The Threat of Race

For Philomena

The Threat of Race

Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism

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Contents

Preface and Acknowledgments

This is a book about race and its exclusionary, humiliating, and violent expressions, historically produced and contemporarily articulated, yet so often in denial. About the transformational grammars of race and racisms as neoliberal political economy has assumed a more or less firm grip on different societies, across varying regions. I am concerned with what is unique to those geo-regional expressions, and what can be generalized across them.

The numbers are notorious, almost numbing.

Ten million enslaved Africans perished in Middle Passage, on reasonable estimates. Death en passant to a life more often than not worse than death. Starved, worked, beaten, suffocated, diseased to death. Numbers as large again prematurely killed in new world slavery. Systemically, brutally worked, beaten, saddened or maddened into death. Seven million aboriginal inhabitants of Australia wiped out by European colonization and modernization. A lynching every other day in the southern states of the US throughout the 1890s. Ten million battered into death by Leopold's vicious regime in the Congo between 1885 and 1908, half of the population of the area castrated and delimbed and diseased in a brutality matched only by the six million Jews and nameless others gassed and shot and tortured to death by Aryan superiority in the 1940s, for which the Congolese experience served as a pre-cursive laboratory. Each death exceptional in transnational processes of violence and violation all too sadly not. One million people murdered in 1994 in Rwanda in the ethnoracial name of not belonging. In one month. More than 70 percent of the more than two million people rotting in US prisons (up from 200,000 less than 40 years ago) people of color. A percentage eclipsed perhaps only in (post-)apartheid South Africa. Countless lives foreshortened by segregation and apartheid, urban decay and globalized labor conditions, smart bombs and stupid politicians.

All in the name or wake – explicitly or implicitly, structurally or analogically – of ethnoracial configurations and their legacies. People reduced to the abstraction of a group, groups classified as abstracted numbers, belittled, rationalized as animals, treated as beasts by those whose actions would make them better candidates for the designation.

What do these sorts of numbing numbers (repeatable ad nauseam, if one is not already nauseated) say about race and how we have come to think about racial ordering and racial theorizing? About racial futures and their connections with what counts as history? About an ordering, valuing, ways of being and thinking that enable and allow the cults of death and violence, that threaten the wellbeing of so many? And later ignores their legacies. So how are the mentalities of racial being and seeing made, manifested, managed over time, at different times, to different social or governmental purpose? What are their products and productivity, their currency and the value they create, sell, and purchase? What fates does this order(ing) of images and ideas, values and virtues seal, and seal off?

What indeed about color-consciousness and colorblindness, about conscience and connectedness, about community and collectivity? And what about racial cultures and resistance, domination and representation? About racial memory and forgetting, apology, apologetics, and forgiving? About grief and grievance, identity and injury? About racial resonance and suggestibility, refusal and possibility? What, in other words, of that question first asked critically by the likes of Fanon, about the connection between race and culture? What, as Said asks in *Culture and Imperialism*, is culture both productive and reflective of the historical moment(s) in which it is produced? Is there something systematic about the cult(ure)s of race across time so that one can conjure, as Said argues about imperial culture at once more generally and more specifically, a "structure of attitude and reference"?

The set of reflections that follows across the pages of *The Threat of Race*, then, is about retrospectivity and prospectivity, legacy and latency, pasts as horizons of futures. It is about race in structure and representation, order and rationalization, arrangement and narration. It is then also about what race does about itself, how it represents itself and what it does around and in the name of such representation and extension. About the suffocation of history's weight but also about living through and beyond, because and in spite of it. It is, one might say, to pause between, to reflect on the stains and strains of history, of histories. But the book is also about standing up and brushing off. About digging out, and picking up.

In this, my concern is to mold a critical analytics and a critical analytic vocabulary towards comprehending racially driven neoliberalisms and neoliberally fueled racisms: racial regionalizations and critical regionalisms, born again racisms and social prophylaxis, enduring occupations and permanently temporary states, euro-mimesis and Muslimania, mixture and violent duress, political theology of race and racial secularization, racial compulsions and their resistances, socialities of the skin and racial evaporations, racisms without racism and neo-neoliberalism, homogenizing and heterogenizing dispositions.

How, then, to write in the name of and against a title? A title fraught with prospect and promise, with the ambiguities of racial erosion and erasure, on one side, and antagonisms, violence, death, and their charges, on the other? A title in the shadow of which histories are taken to be over, past, evaporated and in denial, yet the conditions of which, as they are buried, misremembered, mis-membered, remain very much alive.

A book of this sort, it may already be evident, conjures if it doesn't emphatically call for a different kind of writing. I have composed a work in which I have tried to retain passion rather than purge it for the preference of a neutral disposition, whatever that might mean, preferring to wed passion to a critical analyticity, commitment(s), and to theoretical reflectivity. I have tried to write with writing in mind. Which is to say with speaking to colleagues and those unknown, shouting at claims from which leave is taken, which leave one not so much cold as furious. How to write with passion and yet remain coolly critical, cutting, incisive? About pressing matters cutting today as deep to the bone as any moment in my lifetime. How to write about complex and difficult matters, but clearly? How to resist and insist, through argument? These are my challenges.

This is a text, accordingly, free of footnotes or explicitly referenced intra-textual citations. Which is different than saying there are no references, or better yet reference points, allusions, conversational interjections. The book is conceived in conversation, with many texts, multiple voices, various expressions of opinion. A bibliography of works consulted, conspired with or against, critically taken up or cast aside, follows each chapter. Where I suggest in passing within the flow of a chapter's argument that so-and-so says such-and-such the general reference will be included in the chapter's bibliography.

We are often in denial about just how collaboratively produced single-authored monographs are. I owe enormous debts of gratitude, from the detailed and definitive to the deep and comprehensive, from the institutional to the

invested, the abstract to the personal. The abstract first. The writing was driven in good part by the music in the presence of which it was so often composed. Philip Tabane and the Malombo Jazzmen, Feya Faku, McCoy Mrubata, Greg Georgiades, Paul Hanmer, Wessel van Resburg, Madala Kunene, Tlokwe Sehume, Sibongile Khumalo, Gilad Atzmon, Max Roach and Abdullah Ibrahim, Jack De Johnette and Foday Musa Suso, no doubt among many more. Above all Zim Ngqawana and Gonzalo Rubalcaba. I can only hope the rhythm of the writing resonates with something of their timbre and timing, their inimitable spirit.

