but does have one peculiar foible: "he imagines himself a white man" (29). The master is successfully sold by Sam, and by the time the master has produced the documentation to free himself, Sam has boarded a ship for a European port and is never heard from again. In this case, passing seems to concern not so much loss or exile, but instead pulling one over on the master. Hobbs also discusses a wonderful short story by Langston Hughes called "Who's Passing for Who" (1956). The story involves an awkward evening with a white couple who eventually say they are only passing for white but are in reality black. Hughes and his friends then laugh and feel more comfortable, and the entire group goes out to drink, carouse, and have fun until five in the morning. When Hughes is pulling away in a cab in the early morning hours, however, the wife shouts out to him, "Listen, boys! I hate to confuse you again. But, to tell the truth, my husband and I aren't really colored at all. We're white. We just thought we'd kid you by passing for colored for a little while—like you said Negroes sometimes pass for white" (213). This playful story shows the ways that passing can poke fun not only at whites, but also at blacks who might insist on fixed ideas of racial identity and behavior. It also tricks the reader, and in so doing shows the subversive and disconcerting side of racial passing for the audience, as well.

Even though we have now moved fifteen years forward into the "mulatto millennium," it seems that passing has not become "passé," as some critics have claimed. Indeed, with the publication of both Hobbs's study and another recent one—the collection *Passing Interest: Racial Passing in US Novels, Memoirs, Television, and Film, 1990-2010* (SUNY P, 2014), edited by Julie Cary Nerad—it becomes evident that passing remains a topic of enduring fascination within U. S. history and culture. Studies of racial passing often end up pushing this very complex phenomenon into one side of a binary formulation. The behavior either subverts *or* supports the dominant social ideology of race; the passer either is liberated *or* exiled by the act of passing; and texts about passing either demonstrate that racial identity is a construction *or* that it is something "real." Yet passing has always been a multivalent phenomenon. Some individuals (such as Moses Roper, Walter White, or Toi Derricotte) cross back and forth across the color line for strategic reasons, and others (such as Anatole Broyard) pass in plain sight, known to many African Americans as black, but to the rest of the world as white. To use the sociologist Erving Goffman's terms, some people "disappear" into the white race, never to come back, while others return periodically to their family or after many years of living on the "other side." Hobbs does her best to keep her eyes open to the subversive possibilities of passing, even as she unearths the great personal and familial losses that often subtend this phenomenon. Ultimately she uncovers not only the exile that is passing, but also those vertiginous moments when the behavior reveals the emptiness at the heart of race itself.

David Roediger. *Seizing Freedom: Slave Emancipation and Liberty for All.* New York: Verso, 2014. 230 pp. $26.95.

Reviewed by Thomas Aiello, Valdosta State University

David Roediger is engaged in a reclamation project. He wants us to remember the central role that slaves played in forcing emancipation through their feet, by escaping, by fighting, by seeking the freedom that the white leaders we so often celebrate were reluctant to bestow upon them. *Seizing Freedom: Slave Emancipation and Liberty for All* is, to be sure, an act of remembering rather than of discovery. Roediger traces the long history of our understanding of the central role slaves

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played in their own emancipation, from the groundbreaking work of Du Bois onward, but he also argues that that central role has been marginalized; it has never been eliminated from accounts, but instead has consistently been pushed to the fringes as an a priori assumption that can be given a reverent nod before turning to more compelling political drama. In this project he is not alone, as his book appeared at roughly the same time as *I Freed Myself: African-American Self-Emancipation in the Civil War Era* (Cambridge UP, 2014) by Civil War scholar David Williams, which also seeks to give the black role in emancipation its rightful pride of place.

Seizing Freedom, however, broadens the debate beyond the traditional historical narrative and beyond the story of slaves. By emphasizing the centrality of slave self-emancipation, Roediger is able to harness the ripples created by the tidal wave of the war. The death of slavery was an epic demographic upheaval, the conditions for which were created what the author describes as a synesthetic, sped-up "revolutionary time," wherein the moment's hyperbolic rhetoric and rapid political and cultural changes altered the way people experienced their world. Time slowed down, and when it did, the ideological agreements that gave the appearance of organization broke down into factions that had their own stakes in the game. Thus, as Roediger explains, movements developed in response to emancipation that also championed causes as diverse as Indian rights and Irish nationalism.

More important, the Civil War and the end of slavery it engendered recreated the women's suffrage and labor rights movements. For women, the intersection of increased public roles in the wake of the war and the already established place of women in the abolition movement, feeding as it did from the multipronged push for antebellum reform, generated a renewed confidence among activists and helped the movement coalesce around a woman's right to vote. At the same time, women were able to broaden the discussion of what exactly "rights" entailed by inaugurating the first sustained national discussion of the causes and consequences of domestic violence.

