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The State of Race

Edited by Nisha Kapoor,
Virinder S. Kalra and James Rhodes

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The State of Race

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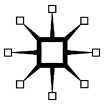

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Introduction: The State of Race

Nisha Kapoor and Virinder S. Kalra

The context

As the turn of the twenty-first century marked a significant shift in geopolitical frameworks, namely from communism to Islamism as the targeted enemy of the West, together with the advancement of neoliberalism on a global level, so the politics of racisms in Britain entered a new moment. Shortly following the 2001 riots in the northern towns of Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, the 9/11 attacks on the US came to denote a defining moment for the re-framing of race-relations policy in Britain. Just as the label 'mugging' came to symbolise, represent and thus mobilise a whole referential context of black ghettos, urban crime, drug addiction and related criminalisation, and a decline in 'law and order' in the 1960s and 1970s (Hall et al. 1978), so in 2001 the terms 'terrorist' and 'terrorism' came into play on new levels to mobilise the cultural context of panic and fear of the suicide bomber, of endless war on our doorstop anytime, anyplace, and of a barbarian, backward, premodern, uncivilised culture threatening 'our' way of life. This phantasm, a threat imagined, has justified an associated escalation of state militarisation and securitisation for the purposes of retaining 'law and order'. The shift from mugger to terrorist equated to a shift from the 'criminal' to the 'unlawful enemy combatant', a shift from an object whose crime could be dealt with within the law to an object that ultimately required suspension of the law (or its extension) in order to curtail legal rights and freedoms. The mobilisation and manipulation of the law to protect the sovereign and target the enemy, in essence the blurring boundaries of legality and illegality, has created an unprecedented institutionalisation of the state of exception – the normalisation of the state of exception, if you will. The heightened level of panic created by the boundless,

amorphous, global War on Terror has been tapped into regionally and globally to legitimate and justify the implementation of a permanent police state. This managed state response is of course complicated by the specifics of the political economy of our times. The rapid advancement in biotechnologies now available to govern, monitor and control enable the practice of much more sophisticated biopolitics, increasingly covert in their implementation even as they are ever more intrusive.

So the War on Terror in the colony saw to the creation of a label, then 'ready-made' for its mobilisation to govern 'the terrorist' at home. The technologies used to discipline and control and the ideologies which inform strategies for war have been transferred to the home front. Post 9/11, we witnessed a rethinking of the way in which (British)Muslims would be besieged and disciplined in Britain, as they became the targeted enemy within. Much work was done to construct the figure of the 'terrorist threat' which encompassed drawing on age-old notions of the oriental Muslim; the male simultaneously barbaric, pre-modern, hyper-aggressive and hyper-sexualised, whilst also displaying homophobic and patriarchal tendencies denying the Muslim woman – veiled, submissive and without her own agency –the rights and freedoms deemed the foundations of liberal, democratic civilisations. The potential violence of 'the terrorist' became the cash cow for Western allies, particularly the US and Britain, which mobilised such a threat to step up their programmes of militarisation and the securitisation of everyday life. The response of the state and key political commentators was to argue the failure of, and consequently to call for an end to, multiculturalism as a state response to governing racialised minorities. The new approach was a politics of integrationism (Kundnani 2007) which in essence brought to the forefront, yet again, the problem of 'cultural difference', artificially posing a clash of Islamic and Western belief systems as reasons for social tensions and unrest, prompting instead a series of measures designed to promote the Britishness of Britain's Muslim citizens. As the politics of integrationism set to pummel out any allegiance British Muslims might have to diasporic links abroad, or indeed to mute them from speaking out against Britain's attacks on fellow Muslims in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere, this reinvigoration of (racist) British nationalism went hand in hand with a strategy of heightened discipline and control.