Bits of argument and versions of chapters were read in public fora far and wide – across the University of California and the United States, repeatedly in the Netherlands, Britain, Sweden, Ireland, and France, as well as in South Africa, China, Singapore, Australia, and Canada. I learned in other ways from workshops in Costa Rica and Mexico. I am grateful to my generous hosts in each instance and to the critical comments, insights, and thoughtful provocations following from these interlocutions that more often than not prompted me to think anew, to revise and reformulate. If the book took longer as a result to complete, it is inordinately the better for it.

The earlier chapters were much improved also by their reading and commentary from my colleagues in the Critical Theory Institute, Irvine. An insight here or revision there found its way into the book prompted by impromptu conversations often in unlikely settings with friends and colleagues Etienne Balibar, Gayatri Spivak, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Judith Butler, and Ackbar Abbas. Close friends read or listened, often repeatedly, to my rantings, gently setting me straight and saving me from embarrassment on matters major and minor. The book would be so much the worse but for Ana Paula Ferreira, Michael Hanchard, Angela Davis, Gina Dent, Geraldine Heng, John and Jean Comaroff, Lisa Lowe, Gabriele Schwab, Saree Makdisi, Ronit Lentin, John Solomos, Michael Keith, and Barnor Hesse. A public conversation with Paul Gilroy organized at the University of Manchester by Virinder Kalra (www.archive.org/details/Goldberg_Gilroy) not only happily renewed an old friendship but led me to rethink a couple of points I had thought settled in my mind.

Sadly, our dear friend Tanya Reinhart passed away suddenly before I could share the chapter on racial palestinianization with her. I learned more casually about matters in that troubled region from Tanya and her partner, the inimitable Israeli poet Aharon Shabtai, than from most all else combined. We miss her immensely.

My day job throughout the conception and composition of this book has been administering a research institute serving all ten campuses of the University of California. The incomparable staff not only invariably lightens the sometime tedium of the day-to-day administrative detail and the everyday challenges of fundraising. They have protected my time from the inevitable intrusions of daily demand, without which the manuscript still would not be complete. An unqualified pleasure to work with, knowing that things will be so well done despite my distractions.

In similar vein, the distractions have often been a consequence of matters unrelated to *The Threat of Race*. Through it all I have worked closely with Cathy Davidson, running a national network promoting work at the interface of the humanities and digital technology, and overseeing a series of grants. Cathy, too, has occasionally suffered my writing distractions when I owed her a response or a proposal draft, despite which she was always one to cheer me to completion, sending me relevant articles or urls pertinent to my argument which proved only all the more distracting from our work together. I have long been fortunate to have fabulous research assistants. Kim Furumoto for the earlier parts of the book and Stefka Hristova more recently have been the best of the best. Both have been more interlocutors than assistants. Stefka has been instrumental in making it possible for me to draw on accompanying images and to design the website to accompany the text (see www.threatofrace.org). Muriam Haleh Davis has repeatedly posed probing questions about the argument and conceptual apparatus, prompting me to be clearer than I otherwise might.

Jayne Fargnoli, editor extraordinaire, left me alone when most others would long have called in the chips, prodded me gently along when others might have chided in frustration, cheered me to the finish line when others might have turned out the light. She exchanged reflections about Shaq and Miami's demise, the Knicks implosion, and the Celtics' ascendancy, just the distraction for an author struggling to find his direction. Or found other Blackwell projects to which I might contribute so as to keep her bosses at bay. When I requested Brigitte Lee Messenger to copy-edit the manuscript, the deed was done. Laboring under her own trying conditions, Brigitte as always lived up to the expectation, and then some.

Throughout I have engaged in spirited conversations with a small group of close confidantes. I have burdened them with drafts of chapters and half-baked ideas, troubled them over details disturbing their own time with half-hearted arguments, often while collaborating on something else entirely. Always they have laughed me through my knots, angling me in corrected

and renewed directions. Donald Moore has borne all of this burdened by the enormous challenges of his own situation, drawing my attention to points overlooked, a nuance by-passed, inevitably to a reference about which I was unaware. Saba Mahmood and Charles Hirschkind gave me a hearing no matter what part of the world to or from which they were rushing. Conversations with my sometimes skeptical son, Gabe, just leaving his teenage years, occasionally kept me from making claims for which my evidence was less than compelling.

Susan Searl Giroux read and taught the manuscript repeatedly, drew my ideas out in an extraordinary interview, found insights in my work I had not known were there.

Over the past number of years now and throughout the book's formulation I have been engaged in a conversation with my dear friend Achille Mbembe ranging across politics and culture, the postcolonial and post-South Africa, conviction and compulsion. It was out of one such critical conversation before students in a graduate course that I thought to write about the political theology of race. These engagements with Achille, teaching and working together in California and Johannesburg, continuing to be moved by his generative writing and probing thought, have conjured ideas that could have come to me in no other way.

And finally, Philomena Essed has listened to me thinking aloud on these issues on a literally daily basis. Always thinking *with* me, she has more often than not offered me the gift of ideas discovered and uncovered, prompted and polished, helping invariably to deepen insight or abandon thoughts with no nuance and less future. The book's title came together only after months of fretting across meals and travels and conversations over an appropriate characterization. As also many a critical turn or subtle twist, a way of looking or a line of argument. Without her boundless care, support, and generosity, this would be a much lesser book, if one at all.

Amsterdam and Irvine
January 2008

Author's Note

We have created a website to accompany *The Threat of Race*:

www.threatofrace.org

While intended as a stand-alone site, it includes images and links to images informing and embellishing the text, in a sense an essay next to and in conversation with the argument in the book. Somewhat experimental in form, it will incorporate also a forum for commentary and ongoing conversation. We hope you consult it and find it an engaging presence.

I am grateful to Stefka Hristova, Erik Loyer, Shane Depner, and Khai Tang without whom it would still be struggling to see the light of day.

