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Michael Phillips. *White Metropolis: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Dallas, 1841–2001.* Austin: University of Texas Press. 2006. Pp. ix, 267. Cloth \$60.00, paper \$19.95.

A pungent prologue and an acerbic afterword constitute the more memorable parts of Michael Phillips's study of race in Dallas, Texas. At the outset, in a critique of the historiography on Dallas, the author judges other accounts as variously mythical, Whiggish, fantastic, simplistic, or neglectful; in a rare positive concession he observes that one "narrative makes for poor history, however, at least it is coherent" (p. 6). To establish the importance of his own work, Phillips makes large claims for the historical significance of Dallas. The modern partisan realignment in southern politics "began in Dallas," and the connection between right-wing Republicans and conservative Christians also started there, especially with the First Baptist Church led by W. A. Criswell (p. 2). The city's "unique geographical position" at the edges of both the South and the West should have made it a "tantalizing" historical subject (pp. 3, 2). Phillips attributes the relative neglect of the city's history to an "amnesia by design" that created instead "a myth of consensus ... in which a white male elite, ruling for the good of the 'city as a whole,' created a community 'with no reason for being' as an act of macho will" (p. 3). Phillips calls it the Origin Myth, and his book seeks to overturn it by putting conflict among races, ethnic and religious groups, and social classes at the center of the city's story. According to Phillips, the concept of whiteness provides the key to his analysis.

In his afterword Phillips defends whiteness studies and historian David Roediger against the attacks of their critics. In discussing Eric Arnesen's assessment of whiteness, Phillips claims it "too often degenerates into wildly inaccurate ad hominem attacks" (p. 179). He damns Arnesen's essay as a "prima facie absurdity," and he attributes to him an "obsessively empiricist literalism" (pp. 180, 179). In regard to Arnesen's "ally Barbara Jeanne Fields," Phillips claims she "cannot simply disagree with whiteness scholars; she attributes to them malevolent motives," and he "suspects she is not very familiar with the literature" (pp. 180, 181). (Phillips refers to essays by Arnesen and Fields in *International Labor and Working Class History* 60 [Fall 2001].)

Phillips does concede that some good works have been written, among them Jim Schutze's *The Accommodation: The Politics of Race in an American City* (1986), and he acknowledges that he seeks to "extend upon, revise, and counter" Schutze's "groundbreaking work" (p. 183). Only at the end of the book does Phillips declare that he took from Schutze the concept of an Origin Myth to describe Dallas's past. He also credits the influence of scholarship by Harvey Graff on Dallas's lack of history and by Richard Slotkin on frontier violence. Although Phillips chides one author for using a photograph of Dallas on the cover of his southern history textbook but not including Dallas in his book's index, Phillips's own index inexplicably omits any references to Roediger, Arnesen, Fields, Graff, or Slotkin.

Between the prologue and afterword, Phillips quickly surveys 160 years of Dallas's history in as many pages. In each period he finds that the white elite used its varying definition of whiteness to retain power and to support capitalism. After the Civil War, for example, the elite defined whiteness to exclude blacks, Mexicans, and immigrants, but the elite also employed premillennial dispensationalism to convince the poor to wait for Christ's return and to allow increasingly influential Jews to become partially white. Around the turn of the century, the elite tried to use white supremacy to satisfy lower-class whites stripped of political power. Phillips sees that the "elite agenda became tangled in its own contradictions," with the distinctions among groups often challenged and frequently changing (p. 77). Jews, for example, sometimes were, and sometimes were not, white; "philo-Semitism existed side by side with anti-Semitism" (p. 122).

As the civil rights movement emerged, Phillips shows the conflicts and rivalries among blacks, Jews, Catholics, Mexicans, and lower-class whites; each group's efforts to become white often prevented it from aiding the black freedom struggle. While the white elite allowed some conservative blacks to exercise power, it "continued to see the Anglo working class as uncivilized barbarians, outside the norms of whiteness" (p. 147). Besieged by an influx of midwestern immigrants, the divided elite struggled over any change in segregation, while blacks and Mexican Americans fought. By the 1990s Phillips sees a "grim future" for all because whiteness, "an effective tool for controlling dissent," had been "poison for community building" (p. 177). "Under the influence of whiteness," he concludes, "Dallas learned to forget the past, regret the present, and dread the future" (p. 178).

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