Framed through the state's revised Counter-terrorism Strategy, (CONTEST), which encompasses the four central themes of Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare, the War on Terror in Britain is fought as much within the state's welfare functions as within its policing arms. The strategy of pre-emptive action, from which 'Prevent' takes

its cue, has been rolled out through schools and youth clubs as well as higher education, just as we have witnessed a glut of terrorism legislation and escalation of police powers. We find ourselves in a moment where our children are actively taught to be aware of potential 'terrorist threats' just as they are taught to be aware of the dangers of crossing the road; where Muslim girls in particular are taught to play their role in the prevention of terrorism; and where teachers, many of whom have never been in contact with Muslim communities in their personal everyday lives, are trained in how to identify indications of 'extremism and radicalisation' amongst their students, while anti-racist education and training receives scant mention or attention. It is a situation where youth workers are expected to exploit the trust they have developed with young people, as youth-services provision is eroded to a bare minimum, to spy and report on any suspect behaviour. It is a state where protocols are sent out to universities setting out guidelines and recommendations for monitoring Muslim students and societies, encouraging campus police patrolling for this very purpose. And it is a state which actively encourages community self-policing, whether it be for users of public transport to be extra vigilant and report anyone or anything which embodies 'suspicion' or the Muslim communities themselves to scrutinise each other using spy boxes placed in mosques. This indoctrination of threat and suspicion is then backed up by the conflation of 'hard' and 'soft' policing which sees to the increasing use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras, the proliferating use of stop and search, control orders, detention without trial and a drastic removal of legal (and human) rights. Thus, there can be no doubt that the most pervasive form of racism in the current political moment is that conducted through the War on Terror which centres the Muslim as the ultimate folk devil. Yet this focus, which dominates the narratives in this book, sits alongside continuities of racist institutional practices and responses that are all too familiar. As racism extends to the new, it of course builds on the old, so that its articulations and representations overlap as they also reform, becoming ever more complex. The cause and response to the urban disturbances of 2011 and the media hysteria around sexual exploitation are cases in point.

On 4 August 2011, Mark Duggan, a young black man from Tottenham, was shot dead by the police. The operation, involving officers from the specialist firearms team CO19 and from Operation Trident, a police initiative which specifically targets black communities for gun crime, sparked uproar in the local black community as they confronted yet

another incident of police brutality. It seemed that despite key historical moments which have unveiled entrenched institutional racism within the police and wider state structures, the most infamous example in recent history being the 1999 Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, confrontation with and criminalisation by the police has remained a long-standing, all too regular experience of black youth. This incident was a frequently familiar, almost normalised interaction which informs the statistics that tell us that in 2011 black people were 30 times more likely to be stopped and searched than whites under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice Public Order Act 1994, up from an 11 to 1 ratio in 2009 (Delsol 2012). The increasing use of the notorious Section 60, which permits police officers to stop and search without reasonable suspicion, was a reminder that racial injustices are ever present and, indeed, on the rise. While powers to assist and arm the police have reached hitherto unprecedented levels and granted them exceptional liberties, the racial pathologisation of black youth as 'folk devils', gangsters, and drug dealers, and, generally, as culturally degenerate, was as evident in the popular and media narration of the 2011 riots which followed as it was in the 1980s.

In the year following the riots, another repetition of popular racist sentiment took hold of public discourse. In May 2012, when nine Asian men from Rochdale were found guilty of a variety of offences relating to child sexual exploitation, a huge national debate was prompted concerned with 'Asian grooming', reviving the colonial dichotomy of effeminate/ hyper-sexual Asian males (Kalra 2009). Spurred on by both the extreme-right British National Party (BNP) and the English Defence League (EDL), who protested that 'Our Children are not Halal Meat', and by the more liberal voice of the former head of Barnardo's, Martin Narey, who had pointed out that the street grooming of teenage girls in northern towns was overwhelmingly carried out by Asian men, the national press were forthright in posing key questions, such as 'are there more Asians involved in this kind of crime than might be expected, as a proportion of the population?' And, if so, 'are there any cultural factors that would account for it?' (Vallely 2012). A clear pathologisation of Asian men as sexually deviant with little respect for women went hand in hand with the denunciation of Asian women as submissive, veiled and abject, who were silenced in the debate which centred on the honour of white women. The current conjuncture reminds us that demeaning and degrading cultural representations of the racial outcast are alive and well.