In the following pages I include a critical account of the Royal Belgian Museum for Central Africa in the context of discussing colonialism, racial europeanization, and cultural memory (see pp. 169–75). My analysis was composed on the basis of a visit to the Museum and institutional catalogues and materials predating 2007. The Museum has since signaled a comprehensive commitment to renovate the building and reconceive its exhibits. As an announcement greeting visitors to the Museum today declares, "The aim of the restoration and renovation [due to be completed by 2013] is to bring the Museum in tune with the needs and requirements of the 21th [*sic*] century, but without affecting its charm." Finally realizing that the Museum could no longer continue as an unapologetically colonial institution, the permanent and temporary exhibits already seek to indicate that its leaders are grappling with its troubled past. These developments came about too late to incorporate into the pages of this book. Instead, I have composed a brief supplementary reflection on the anxious, ambivalent attempts now being initiated to save the Museum's troubling "charm." The posting appears on the website accompanying this book (see www.threatofrace.org).

1

Buried, Alive

I find theory exasperating. And I find a confident theory even more exasperating.

Derek Walcott

There is an esteemed tradition of working to end racial configuration in societies long marked by it. This tradition emerged out of resistance movements to racial slavery, subordination, suppression, and segregation both in colonial societies and in postcolonizing social arrangements. Commitments to do away with race, consequently, have long been associated with social movements to end racism. Indeed, a primary prompt to end racial classification and configuration is tied to antiracism.

The connection between antiracial conception and antiracist commitment suggests a complexity I am concerned here to explore. For I shall be suggesting that there are crucial moments when the necessity and complexity of this connection are lost sight of, and antiracism reduces primarily, principally, or completely to antiracial commitment, to antiracialism. At these moments, the end of racism is confused with no more than being against race, the end of race substituting to varying degrees for the commitment to – the struggles for – ending racism. The refusal of racism reduces to racial refusal; and racial refusal is thought to exhaust antiracism.

Now, what is refused in this collapse, what buried, what buried alive? What residues of racist arrangement and subordination – social, economic, cultural, psychological, legal, and political – linger unaddressed and repressed in singularly stressing racial demise? What doors are thus closed to coming to terms with historical horrors racially inscribed, and what attendant expressions of racial grief and group melancholia, on one side, and racial self-assertion and triumphalism, on the other, are left unrecognized? What are the implications of this delinking of race from racism, especially under

the contemporary spur of neoliberal socio-economic impetus, for a critical account of the character of the racial state and a critical transformation of racist culture?

Histories

The history of race as an ordering mechanism for modern social arrangement has been widely retold. There is some controversy about the place of race – its conceptual presence, its role, its effects – in what have come to be called the Middle Ages. In the latter part of this period race was emergent rather than fully formed, incipiently invoked to fashion nation formation in the early moments of national elaboration as racial consciousness began to emerge out of – and later can be said to have taken over if not to have replaced – the mix of public religious constitution, the symbolics and architectonics of blood, the naturalizing dispositions – the metaphysics – of hierarchical chains of being, and the ontological orderings in terms of supposedly heritable rationalities. Under medievalism religion was the dominant discourse of public order and intellectual life, while the romantic legends revealed the ways in which public forces got played out in private lives and the imaginary narratives of personal adventure reflected shifting social forces. The sweep from the medieval to the modern, in this sense, can be said to be reflected in the shifts from religion as dominant public frame for structuring and interpreting social life to the civic religion of race as prevailing fabric of public arrangement and imaginative hermeneutics.

Stated thus, it becomes easier to see how much the very notion of the Middle Ages – of an age of darkness caught between the light of classical antiquity and the resurrection of the Renaissance and the learning of the Enlightenment – is so deeply predicated on the presumptive dominance of European historicities, of Euro-dominated temporalities and modernities. And this, in turn, reveals both the centrality of race to the expansive and extensional global order(ing) of European modernity and the (late) modernity of medieval categories of disposition and dominance, imposition and order once racially conceived. To put the latter point another way, as Geraldine Heng has done in her marvelous book, *Empire of Magic*, it could be said that there is much to be learned from medieval narrations about the crusading character of our own all too "medieval" politics of

domination, disorder, and cultures of control – without at the same time insisting that the modern is no more than medieval (though in moments of deep despair about our present I am more than tempted by that counter-evolutionist reductionism).

The notion of race, then, was put to work from the fifteenth century on in the Mediterranean countries, especially Iberian. Race quickly came to mark Europe and its wordly extensions in the colonizing and imperializing societies over the next couple of centuries, especially in the drive to state sovereignty and the subsequent centralizing of the war function under state mandate elaborated so provocatively by Michel Foucault in his 1976 lectures on race and modern state formation, *Society Must Be Defended*. Race acquired a more formal codification and consequently socio-intellectual authority from the eighteenth century onwards, as Foucault remarks, increasingly coming to order centralizing state definition and function, institutionalization and practice.

By the late nineteenth century race had assumed throughout the European orbit a sense of naturalness and commitment, a more or less taken-for-granted marking of social arrangements and possibilities, an assumed givenness and inevitability in the ascription of superiority and inferiority, sameness and difference, civilization and vulgar lack. This supposed naturalness meant the ease of racial reference for the relatively powerful and privileged. This easiness of racial ascription served to hide from view – to hide from and for the more racially powerful themselves – exactly the hard work, conceptually and materially, socially and politically, legally and forcefully, it took to set up and reproduce racial arrangements. Science and literature, scripture and law, culture and political rhetoric all worked in subtle and blunt ways to establish the presumption of white supremacy, to naturalize the status of white entitlement and black disenfranchisement, of European belonging wherever the claim might be staked and of non-European servitude and servility.

European expansion accordingly rationalized its global spread in racial terms. Rationalization through race obviously assumed the form of legitimation, of claiming to render this expansion acceptable, even desirable or necessary, to the perpetrators. But it served also effectively to maximize both the grip on power globally – in the colonies or within the European theater of relations – and relatedly the extraction of profit and accumulation of wealth. By extension, this global colonial spread, commercial interaction, and cultural intertwining prompted conceptual seepage into (former) imperial powers. European engagement and enforcement through

race, in other words, encouraged the adoption and adaptation of racial conceptualization to give sense to and to rationalize long-existing ethno-class and caste relations and tensions in the likes of China, Japan, and India. In these cases of conceptual assumption, race was pressed into work in new ways on the basis of local ecologies encompassing thick histories of excluding those considered alien, ethnoculturally different, and so racially tainted. In these instances race clearly came to be invested with new, if connected, significance. This can be characterized as networks of racial conception and meaning, of racial value and power.