A similar phenomenon happened with the labor movement as the overriding emphasis on free labor and the constant comparisons, positive and negative, made on both sides to the metastasizing wage labor force in the North led workers to seek their own version of emancipation, which ultimately coalesced around the cause of an eight-hour workday. That, too, was given its push by what Roediger calls "the broad politics of Jubilee" (21).

Roediger reads that politics in new ways and pushes it in new directions that, for example, *I Freed Myself* does not go. The revolutionary time of emancipation also problematized whiteness. Proceeding from the pioneering work of Douglas Baynton and other scholars of disability, Roediger reads racial and gender othering as a phenomenon of disability, wherein white male norms of fitness constituted a biological template for others who sought inclusion. Female hysteria or slave unintelligence became functions of disability, which made them much more difficult to overcome than simple bias in favor of whiteness or maleness. In the wake of the Civil War, however, an ethos of disability resulting from the war's injuries fundamentally changed that narrative and forced both the dominant culture and the politics that served it to cater to the white male disabled. Thus, disability, as Roediger explains, "was at once celebrated for its connection to heroism and hidden for its connection to weakness" (78). Gender and race played new roles in this new conception of disability, as female nurses were the primary caregivers for the wounded and black war veterans were denied their place at the table. The image of disabled black veterans denied the right to vote, for example, became particularly palpable when set against images of pardoned, able Confederates who had contributed to the infliction of those wounds. More broadly, "ubiquitous encounters with unthinkable suffering demonstrated how fragile and how ordinary white male ability was," thus shaking the entire foundation upon which the pseudo-biological edifice of race and gender superiority was built (82).

Into that uncertainty stepped the valor and dignity of black slaves and soldiers, which fundamentally benefited the Union war effort (sometimes voluntarily, sometimes through the requirements of "contraband" provisions) and giving lie to the assumption of disability among those who didn't fit the profile of the able white male. Roediger's study here is at its most innovative, as he demonstrates the transformation in white attitudes and understandings of such notions of difference through a close reading of Civil War art, poetry, and popular culture. What makes his work so groundbreaking is not its sourcing and not the story of freedom and difference that it tells. Rather, its principal value lies in this kind of radically innovative conceptualization of the often-marginalized facets of war and emancipation that developed in the sped-up immediacy of his "revolutionary time." It is that kind of innovation that leads to reading Winslow Homer through the lens of disability studies to the end of demonstrating the ideological drivers of emancipation.

And it is that kind of reading that is at the core of *Seizing Freedom*'s success. Not only is it replete with similar instances of individual brilliance, but it situates those instances around a broader meditation on the self-emancipation of the slaves. When combined with the work of scholars like Williams, Roediger's unique insight helps resituate the intentional agency of slaves back to the center of the story of emancipation. One leaves his excellent book convinced that such is precisely where it should be.

Keith Clark. *The Radical Fiction of Ann Petry*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2013. 257 pp. $40.00.

Reviewed by James W. Coleman, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

As Keith Clark points out in *The Radical Fiction of Ann Petry*, the author for a long time was known almost exclusively because of her short story "Like a Winding Sheet" (1945) and her first novel *The Street* (1946). This singular emphasis resulted in Petry's works being confined to the category of naturalist protest fiction—not to mention the author being considered something of an imitator of the father of the form, Richard Wright. To a significant extent, this very limited critical perspective on Petry developed because both of these works appeared at a time after the publication in 1940 of Wright's *Native Son*, a novel that made a vast impact on the male-dominated literary establishment and enshrined naturalistic protest as the dominant African American literary mode. Moreover, critics and readers neglected an œuvre which included novels, short stories, literature for children/adolescents, and essays.

As Clark shows in his groundbreaking study, however, Petry's work offers so much more than Wright's masculine-focused naturalist protest. "Like a Winding Sheet" and *The Street* have naturalist characteristics, but Clark's close reading of both reveals that the works are substantively deeper and richer than naturalism. One of Clark's two main emphases is that Petry portrayed a black male ontology that differed markedly from Bigger Thomas's in *Native Son*; the second is that gothic elements in her writing continue an often overlooked *mise-en-scène* in the African American literary tradition and anticipate the gothic settings and horror in the writing of contemporary black and white American authors such as Toni Morrison and Joyce Carol Oates. There is a gothic horror and haunting in Petry's work that applies not only to African American life, but also to that which is *white*, and generally American too. Clark demonstrates that Petry was far ahead of her time in the exploration of black male ontology, and, further, foregrounds how the gothic

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