bluestein, *Voice of the Folk* 1–15, and Arnold Krupat, *Native American Literature and the Canon*.

33. See Lain Chambers, *Popular Culture* 40–44, for the ways the color bar was broken in radio; see, among others, Jules Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment*, or C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, for the world-historical struggles that may obtain in the world of sport.

34. Quoted in David Roediger, “‘Labor in White Skin’” 293.

35. Karl Marx, “A Criticism of American Affairs” 211; Marx is referring specifically to the progress of the Civil War. The first sections of Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* (1–152), constitute an extended meditation on punk music’s relation to its late-1970s social history.

36. In *Subversive Genealogy* Rogin brilliantly reads Melville’s career through political developments that roughly parallel the European context; but for brief explicit statements on that context, see 15–23, 102–6. See also Larry Reynolds, *European Revolutions and the American Literary Renaissance*.


Chapter 5

1. For Rice’s career, see Molly Ramshaw, “Jump Jim Crow!”

2. See, for example, Nathan Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance* 270, 273, and Jules Zanger, “The Minstrel Show as Theater of Misrule.”


4. Another writer, the theater historian Laurence Hutton, noted in 1889 that many blackface performers had made names for themselves, “to say nothing of the bands of veritable negroes who have endeavored to imitate themselves in imitation of their white brethren in all parts of the land” (144). As if in response to this cultural effect, in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* Stowe has Mr. Shelby hail George and Eliza Harris’s little boy as “Jim Crow” (44).


9. Insurrection was no small concern in the 1830s and early 1840s, as an editorial in the *New York Sun* makes clear. When Joshua Giddings introduced a resolution in Congress that commended the slaves who revolted aboard the *Creole* and steered it to Britain, the *Sun* (March 25, 1842) compared him to “Robespierre, Brissot and Marat,” who “set themselves up as champions of the freedom of speech and of the negroes, and led the way to deeds of blood, the history of which will applaud the world throughout all time to come” (quoted in Saxton, “Problems” 233). For an excellent treatment of the ironies attending the issues of slavery and revolution in these years, see Eric Sundquist, “Slavery, Revolution, and the American Renaissance”; for a brilliant analysis of the overdetermined proximity in T. W. Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (1867) of black male bodies, weapons, and the sort of homoerotic interest I review in this discussion, see Christopher
the Mob" 35. See Wilentz, Chants Democratic 180–81, for a sense of the routineness of anti-Tappanism.

35. The impetus for this brief investigation is, of course, the extraordinary work on popular rioting and mobbing produced by George Rudé (The Crowd in History), E. P. Thompson ("The Moral Economy of the English Crowd"), and others. I have drawn my narrative from these accounts: Gustave de Beaumont, Marie, "Appendix"; Alvin Harlow, Old Bowery Days 289–93; Linda Kerber, "Abolitionists and Amalgamators"; Leonard Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing" 113–22; Jentz, "Artisans, Evangelicals, and the City" 245–55; Paul Weinbaum, Mobs and Demagogues 23–27; Wilentz, Chants Democratic 264–65; Peter Buckley, To the Opera House 184–90; and Paul Gilje, The Road to Mobocracy 162–70.


37. Peter Buckley carefully notes that these separate actions "became part of a seamless organism" in the minds of contemporary observers (190), given the "mobocratic" spirit (as a young Abraham Lincoln was to call it) of those days. See Lincoln's 1838 "Address to the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield."

38. Quoted in Jentz, "Artisans, Evangelicals, and the City." 249.

39. Jentz, "Artisans, Evangelicals, and the City" 251–55 (the quote is from Jentz, "The Anti-Slavery Constituency in New York City" 117); David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness 110.

40. The text here is reprinted in Gary Engle, ed., This Grotesque Essence 1–12. It dates from 1856, but Hans Nathan observes that it derives from the original. Although no plot summary survives from the early performances, the playbill synopsis of a companion piece, Bone Squash, is in almost complete agreement with its 1856 printing, and the names of the characters in O Hush! are virtually identical with the earlier play's. See Nathan, Dan Emmett 67.

41. Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing" 114–15. In Gustave de Beaumont's Marie (1835), whose pivotal episode is based on the July riots, the antiblack violence interrupts the wedding ceremony of a Frenchman and a mulatto, rather nicely underscoring the link between the rioters' motives and fears of amalgamation.

42. Emma Jones Lapsansky's "Since They Got Those Separate Churches" is very good on the emergence of the black dandy as an ideological fiction—its class sources and its regulation of black behavior. Black responses to the fiction included an 1838 Philadelphia Colored American article that asserted, "The same class of vagabonds who would readily mob . . . the aristocracy could they do it with the same impunity" (72), casually making clear the class resonance of abolitionism. See also Gary Nash, Forging Freedom 254–59.