Race in the current conjuncture

Stuart Hall noted in the 1970s that 'Racism is always historically specific ... Though it may draw on the cultural and ideological traces which are deposited in a society by previous historical phases, it always assumes specific forms which arise out of the present – not the past – conditions and organisation of society' (1978, p. 26). The present moment finds us under the radar of what has been termed 'advanced' neoliberalism, the neoliberal crises 'several stages further on' (Hall 2011). If neoliberalism's main objective was to reduce barriers to global flows of capital so that it could roam freely across borders, finding new workforces, new markets, new resources to exploit, as David Theo Goldberg (2009) has noted, it also required greater security from perceived threats (racially perceived and defined) both within and outside the state. The central role of the state was thus restructured from welfarism to securitism, or as Goldberg has articulated, from that of 'caretaker' to 'traffic cop' (2009, p. 334), where we witness the rapid erosion and/or militarisation of all social welfare arms of the state. Consequently, while race remains a key structuring condition of state formation – now driving the neoliberalism of the late-modern capitalist state, just as it organised modern state formation – the level at which it operates has altered significantly. In yet another moment of deep structural adjustment and economic stagnation, the realities of high unemployment, cuts to the welfare system, and the erosion of higher education, a time period characterised by austerity, we find the British state increasingly withdrawing from all aspects of social provision whilst ring-fencing and bolstering counter-terrorism budgets.

Yet, just as the state has shifted the way in which it packages and employs racisms, there prevails an oppressive and suffocating discourse which states that race is no longer relevant, that we are 'post-race' in a similar fashion to being 'post-colonial' and 'post-apartheid'. In September 2010, *Prospect Magazine*, for example, published a dossier entitled 'Rethinking Race' which consisted of articles by four 'postrace' Asian and black professionals. All four argued that racism was no longer so salient, but that the increase in monitoring required under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 had promoted a climate of suspicion and fear wherein racism was arising from its mere endorsement as a discourse; that is, through the state's encouragement to name racism, racism was being created. While the limited articulation of racism as an individual act or attitude was nothing new, the significance of this

publication was its reflection of a much wider discourse on race and racism that has come to dominate and characterise the first decade of the twenty-first century. David Cameron, echoing this sentiment, appeared outside Downing Street in the aftermath of the 2011 riots, clearly stating that they were not race riots or a reflection of prevailing racial injustice and inequality, but an example of moral breakdown and criminality.

While the discourse of postraciality has received increasing attention in US popular, political and intellectual circles, this framing has to date been granted much less focus in British scholarly work, despite the fact that it is being increasingly adopted as political rhetoric to describe the contemporary moment. The problematic of the 'postrace' discourse comes to light when one considers the large discrepancies between racial rhetoric and racial experience, where for many racialised minorities ongoing racial stratification and injustice mean that conditions have largely remained unaltered or have worsened under present systems. It is this dichotomy which has been defined as the present racial crisis (Winant 2004), and a situation which remains unexamined. This collection seeks to address the gap in the literature by offering insightful theoretical and empirical contributions largely focusing on the British context. While there is a need to be alert to the nuances between the different racial state projects, this collection offers an important contribution to the international 'postrace' debate from a British perspective.

Aims of the book

The aim of this collection is to bring together a series of responses and reflections that provide a counterweight to this 'end of racism' agenda, and to make a much-needed intervention into the plethora of identity work which has largely come to dominate intellectual approaches to race in Britain. Almost nurturing the postrace mentality, the pervasiveness of identity politics as a means of addressing race foregoes the much deeper, entrenched forms of state racism which continue to inform the lived realities of many. At times, it could be characterised as a 'cultural studies lost', both from its roots and in terms of its future direction. Countering the reductionist tendency to see folks as the product of their position in the racial hierarchy – over-determined as victims and partial people – the necessity of the cultural turn formed part of the need for redress, to be addressed as fully human. Potent critiques of the nation emerged from this demand to be recognised, and race talk punctured settled notions of belonging, indicating some possibilities of a planetary humanism (Gilroy 2000). In the meantime, the inexorable inertia of

state racism pushed on but with a more subtle veneer, and the presence of brown and black bodies, space invaders, lent the core institutions valuable cover stories (Puwar 2004). But as 'race-as-identity' work pushed towards achieving recognition and equality of representation, academic discourse caught in the necessity of producing innovation and novelty, at times of an ever-irrelevant kind, has been unable to catch up with the rampant exertion of state intervention in its punitive and coercive capacities that has come to mark the contemporary period. The continuing necessity of tackling the vicissitudes of the nation, should not mean a neglect of the role of the state. And it is in this vein that this volume is produced; it is primarily concerned with articulating race as it works in the discursive and material terrain of the state and its particular institutions. Its mission is thus to reflect upon and critique the contemporary 'state of race'.