Thus the *labor of race* is the work for which the category and its assumptions are employed to effect and rationalize social arrangements of power and exploitation, violence and expropriation. Race was turned into a foundational code. But as with all foundations (conceptual and material), it had to be cemented in place. Racial thinkers, those seeking to advance racial representation – scientists and philosophers, writers and literary critics, public intellectuals and artists, journalists and clergy, politicians and bureaucrats – for all intents and purposes became the day-laborers, the brick-layers, of racial foundations.

Conceptions

Like many other commentators on racial matters, I am insisting that there is a conceptual distinction to be acknowledged between racial conception and racism. Racial conception, or what some such as Anthony Appiah have called racialism, is the view that groups of people are marked by certain generalizable visible and heritable traits. These generalized traits may be physical or psychological, cultural or culturally inscribed on the body, and the physical and psychological, bodily and cultural traits are usually thought somehow indelibly connected. Thus racialists more often than not think that racial group members share not only these traits but also behavioral dispositions and tendencies to think in certain ways those not so marked do not share. Appiah argues that such views about racial groups – that they share such characteristics, tendencies or traits not shared by non-members – if unaccompanied by consequential claims of inherent inequality or hierarchy do not amount to racism. Such views, while presumptively mistaken, are not as such necessarily dangerous or immoral. What would further mark racial(ist) beliefs as racist, Appiah insists,

would be the added claim to inequality or inferiority as a consequence of being so marked.

In his useful little book, *Racism: A Short History*, George Fredrickson suggests that racism necessarily requires the presumption of inequality or inferiority on the part of those whose assumed difference is deemed intrinsic or unchangeable. But does it?

Consider the racial paternalism of those claiming that others who are supposedly (still) racially immature should be subject to the education and governance of those who take themselves to be racially elevated (a view I have characterized as "racial historicism" in *The Racial State*). The increasingly widespread adoption of racial historicism from the mid-nineteenth century on and its discursive dominance in the latter half of the twentieth century regarding racial matters should serve to qualify the claim that racism necessarily requires a belief in intrinsic or unchangeable inferiority (the view I have called, by contrast, "racial naturalism"). That black or Asian people, as a people, may be thought by racial historicists to be educated ultimately to govern themselves suggests what Ann Stoler calls the "motility" – the shifting meanings and significance – of both racial and racist conception.

The mark of racist expression or belief, then, is not simply the claim of inferiority of the racially different. It is more broadly that racial difference warrants exclusion of those so characterized from elevation into the realm of protection, privilege, property, or profit. Racism, in short, is about exclusion through depreciation, intrinsic or instrumental, timeless or time-bound.

If race (or, ideologically, racialism) is about the manufacture of homogeneities, racisms police their boundaries. Race has historically concerned the fabrication of social homogeneities, their making and their embroidery, arrangement and order, management and commerce. Racism concerns the maintenance of homogeneities' contours, militarizing their borders, patrolling their places of possible transgression.

Underlying racialism, not unlike nationalism, is an abstract presumption of familialism. As Nadia Abu El-Haj remarks in her revealing interrogation of genealogy in the wake of the human genome project, membership criteria "in family, nation and political society are always entangled." The traits or characteristics I take myself to share with those I consider like me conjure an abstract familial connectivity. That I am like them, or they like me, *must* mean that we are familially connected, so to speak. But familiality, by extension, is necessarily conceived, if often silently, by the negation of (racial) otherness, of the differentiated and disconnected,

the unlikened and unrelated. Note here the paradoxical relatedness of the racially denied, the constitutive connectedness of the disconnected, the manufactured fabric of familial distinction.

Abstract familial connection – loosely sharing some traits or characteristics or bordered dispositions – becomes the basis in turn for an abstracted familiarity. This connection is well captured in the extraordinary body of *Casta* painting spanning eighteenth-century Mexico, those elaborations of early racial classification schemes predicated on miscegenation I discuss in the chapter on "racial latinamericanization" below, some of which explicitly linked racial types to behavioral, emotional, and moral characterizations. That we are alike in physically predicated ways is thought to entail that we are alike in other ways also. We share benefits, and no doubt burdens too, in ways family members are presumed to do. And perhaps we share more than this, an intuitive set of sensibilities and sentiments, sensitivities and resentments, likes and dislikes. The hint of concrete connectivity, however slight, becomes invested with value well beyond what the concrete bonds of connectivity alone can sustain. I can presume to know you because your somehow looking like me on supposedly crucial markers (skin color, hair texture, facial shape, mannerisms, ways of speaking, even dress and the like) suggests also social dispositions and perhaps even beliefs. If intuition is nothing more than educated and habituated guess predicated on a degree of familiarity, I can claim to know you intuitively on the basis of presupposing peculiarly to be like you. Affiliation, however flimsy its social basis or status, conjures in such cases presumptive filiation. Race and nation, racism and nationalism run together in just these bonded ways. Familiality, no matter how abstract and imagined, is supposed, it seems, to conjure familiarity.

But familiarity, the idiom would have it, similarly breeds contempt. Contempt in this case, we might ask, for whom? And to what end(s)? For those thrown together with one in some way by circumstance – by the very demands of social constitution, if I am right – and whom one accordingly presumes to know, in character and habit, condition and behavior, prospect and limit. In short, ethnoracially. It is the presumption of knowledge, the fabrication of character for those one knows at best partially, in both senses of the term, which both bears and bares the stigma of race in these instances. The end(s), of course, are varied – exploitation or extermination, use and abuse, assertion and order. In short, violence and property, profit, and power, instrumentally but also for their own sakes. Race feeds, fuels, and funnels violence, property, profit, and power, but can also be their modes of expression, the forms in which they manifest.