43. Indeed, Lapsansky observes that in Philadelphia it was not amalgamation per se but amalgamation for the purposes of upward mobility to which rioters objected (62).

44. Jentz, "Artisans, Evangelicals, and the City" 192 and "The Anti-Slavery Constituency in Jacksonian New York City" 110.

Chapter 6

1. Emmett's account, a more elaborated and convincing narrative than those of Billy Whitlock and G. B. Woolridge, appeared in the New York Clipper May 19, 1877; the other accounts were published there a year later (April 13, 1878). Despite Hans Nathan's assessment, the evidence may support E. P. Christy's claim of having organized (in Buffalo, New York) the first minstrel band, though Emmett's was no doubt the first in New
York City. See Dan Emmett 116–18, 143–46; more generally, see C. B. Galbreath, Daniel Decatur Emmett.


3. The argument of this chapter has been influenced by the brilliant analysis by Stuart Hall et al. in Policing the Crisis of the British “mugging” scare of the early 1970s—an attempt on the part of “law and order” to regain lost ground in the wake of the “crisis” of the 1960s.


5. Hans Nathan is very precise about the makeup of the first minstrel shows. See Dan Emmett 118–34, 143–53.

6. This assertion is still perhaps a controversial one, based as much on guesswork as on insurmountable evidence. About all that can be adduced on the matter is the recollection of the late nineteenth-century performer Lew Dockstader that the early interlocutor’s lack of “darky dialect” contrasted with his black makeup; on the basis of this statement, Robert Toll concludes in Blacking Up 63, n.63) that interlocutors generally appeared in blackface. Certainly there is a considerable lack of evidence of a whiteface interlocutor in this period, much less songbook illustrations featuring blackface companies with a sole whiteface performer. Reminiscences such as that of Mark Twain, which does support the claim of a white interlocutor, seem influenced both by regional particularity (Twain saw shows in Hannibal) and by minstrelsy’s later incarnations—more accurate in spirit than in all their facts. The ease with which the mask accommodated a variety of dialects—Irish brogues, the b’hoys’ slang, even parodic, German-inflected English—perhaps indicates less of a contradiction between the blackface mask and gentile dialect than one might have expected. The white interlocutor, at least in urban centers, appears to have been a later development.

7. In this respect the minstrel show is not unrelated to television situation comedy; see Patricia Mellencamp, “Situation Comedy, Feminism, and Freud.” For some interesting remarks on the minstrel show’s structure, see W. T. Lhamon, “Constance Rourke’s Secret Reserve” xxxiv.


9. By “right-minded black comedy” I mean anything from Spike Lee’s films to Bill Cosby to the unfortunate “In Living Color.”

I have been oriented in this project by several excellent discussions of pleasure: Roland Barthes, The Pleasure of the Text; Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”; Fredric Jameson, “Pleasure”; and Colin Mercer, “Complicit Pleasures” and “A Poverty of Desire.” Also helpful are John Lowe, “Theories of Ethnic Humor” John Morreall, Taking Laughter Seriously 27–37; and Werner Sollors, Beyond Ethnicity 131–41.

10. Knickerbocker 16, 1 (July 1840), 84.

11. If the symbolic depends on reflection and lack, writes Christian Metz, “the cinema is a body . . . a fetish that can be loved” (57). Barbara Freedman’s Staging the Gaze argues that the same might be said of the actor’s presence in the theater (47–77).


15. Steven Marcus, The Other Victorians 266–86. Edward James’s Amateur Negro Minstrel’s Guide advises that three quarters of an inch of lipstick will “make the face look all mouth when opened to its full extent” (8).


17. Popular Music in Jacksonian America, side 2.

18. “Now Hold your Horses, will you!” Christy and Wood’s New Song Book 9; see also George Christy, Essence of Old Kentucky 46–47.

19. A third possibility is that some audience members experienced a marginally more positive nostalgia for nurture rather than infant rage; this was true, we shall see, for the wave of sentimental black images that would soon begin to flood the minstrel stage. I have been influenced here by Michael Rogin’s psychohistorical interpretation of white attitudes toward Native Americans in the antebellum period. See Fathers and Children 3–15, 114–25; see also Sander Gilman, “Black Bodies, White Bodies” 256.

20. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression 192. This argument refines ideas drawn from symbolic anthropologists such as Mary Douglas, who have written of the body as a symbolic representation of the social forces that produced it—bodily functions and boundaries, points of entry and of exit signifying societal relations and values. See, for example, Douglas, Natural Symbols esp. 65–81.


22. For a similar argument, see David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness 97, 100, 110, 118, and, regarding theatrical portrayals of the Irish, Bruce McConachie, “The Cultural Politics of ‘Paddy’.”