A number of topics which have forefronted the politics of race in Britain over the last decade occupy these reflections. Since the election of New Labour in 1997, we have witnessed one of the most turbulent periods for the politics of race in the UK. The 9/11 and 7/7 attacks, continued urban unrest, the rise of the BNP and the EDL, the War on Terror, the politics of asylum, and the 'crisis of multiculturalism', all represent the reconfiguration of the politics of race and are discussed within our narratives of the racial present. The particularity of the cases is punctuated by an understanding that European-wide policy on integration and cohesion is often informed by the supposed 'progressive' stance of the UK. Mirza and Sirryeh's chapters address this wider context in relation to Muslim women and asylum seekers. The presence of the European court and the wider integration of individual states into extradition processes also frames the debate in Kapoor's chapter. This international comparative dimension is also present in Rhodes, who looks at the discourse of whiteness across the Atlantic. Indeed, the collection begins with Goldberg's reflections of the postracial in the USA and how this can be refracted into the European context.

David Theo Goldberg's work has been influential and instrumental in asserting the role of the state in creating and maintaining racial difference. His opening chapter considers some of the shifting contours of the 'postrace' debate in the USA, discussing how it reflects upon, but also alters and shapes, the neoliberal order. In particular, the election of Barack Obama in 2008 has led to what Goldberg has deemed the 'postracial', a mash-up of the hitherto known racial order, where public discourse has become much more explicitly racist compared with the 1960s, yet where the presence of racism is routinely denied, disavowed

and deflected. In keeping with the neoliberalisation of the state and the subsequent individualisation of the social, the postracial creates epistemological and ontological confusions. Goldberg illustrates this schematic with examples from the USA, Europe and elsewhere, setting a larger frame for the subsequent chapters, which are mainly focused on Britain. Indeed, the second chapter, penned by Gargi Bhattacharyya, takes up some of the key insights into postracial neoliberalism and questions their applicability to the British context. Crucially, the usefulness of these concepts is tested on the ground of the rhetoric of austerity and a massive withdrawal of state funding from the provision of social goods. It is the presence of a welfare state that perhaps most distinctly marks the UK from the USA, and it is to the dismantling and reorienting towards the free market of institutions such as the National Health Service (NHS) that so marks the contemporary period for Bhattacharyya. There is, then, the reappearance in economically difficult times of what are termed older forms of racism, the crass division between insider and outsider rendered in popular culture through issues of criminality and immigration. This sits alongside newer forms of racism targeted at the alien patriarchal cultures of terrorists within, where the state's only role is that of increasing policing and surveillance. This division is necessarily heuristic, and is an attempt to disaggregate the ongoing impact of the War on Terror and the more recent 'austerity'. It is an analysis, in part, offered to consider how the objects of these discourses might find themselves able to respond. Bhattacharyya is interested in the way that racialised groups respond to the neoliberalisation of state services in an ambivalent manner, reflecting their previous experiences of poor treatment and racist exclusion. It could be argued that this ambivalence towards 'austerity' and the drastic reduction in welfare is a point of connection with the white population, but as James Rhodes articulates in his chapter, the construction of the white underclass through a range of popular and media techniques has become one element of the deflection of race onto a particular group rather than a point of recognition of the role of state racism.

In Chapter 3 Rhodes outlines the way in which the discourse of whiteness became embroiled in the politics of blame following the urban disturbances in the UK in 2001. The caricatured figure of the white working class has reappeared in the 'chav' and in the representation of a 'feral underclass'. In the postracial landscape, then, it is this group that carries the burden of the racists, whilst the tolerant, respectable middle class carry out a double disavowal of race and class. The endemically racist white working class service a number of political projects. They

allow the state to represent itself as absolved of the responsibility of advocating equality, as some racialised minority groups have achieved economic success and the existence of poor whites means that all is well in the meritocratic society. Secondly, the core values of the middle class become universalised in a non-racist consensus. Ultimately, the white working class become available as a minority group in their own right, and the fear of a 'white backlash' allows politicians of the right and left to make arguments against multiculturalism as the process by which whites have been left out of state resources.