It is revealing in this sense to read race conceptually as a term of social geography. I mean this not in the disciplinary but in a normative sense. Race is taken historically as (or in terms of) identifying people geomorphically by their supposed phenotypes in terms of their imputed or implied geographic origins and the cultural characteristics considered to be associated with those geographic identifications, those landscapes and their associate characteristics. A Florida-based company, DNA Printgenomics, is one among a growing industry offering "ancestry testing." This is, as they put it, a "Biogeographical Ancestry analysis," a purported DNA test to establish one's racial ancestry or, in the case of mixed race, ancestral proportions. For a mere $158 you can learn "your percentage" of "African-Indo European-Native American-East Asian" (*sic*). A new biopolitical technology meets an older regime of biopower. Race is defined in reified and presumptive terms of "the five major" continental "races" which its website (www.dnaprint.com) characterizes as "Native American, East Asian, South Asian, European, sub-Saharan, etc." It's the "etc." which is the embezzling genomic insurance policy at work here, for in the additive, as Feyerabend once may have put it, anything goes.

When read as mapping social geography in this way, race is taken both to complement and to counter national formation and character. Those whose "racial origins" are considered geographically somehow to coincide with national territory (or its colonial extension) are deemed to belong to the nation; those whose geo-phenotypes obviously place them originally (from) elsewhere are all too often considered to pollute or potentially to terrorize the national space, with debilitating and even deadly effect. But those belonging racio-nationally also share an extra-national raciality, a super-whiteness, as Etienne Balibar has pointed out, complementing the supraracial nationality. Race figures the national even as it transcends it; and in transcending race gives the nation its transcendental character, its larger, ultimately globally extensionalist imperative. Fashioned in the expansive colonial and imperial laboratories of euro-modernities, there's a sense too in which the logical reach of race was inherently extra-national, was drawn inevitably to fulfill itself colonially, imperialistically.

Counters

If this is the historical logic of racial dominance, it suggests too a feature of racial resistance. On the other side then, it is the refusal of living with

contempt – and, relatedly, with self-contempt – that gives rise, at least initially, to the impetus for antiracist movements. "The other side," otherness, othering are hardly natural categories, as critical intellectual movements of the past 25 years have shown. Resistance and response are necessarily products of the artifice of alterity, of its making and remaking. If I am different – *that* I am different – in just the ways racially marked may well dispose me in a society taking those markers seriously as much to act against the stereotypifying ascriptions as to act on them, to act them out. No transgression without (in this case) racially fashioned normativity. I am racially characterized, therefore I (am presumed, expected, in fact seen to) think (or not) and act accordingly. And perhaps I do, self-consciously or not.

"I have incisors to bare," Fanon remarks cuttingly, in response to a white French child exclaiming as he might at the zoo, "Look, Mama, a Negro!" Fanon's incisive response – "I bite" – signals acting on, and out, the reifying stereotype, here both racial and racist, and undercutting it, bringing the reader up short, raising the stakes not just of visiting but of creating the zoo or zoo-like environment. If you think there are animals here, the animals bite back.

The weight of race

These tensions between cutting and biting back, alterity and counter, distantiation and embrace – existential as much as analytic, perhaps analytic because existential – reveal what I want to characterize as *the weight of race*. Race is heavy. But the heaviness is layered, volume piled upon mass, the layers or strata composed of varying substances and differentially born. "White man's burden" was the racially historicist rationalization common in the nineteenth century for both the effort and profit of colonial rule. European settlers and colonial rulers were exhorted to sacrifice in the name of empire, just as they were encouraged to educate the less civilized and immature with the view to eventual self-rule (once the cost-benefit calculus of colonial rule tipped precariously away from metropolitan advantage). The weight here was taken to be borne exclusively upon those sagging shoulders of Charles Atlas.

The abolitionist movements, slaves uniting in resistance with white conscience and longer-term self-interest, were the first to reveal in a public way how the load of race weighed so much more heavily upon its

targeted populations. Bodies beaten and broken, spirits sagged, life-spans artificially and dramatically limited, whatever prospects for whatever slither of prosperity sliding from grasp because of the racial weights pulling one back. Fingers clawing at the soft sand to pull one onto the bank, to a resting place, a restful place, as the cement about ankles or sand bags upon backs drag one into water already so dark with the bodies of those made kin through race.

The weight of race, as Bourdieu might have put it. That weight borne, as I say, differentially, borne by some for others, killing many for the sake of some, for the salvage and resource and supposed security of those whose weight is borne upon the backs of others. Sometimes a dead weight, one made heavier because the breath has been squeezed out of its subjects, shifting the bearing from those whose fingers have let go, too broken to grab on, to those left clinging, scratched and scarred, half ashore. The weight shifted to those etched with the grief of witness and memory, but also to those forced to grapple with the burden of tasks for which they have been left or left themselves unprepared. The weight of race lingering between the scales of justice bound by a past, present, and future, distributed and redistributed between those marked indelibly by history and those seeking incurably to remake themselves outside of history's cast, untouched by the shadow of their past.

I think here of the differential effects of racial weights taking their toll on blacks and whites respectively in the wake of the vicious murder of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas in 1998, as reflected in the revealing documentary, *Two Towns of Jasper* (2002). Or even more recently of the differentiated weights distributed across targets of the "war on terrorism" and the "clash of fundamentalisms" falling overwhelmingly on Muslims or those mistaken for or identified with them. How in these tensions of racial burden to shed the weight of race?

Though there is a clear conceptual distinction we must mark between race and racism, they are deeply connected conceptually and politically. It may be impossible always – ever? – to sustain the distinction historically and politically. The weight of race is at once a racist weight. A different, if related, metaphor may be equally revealing. Race is the glove in which the titanic, the weighty, hand of racism fits. The cloth may be velvet but it is studded with spikes and soaked in blood. Antiracism, it seems, is at once antiracialism, at least to the degree of de-spiking the glove. Whether the glove, once defanged, can be washed of its bloody legacy remains an open question. But the larger lingering if too often liminal question is whether

antiracialism, as so many contemporary commentators and politicians would have it, suffices as a response to the history of racisms.