24. F. C. Wemyss, Theatrelogy 1–19; or, The Life of An Actor and Manager 179.


26. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White make an excellent statement on how this formation comes about in The Politics and Poetics of Transgression 193–94. Julia Kristeva terms this predicament “abjection.” Kristeva writes of the abject that “‘unconscious’ contents remain . . . excluded but in strange fashion,” clearly enough “for a defensive position to be established” yet “not radically enough to allow for a secure differentiation between subject and object.” Thus blackface’s white spectator, in Kristeva’s terms, “never stops decimating his universe whose fluid confines . . . constantly question his solidity and impel him to start afresh” (7–8).

27. See Christian Metz, The Imaginary Signifier, for an account of how the castration threat is managed by replacing it with a fetish substitute: “The fixation on [the fetish’s] ‘just before’ [castration] is thus another form of disavowal . . . The fetish signifies the penis as absent, it is its negative signifier; supplementing it, it puts a ‘fullness’ in place of a lack, but in doing so it also affirms that lack” (70–71). The minstrel show exemplified and worked several permutations on this theme, as will become clear.

28. Christy and Wood’s New Song Book 30; for further examples, see “Gal wid de Blue Dress on,” White’s New Illustrated Melodeon Songbook 65, and “White Cat and Black Cat,” White’s New Ethiopian Song Book 49.


30. In thinking about racial and gender disguise, and about theater spectators’ varying identifications with blackface characters, I am indebted once again to Carol Clover’s “Her Body, Himself.”

32. For this figure of “aristocratic” self-satisfaction, see Peter Buckley, *To the Opera House* 197–205.

33. In *Strangers in the Land*, John Higham connects nativism with racism (4). Whereas single-minded class radicalism had had variable racial results in the 1830s, the complexities and contradictions of class feeling in the 1840s tended to produce a corollary sense of racial impatience and disdain.


38. In “Writing Labor’s History,” Stanley Aronowitz offers some excellent insights regarding what he sees as the internally split formation of the American working class, which encompassed not only an artisan republicanism developed in opposition to a consolidating bourgeoisie but also proletarian substrata resisting artisan culture itself (180–85).

39. See, for instance, Karen Haltunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*.


41. On the internally contradictory (but finally conservative) character of the petite bourgeoisie, see Arno Mayer, “The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem.”

42. I rely here on “Heroes of the Burnt Cork,” which includes one of the most detailed descriptions of antebellum cross-dressing.

43. See Christine Stansell, *City of Women* 78–80, 55–62, 89–100; Foster’s remark is quoted at 94. Elsewhere, Foster makes the connection (without, I think, understanding it) between these women’s work and their (resistant) sense of style: “The pretty book-folder and the pale seamstress, the buxom housemaid and the ambitious laundress, slave cheerfully all the week in the drearier and most monotonous occupations, that they may obtain the means of making a handsomer appearance at the Saturday night dance.” See *New York in Slices* 111.


45. S. Foster Damon, *Series of Old American Songs* no. 31; *White’s New Illustrated Melodeon Songbook* 47.

46. Robert Stoller, *Sex and Gender* 185, 176–86, 214–15; conversely, in “Transvestism” Ethel Person and Lionel Ovesey argue that transvestism seeks to allay separation anxiety, not castration anxiety, by using women’s clothes as a substitute for the mother (308). See also Marjorie Garber’s remarks on Stoller in *Vested Interests* 94–98.

47. Olive Logan, “The Ancestry of Brudder Bones” 698. The *New York Herald* wrote of one “wench” performance: “Such a strapping pair of colored ladies have not been seen for many a day. Fine fun may be expected” (November 7, 1842).


Chapter 7

1. I am indebted to Michael Rabin’s excellent discussion of this article in *Subversive Genealogy* 104–5.

2. The *Journal of Music* noted that Christy’s Minstrels performed 312 times in 1853 and netted $47,792 (“Black” 108); one songster boasted that Christy’s Minstrels had given 69 concerts as early as 1842, yielding $1,847.52 (Christy’s No. 4 v); Robert Nevin wrote that Stephen Foster’s commissions for “Old Folks at Home” alone totaled $15,000 (614); and in the *New York Herald*, a “card” published by Christy’s Minstrels asserted that George Christy (who had ungratefully broken from the troupe) earned $19,680 in his two and a half years with them (November 7, 1853).