It is an in-depth analysis of multiculturalism that forms the core of Sivamohan Valluvan's Chapter 4. Whilst recognising the multiple ways in which the term has been used and abused, Valluvan wishes to recapture it from the critique that has rendered multiculturalism as only representing 'tolerance' of the cultural other. This is what he terms a 'mischaracterisation', a 'thinning' of a concept which still has much purchase as a site of critique of the nation, as well as pointing towards what is the only way of formulating a contemporary society. The critical edge that multiculturalism offers is demonstrated via the re-staging of a debate between Slavoj Žižek, political philosopher/commentator, and Sara Ahmed, feminist/ race theorist. Valluvan insightfully demonstrates how the 'illusion' of multiculturalism as the hegemonic tolerant is deployed by Žižek without being alert to the mirage-like status of the concept. In one sense, Žižek and Ahmed give too much power to the notion of multiculturalism. Rather than being focused on group rights or on the question of tolerance, multiculturalism can do better with more modest aspirations of causing disturbance to the neutrality of the nation-state in its treatment of racial difference. In sum, a robust multiculturalism (perhaps the opposite of a robust liberalism) enables the recognition of difference and an interrogation of misrecognition, not just at the level of an abstracted culture, but at the very heart of the way the state exerts biopolitical power. Mirza takes up the issue of multiculturalism but with the inflection of gender, in the last chapter of this section. By taking on the binary heroine/ victim, Mirza traces the representations of Muslim women in public and media discourse. To some extent there is no possibility of representation outside of this binary, there is no outside of these representations, as the Muslim women's body becomes the site upon which European racial discourse plays out its most virulent Islamaphobia. State multiculturalism, in its most illusory form, fosters and promotes a victimised Muslim woman terrorised at the hands of an equally imaginary community. Mirza offers the corrective to these circulating deceptions by alerting us to the multiple contexts in

which women are exploited, abused and oppressed. The possibility of escape from the heroine/ victim dichotomy is represented in the actions of campaigning groups in the UK who struggle for women's rights in the context of state racism.

Whereas the first section of this volume embarks on an investigation into the conceptual terrain of the state of race, the second section encompasses five chapters which look in detail at a number of substantive issues that illustrate various aspects of the racial state. Opening with what is a rarely spoken about issue, Vron Ware asks the pointed question 'Can you have Muslim soldiers?' Her chapter takes us on a detailed tour of the British army's various attempts to deal with issues of equality, diversity and multiculturalism. To some extent, despite the army carrying some aura of special status due to its role in national defence, the examples given in the chapter demonstrate numerous continuities with other institutions, such as the NHS, in the difficulties faced in addressing racism. By bringing the army into the remit of a state public service there is the danger of perhaps over-normalising what is the ultimate tool of violence available to the state. However, Ware is constantly aware of the multiple levels at which the army uses the rhetoric of diversity and develops an interplay between the obvious colonial continuities and the current demands of the US/UK wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is this interplay between international issues and their impact on local institutions that is taken up by Shamim Miah looking at the experiences of Muslim parents and school children. Drawing on interview material, this chapter poignantly articulates the way in which the War on Terror conjoins with local issues of Islamophobia and general school-level racism. The specific manner in which anti-terror initiatives of the British state, such as CONTEST and Prevent, directly impact on the schooling of Muslim children is highlighted. It becomes apparent that there are direct continuities between the securitisation of education and the securitisation of community life more generally, demonstrated by the consideration of these policy frameworks in the following chapter by Virinder Kalra and Tariq Mehmood. The manner in which the dividing lines between the police and intelligence agencies coalesce is explored here through the example of the Birmingham spy cameras. Following the placement of surveillance technology in predominantly Muslim areas of Birmingham to track and monitor all those entering and leaving, a successful, locally led campaign resulted in the removal of CCTV cameras. However, in the process the deep complicity between hard (counter-terrorism) and soft (community-oriented) forms of policing was revealed, and it is this increasing racial