Antiracialism, antiracism

Antiracialism is to take a stand, instrumental or institutional, against a concept, a name, a category, a categorizing. It does not itself involve standing (up) against (a set of) conditions of being or living, as it is not always clear what those conditions might in fact be for which race is considered to stand as a sort of shorthand. Is antiracialism a counter to claims about biology, or a counter to a social/cultural set of articulations, a mode of expression or its lack, a sense of naturalized entitlement or historically ordered incapacity?

Antiracism, by contrast, conjures a stance against an imposed condition, or set of conditions, an explicit refusal or a living of one's life in such a way one refuses the imposition, whether one is a member of the subjugated population or the subjugating one. It is an insistence that one not be reduced, at least not completely, to or by the implications marked by the imposition and constraint, by the devaluation and attendant humiliation. At the limit, antiracism is the risk of death, the willingness to forego life, perhaps at once the measure of the severity of the imposition, dislocation, and curtailment, and of the seriousness of the commitment. There clearly is no evidence of antiracialism ever commanding that sort of risk.

Since their solidification as coherent social movements in the abolitionist struggles of the nineteenth century, there have been three significant periods of broad *antiracist* mobilization: abolitionism throughout the nineteenth century; anticolonialism and the civil rights movements from roughly the 1920s through the 1960s; and the anti-apartheid and the multicultural movements of the 1970s to the 1990s.

The Haitian Revolution (1791–1803) seeking independence from enslaving French rule might be said to mark the initiation also of antiracist movements. Embracing the racial ambiguities of both American and French Revolutions regarding human and political equality and the Rights of Man, abolitionist slave revolts followed the Haitian example throughout the European orbit, marking most of the nineteenth century. They sought to throw off the yokes of degradation, alienation, economic exploitation, political and legal subordination that combined to fashion the peculiar mode, style, and substance of racist subjugation. The slave revolts thus were not

only about inclusion or incorporation into Euro-dominant social orders and civil societies but the very transfiguration of the given and the commonplace, of civil society and the state.

Abolitionism, especially in the form of the slave revolts and accompanying maroon secessions, thus constitutes the first of the three major historical examples of antiracist commitment and struggle I am seeking to identify here. Abolitionism, of course, aimed first and foremost to end institutionalized slavery. But the institutionalization of slavery – capture and trade, degradation and exploitation, servility and abuse, violence, the imposition of power, and foreshortened lives – was predicated upon and enacted through racial technologies. Abolitionism accordingly assumed by necessity antiracist disposition, at least in the sense of resisting the balder, more aggressive, and more obvious forms of racial terror. The progressive products of these brave and often dangerous abolitionist social movements were palpable and remarkable. Between the outlawing of slave-trading throughout the British empire (1807) in the wake of the Haitian tragedy and the eventual abolition of slavery in Cuba (1886) and Brazil (1888), the ending of slavery throughout the extended European empire and its satellite societies was effected by the courageous efforts of many men and women, enslaved and free alike. Those hitherto regarded as somehow less than human were admitted, at least nominally, into the family of Man. Their consequent human and legal rights and protections could no longer be denied on the basis of their presumptive inhumanity or natural depravity. Slave-based societies gave way throughout the British, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Portuguese empires. Ultimately, slave-holding and trading were outlawed also in the German and Belgian cases, as well as in the major slave-holding settler societies of the Americas, most notably the United States and Brazil. By the turn to the twentieth century, racially driven enslavement seemed a thing of history.

If abolitionism was the first broad antiracist mobilization, the anticolonial and civil rights struggles amounted to the second. The two – a global anticolonial struggle figured most visibly in Africa and Asia, and the civil rights struggles in the United States – can be thought together here precisely because they are so deeply interconnected historically and conceptually, geopolitically and existentially. This connection should come as no surprise. Colonialism was factored constitutively around racial conception and configuration. How colonizing metropoles and their agents thought about race determined directly the very structures of colonial order and arrangement. And how nationally configured colonies came to be structured

influenced the ways in which class, gender, and social relations generally got to be thought and enacted in the colonizing and structuring metropoles. The circulation between national metropole and colonies of state agents and advisors, politicians and civic leaders, corporate entrepreneurs and opportunists, but also intellectuals and churchmen, academics and activists, prompted common conversations both about the structuring of racially repressive regimes and the struggle to undo them. Colonization was racially mandated, mediated, and managed; and racial rule in the colonies shored up and was used to rationalize racial repression in the national metropoles. Racial comprehension, practical as much as theoretical, institutional as much as instrumental, was at the center of both.

The histories of colonial conditions were constitutively tied to the racial histories of metropolitan shaping. The circulation of slave and indentured labor from Africa and Asia to metropolitan Europe and especially the Americas indicates the depth of those linkages. It reveals the causal connections between sources of labor supply, raw materials, and later markets for the making and selling of metropolitan goods, and so the source of metropolitan national wealth and at least economic wellbeing. Global connectivity, interactivity, and mutual constitutiveness were long in place before the notion of globalization became vogue. And racial understanding and its subjugating and exploitative effects were the fabric – that glove I mentioned metaphorically above – of this global connectedness.

In any case, the constitutive connections between American antiracist mobilizations and anticolonial activities were already prefigured in and through the mutual presence at the 1911 Races of Man Congress in London and the ensuing Pan Africanist Congresses of early American antiracist activists like W. E. B. Du Bois and Mary White Ovington, anticolonialists like Kwame Nkrumah (later the first President of free Ghana, who had graduated from an historically black American university), academics like Franz Boas, anti-imperialists like Karl Kautsky, and pacifists like post-World War II Japanese Prime Minister, Kijuro Shidehara. Those working against postbellum racism, segregationism, and accommodationism in the US were already in deep conversation from the early years of the twentieth century with African and Asian anticolonial activists, intellectuals, and leaders. These global meetings constituted a laboratory of antiracist, anticolonial, and anti-imperial ideas, commitments, and organizing.