3. Not all of these lyrics, however, arose from minstrel performance; my guess (based partly on existing playbills) is that only a portion of the printed songs were ever performed onstage, though the ones that were probably supported songbook sales, and performed or not, songbook lyrics plugged the performers in whose names the books were published. In other words, to some extent the songbooks constituted an independent realm of literary production. While I have found little information concerning the circumstances of this production, minstrel songbooks did issue—voluminously—from urban dime novel or “fiction factory” publishing houses which depended on a highly organized system of speedy prose manufacture, and it is likely that much minstrel-show verse originated in the same way. It is even possible, given that many songs have a headnote marking their recent performance at such and such a music hall, that blackface artists used the verses fiction factories turned out rather than the other way around, perhaps setting them to tunes already in their repertoire—hence “De New Ole Dan Tucker” or “Old Tucker’s Wedding” or even “Mrs. Tucker.” (The fans at home, of course, could follow the same path.) Another interesting example of this culture industry collaboration is Tony Pastor, *George Christy: A Story of Minstrel Life* (1877), a dime novel extremely loosely based on the life of the famous blackface performer. The songs just mentioned are from the Negro Forget-Me-Not Songster 59, 110, and *White’s New Illustrated Melodeon Songbook* 67. On the fiction factories, see Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents*, chap. 2; Frank Schick, *The Paperbound Book in America*; and Madeleine Stern, ed., *Publishers for Mass Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century America* 35–50, 93–96, 101–14, 229–35.


5. My use of “mythology” here is loosely derived from Roland Barthes’s *Mythologies*, in which *myth* is defined as an instance of “depoliticized speech” (143), what Fredric Jameson would in certain cases call an “ideologeme”—in short ideology narrated, that is,
28. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin 340. This conflict is submitted to lengthy and intelligent discussion in Charles Foster, The R ungless Ladder 49-57. Foster speculates that Stowe’s portrait of St. Clare was inspired by Orestes Brownson’s 1840 “The Laboring Classes,” which equated the exploitative systems of capitalism and slavery and predicted class war eight years in advance of The Communist Manifesto. I believe Foster underemphasizes St. Clare’s ultimate siding with the northern worker against the southern slave; and it is interesting to note that in Brownson’s own development the positions of “The Laboring Classes” were soon elaborated into apologies for slavery. See, for example, Arthur Schlesinger, The Age of Jackson 299-304, 407-8, 425.
29. Of course the displacement of labor struggles onto Britain, in accordance with the abolitionist belief in American “free labor,” might also have given working-class audiences trouble; but in most cases, as far as I can judge, the rhetoric of “European” working conditions seems to have functioned both as a figure for the northern states of America and as a useful fiction, in which workers still believed, that lifelong wage work was not yet an American affliction.
30. The Tribune did note that Barnum later altered this “deformity” of Conway’s play, no longer defending so vehemently the white worker. Somewhat ambiguously, it added: “Now let him [Barnum] kill Uncle Tom and all will be right” (December 2, 1853).
31. Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men (on the Republican party) and Jean Baker, Affairs of Party (on the Democratic party), both enlarge on this purpose.
32. Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men 156, 158, 154; Joseph Rayback, Free Soil. See the excellent review of northern intellectual response to the growth of sectional thinking in the North in George Fredrickson, The Inner Civil War 36-50.
35. See, for example, Alexander Saxton, The Rise and Fall of the White Republic 127-82.
38. See, for example, the white working-class anger expressed in the 1850s in John Hopkins, The American Citizen 132, and H. B. Mullins, A Voice from the Workshop 10-11; see also W. J. Rorabaugh, “Rising Democratic Spirits” 157.
39. For a reading of Lincoln’s political rhetoric in the heat of this process, see Eric Lott, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Abraham Lincoln.”

Afterword

1. In an early letter to his brother, Michael Rogn notes, Melville signed himself “Tawney,” and his first books mixed travel writing with anti-imperialist critique (Subversive 43). Moby-Dick (1851), written during the Compromise of 1850 debates, seems (as many have pointed out) an allegory of the Compromise itself. See Willie Weatherers, Moby-Dick and the Nineteenth-Century Scene; Charles Foster, “Something in Emblems”; and Alan Heimert, Moby-Dick and American Political Symbolism.” For all three writers, the Union in Melville’s allegory is destroyed by monomania: for Weatherers, Abah is William Lloyd Garrison, whose slogan was “No Compromise with Slaveholders”; for
Foster, Ahab is Daniel Webster, advocate of the Compromise and thus the betrayer of New England's moral hopes; and for Heimert, Ahab is John C. Calhoun, who would have preserved slavery not through compromise but at the expense of the Union.


3. Unfortunately this mournful, even nostalgic tone persists; one popular example is Ken Burns's television documentary “The Civil War” (1990).

4. For more on this ambivalence, see Caroline Moseley, “‘When Will Dis Cruel War Be Ober?’”


6. Christy's Bones and Banjo Melodist 57.

7. Du Bois wrote, “It was easy to transfer class hatred so that it fell upon the black worker” (Reconstruction 103–4).


9. Karl Marx, Capital 301; see also the clarity of Bernard Mandel, Labor 204. For an excellent gloss on Marx's words, see David Roediger, “Labor in White Skin” 290–91.

Bibliography