By extension, anticolonial mobilization gets going as a movement – really a set of movements – just as the civil rights movement in the United States gathers steam, fueled by common cause(s) but then also by the growing

en*courage*ment of their respective, if relative, successes. The early mobilizations in each, between, during, and in the immediate aftermath of the two world wars, set the stage for developments in the 1950s and 1960s. These early developments included most notably growing anticolonial assertiveness throughout the various colonial domains and a gathering number of early legal victories around labor (in the 1930s), housing, and educational concerns (in the 1940s) in the US. Nkrumah, Kaunda, and other notable younger African anticolonialists engaged Du Bois at the Manchester Pan-African Congress over which the latter presided in 1945. In the triangulation of the Black Atlantic, Césaire and later Fanon, for example, left Martinique for Africa via Paris, and Fanon spent his dying days in New York; Du Bois circulated between Eastern US urban centers, Germany, Paris and London, and ultimately Ghana. After his legal education in London, Ghandi famously tested his commitment to non-violent resistance in British-ruled South Africa before unsettling colonial India as the principled voice for independence. These circuits of discursive and activist mobilization, multiplied through many biographies and the specificities of particular national sites and struggles, translated in turn into circles of interactive antiracist struggle.

Such interactive movements on the ground were accompanied respectively by the self-defining but also mutually influencing intellectual movements of the New Negro and Negritude. The New Negro, of course, dates back in definition to the earlier period of the Harlem Renaissance, its first formulation in an essay penned by the philosopher Alain Locke in 1925, "Enter the New Negro," and later that year in Locke's widely circulated edited book by the three-worded expression of that title. While emerging from overlapping intellectual and political sources, the discursive influence of "the New Negro" on the conception of the Negritude movement has been variously noted, indeed by principals such as Senghor himself. By the early 1930s, many of the primary writers of the Harlem Renaissance were being read by young African intellectuals studying in Europe, prompted by the presence both of black American cultural producers in Paris, London, and Berlin and of Caribbean and African intellectuals in New York. Aimé Césaire, the first to coin the term "Negritude," in a poem in 1939, had actually written a dissertation in 1930 on the Harlem Renaissance, and was fully informed both regarding the conceptual apparatus and its intellectual, existential, and political commitments, adapting them to the specific conceptual conditions of African anticolonial and antiracist struggles. These ideas spurred, in turn, projects in the 1960s and 1970s by African

Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians (AIM), for example, to shake the dominance of Euro-America, whether conceptually or materially, politically and institutionally.

Both anticolonial and civil rights mobilizations need to be viewed, then, as vigorous, influential, and effective antiracist movements. Anticolonialism, of course, was principally directed at effecting national independence while the civil rights movement was aimed first and foremost at national integration. Both nevertheless sought to undo the histories of racially ordered social structures, legal enforcements, group-driven exclusions, conceptual colonialisms, and racially indexed foreshortened lives in the metropoles as much as in the colonies. Both sought to "decolonize the imagination" and to "provincialize Europe" (which is also to say to deprovincialize what is not European). In this, they sought to strip from the racially subjugated the imposition of infantilizing and demeaning self-conceptions, with varying degrees of success and less dramatic transformative influence on the imaginaries of the oppressing classes. Where anticolonialism altered the geopolitical status quo with palpable implications for former colonial subjects, the civil rights movement altered the political terrain in the US with equally mixed effect for America's racially disadvantaged.

The third antiracist movement I identified above, anti-apartheid, dates back at least to the earliest days of the apartheid regime in the early 1950s. As a broad-based social movement, nevertheless, anti-apartheid is to be comprehended as the combined legacy of the anticolonial and civil rights mobilizations. Global anti-apartheid mobilization, in short, acquires its fuel in the 1970s, especially in the wake of the mid-decade urban youth uprisings in South Africa, and flourishes above all in the form of township refusal, gathering divestment campaigns, cultural and sports boycotts, and growing global isolation throughout the 1980s. It is as a qualitatively distinct if connected mobilization, accordingly, that I consider the anti-apartheid movement to constitute the third major historical moment of antiracist commitment and expression.

Anti-apartheid struggles galvanized a sense of the deep relation of antiracism to democratic political definition; they made palpable the integral connection of antiracist commitments in one part of the world to a progressively transformative politics around race in all other societies marked by the weight of racist histories; and they held out the firm promise that centuries of racist power, privilege, profit, and property would be redressed in some appropriate if not too socially disruptive ways. Those in Europe and North America especially who joined vigorous

anti-apartheid protests were driven by a moral and political outrage at apartheid's premises and violently imposed power in South Africa and by the promise, if often only symbolic, of securing racial justice in their own societies. And those governments worldwide that joined the more or less formal diplomatic protest against the apartheid state by imposing travel restrictions or ultimately sanctions were prompted as much by geostrategic realpolitik as by moral outrage and the attempt to appease local national protest and to delink local racial injustices from the volatile mix.

The anti-apartheid struggles, in turn, were linked complexly, as spark and as fuel, as cause and effect, as warrant and as content of multicultural mobilizations wherever those of European descent had ruled on the basis of their ethnoracial (self-)determination. Multicultural movements of the 1980s and 1990s accordingly are to be understood, at least, as the at once irreducible supplement to anti-apartheid antiracisms. Multiculturalisms of course were prompted and fueled as much locally as by these transnational trends to which I am pointing – by the perceived limits of class-determined politics, the fading of the force of trades unions, by circulating migrations, enlarging circles and circulations of globalizing economies and cultures, and by a refusal to be bound by the racial restrictions of past dispensations. This is not to say that what others such as Peter Caws and Stuart Hall have characterized as the "descriptive multicultural" or modern demographic diversity doesn't have a much longer history in western metropoles such as London and Amsterdam, Paris and New York, but notably also in colonial capitals in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas, dating back at least to the early onset of European modernities. These urban environments attracted and threw together in more or less vigorous interaction and cultural clash people from across broad swaths of the world in trade and social interaction, political tension and intimate intercourse, intellectual engagement and epistemological distinction, linguistic multiplicity and cultural translation.

Notwithstanding, increasingly self-conscious multicultural social, cultural, and political *movements* are a relatively recent phenomenon, as noted. They take on a characteristic specificity in the context of local, national, and state conditions, globally influenced and textured. The racial dimensions of multicultural developments, themselves complex, may have been inherited in the 1970s and 1980s from anticolonial and civil rights reinventions, but such antiracist prompts were impassioned by re-viewing civil rights and anticolonial commitments in light of the anti-apartheid legacy of the 1980s. Anti-apartheid, then, became the latest way of speaking back,

attempting to prise loose the grip of racial effects as much in the form of a dynamic and vibrant multiculturalism on the postcolonial metropoles and its satellites as on apartheid South Africa.

Anticolonial movements often gave way in the former colonies eventually to what Achille Mbembe has insightfully characterized as "the postcolony." In the worst cases, these are withering, debilitating, and abandoned spaces rather than conditions promoting economic independence, demographic upliftment, and the promise of human flourishing. In the extreme they feature the demise of state formation itself, the erosion of all state services and solidarities, safety nets and social securities. Postcolonies are marked by a mix of local affiliations to more or less powerful protective syndicates headed by an aggressive patriarchal figure offering security for those falling under the force of his militia together with the terror among those who invoke his wrath or happen to embody abandoned or unfavorable characteristics, cultures, or affiliations. Of course, not all formerly colonial states have suffered these extreme effects. However, neoliberal economic policies imposed by the dominant powers and global economic institutions upon marginalized economies and societies have tended to push a number of descriptively postcolonial states – those which for various reasons have remained marginal to the extractive conditions of neoliberalizing global political economy – to more or less repressive or anarchic postcolonies.

The civil rights movement in the US, by contrast, clearly has had significantly better if still decidedly mixed results. It has helped to consolidate a more ethnoracially diversified middle class with some economic access and local political power but with definitive limits at the broader national level. These affirmations are offset, nevertheless, by the increasing numbers of impoverished and deprived families of color and a ballooning prison population overwhelmingly black and Latino. The civil rights movement nonetheless managed to invigorate broad antiracist sensibilities alongside expanded civil rights for all, and served as a beacon of sorts, even if a tenuous one, for global standards of ethnoracial civility.

In the wake of anticolonial and civil rights successes, it turns out, there emerged dramatically increased demographic diversification in the former metropolitan colonizing powers as a result of new waves of economic migration, refugees from repression and war, and metropolitan demands for labor in the face of their own aging populations. Multicultural movements thus are cultural expressions of increasing demographic diversity complemented by a more vigorous class mobilization than previously experienced. Multiculturalism sought to secure and embody these ethnoracial shifts in

social culture and institutions, to open up socio-cultural arrangements and institutional life to a more diverse set of habits and practices, thus wresting definitional power from narrow homogeneous restriction, repression, and control. In the worst cases, though, multiculturalism has served as a form of appeasement for those increasingly left behind as well as convenient public relations and advertising modalities for corporate interests.

Generalizabilities

A number of general considerations are to be noted about all of the antiracist historical movements I identify here. First, antiracist movements were fueled in all three moments by broad trans-racial, multi-gendered, and generally cross-class coalitions, whether within or across societies. Shored up by international capital and the local racial structures and expressive cultures thus produced and sustained, racial slavery, colonialism, segregation, and apartheid could only be confronted effectively by such broad coalitional mobilization. Abolitionism ultimately was a mix of brave black, brown, and white women and men saving lives via underground railroads, while risking reputations, social status, and life itself over national borders and across oceans.

Anticolonialism and civil rights struggles were global movements. Men, women, and even children engaged in trans- and inter- and multi-racial mobilizations regarding Africa and African America, Asia and Latin America, often (though not always) with a feminist thrust. Long guerilla campaigns in Kenya or Zimbabwe, Algeria or Angola, Mozambique or Vietnam, and a long march in China were matched by civil rights marches in Selma or on Washington, confronting cannon fire in the one instance and water cannon in the other. Anti-apartheid mobilizations offered an even more robust multi-dimensional global and cross-racial movement alongside township mass mobilization beneath asphyxiating tear gas and uprisings before the gun turrets of "Casspirs full of love," as the noted South African artist William Kentridge has ironically put it. These local South African anti-apartheid expressions were joined by multicultural mass rallies in Trafalgar Square, student divestment campaigns on American campuses, art exhibits in Paris and Amsterdam, not to mention Cuban and Palestinian, African-American and Afro-Brazilian solidarities. Antiracist mobilizations were necessarily linked (or served as a prelude) to more obviously

recognizable multiculturalisms and, indeed, in many and varied instances their repressions.

Second, like racisms, antiracism in each of these instances is a name for a range of conceptions, activities and practices, coalitions and organizations. As antiracist they share the commitment to undo racism. But it should be self-evident from the above account that what might be meant by the designation, what means might properly be employed, and who might be legitimate contenders as well as objects of critique and action differ on a more or less case-by-case basis. For all this range, however, these antiracist social movements were *political* struggles, in Dipesh Chakrabarty's sense of the term, struggles over the terms of self-representation and self-determination, for "full participation in the political life of the nation."

Third, while it may seem obvious in all three cases that antiracist struggle is also antiracial struggle, this connection in fact is not always so straightforward or clear. Consider the shift from racial naturalism to historicism, from the inherent inferiority claim fueling racial slavery and apartheid to the claim of historical immaturity and unskilled ineptitude, even if admitted moral equality, underpinning much of the white and bourgeois abolitionist movement, condescending anticolonialisms, and the less affirming expressions of the affirmative action debate. Or consider yet again and more recently the begrudging white ceding of political power in the face of apartheid's demise. In the historicist and post-apartheid instances, whites no longer bedeviled blacks by explicit insults of inherent ineptitude so much as they damned them to ongoing impoverishment by dismissals of their lingering lack of skill rationalized away by claims to cultural poverty. In doing so, they were reserving to themselves the differential power to compete and consume, to define and determine.

So, fourth (and as a prelude to the fifth point), all the antiracist social movements were committed to transforming the racial status quo, the prevailing set of stultifying and subjugating conditions of existence for those deemed not white. What the movements ended up doing in each instance, not insignificantly but also revealingly, was to admit, all too often begrudgingly, those hitherto excluded into social arrangements and conditions the definitions of which continued to be dominated by those who had held racial power in the first place. This nominal admission was, for the most part, principally legal. Political, social, and cultural recognition and access were much less compelling and so more ambivalent. What changed little or less so were the criteria of incorporation and the defining power over those criteria. This insistence on controlling the criteria of