securitisation of the British state that Chapter 9 exposes. In a detailed reading of the debate on the extradition treaty between the US and the UK that took place in the House of Commons in December 2011, Nisha Kapoor reveals the racist distinctions that were central to determining who was worthy of support and who was not. The clear divide between those who were deemed worthy of extradition (Babar Ahmed and Talha Ahsan) and those who ought to be protected (Gary Mackinnon), reveals the ongoing racial stratification of British justice but with new levels of racist technologies to hand. In this analysis of the British state in its current conjuncture, Kapoor points to Britain's leading position in the War on Terror and its increasing implementation of the exception as routine. The final chapter of the book returns us to the 'older racisms' theme developed by Bhattacharyya, addressing the hostility faced by asylum seekers. Ala Sirriyeh draws on interviews with groups of refugees and asylum seekers to examine the way in which the immigration system has come to increasingly merge with the ever-intrusive securitisation agenda. Using the notion of domopolitics, the way in which the concept of home becomes a site of struggle for those wanting to make a new life in the UK, and for those institutions seeking to keep them out, is a central narrative in the chapter. In a similar manner to the chapters on surveillance and extradition, Sirriyeh draws on campaigning bodies that are trying to challenge and address the increasingly punitive regimes that asylum seekers and refugees face.

If the issues highlighted in the last five chapters make for grim reading, it is only a small indication of the manner in which the British state has become increasingly punitive when dealing with issues of law and order. Our aim here is not merely to offer a pessimistic view for pessimism's sake but to draw attention to the ongoing realities of racial persecution that reach new heights in current times, making the claims to 'the end of racism' difficult to tolerate. As we narrate here some of the continuing practices of state racism, we anticipate a call for the re-mobilisation of an anti-racist lobby that unites against all dimensions and targets of racism in order to continue the fight for its redress.

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Part I

1
The Postracial Contemporary

David Theo Goldberg

The postracial is upon us.

It was born – or rather raciality was born again, anew – when Barack Obama got elected. Postraciality went public, declared itself the state of being, at least aspirationally. There quickly followed a frenzied media discussion about whether America had become postracial. It takes one presumptively black man to get elected president for a self-presumed white country's racial history to be wiped clean, apparently. The Great Man version of history takes a new turn on stage.

Even the critical response – Kim Crenshaw, Sumi Cho, CNN, and Tim Wise perhaps most subtly and insightfully, among others – became beholden to the logic, if in denial: not so fast, not yet, here the counter-evidence. In the US, the family wealth gap between whites and blacks and whites and Latinos, respectively, has spiralled to the highest since records were first compiled in 1984, now 20:1 (from 12:1) for the former, and 18:1 for the latter. Resegregation in schooling and housing has expanded in the past 30 years, faster this decade than before. Republicans have engaged in a variety of questionable tactics to discourage, if not prevent, people of colour from voting in districts where they have higher representation because they are more likely to vote for Democrats. A slew of politicians and media commentators, harsh conservative critics of Obama and his presumptive friends, have revealed in slips, innuendo, and outright vicious characterisation how unprepared Americans have been to deal with what Fanon called 'the fact of blackness.' The viciousness of mash-up internet images of the President and First Lady, from witch doctors to baboons, evidence of the ghost of racism shadowing the postracial.

In South Africa, the supposed model of a state transitioning to postraciality, racial animosities and structural inequities remain

extensive. White wealth and black poverty have remained the structural default, notwithstanding a small burgeoning black bourgeoisie and the re-emergence of white poverty. White students at the University of the Free State urinated in a pot of soup and then gave it to a black cleaning woman to eat. Recently, a photograph was posted to a Facebook page of a grinning young Afrikaner in a military fatigue bush shirt, holding a rifle and kneeling over the dead body of a young black boy as if over the carcass of his dead prey. The Facebook page quickly generated nearly 600 'friends'. Authorities were investigating the commission of various crimes, whether or not the image was doctored (see Swart 2011's article in *Times Live*). At the same time, black nationalisms rival white paranoias.

In Europe, racial discrimination in policing and migration restrictions has been demonstrably on the rise against blacks and Muslims, not to mention the license given to public figures like Geert Wilders in the Netherlands to speak in racist ways about people of colour. Four young people of colour peacefully wearing T-shirts protesting that "Zwarte Piet is racist" at a Sinterklaas parade in a rural town in the Netherlands were beaten up by white policemen for challenging what effectively is the national mascot. In the wake of the London looting by youths after a young black man was shot by police in August 2011, historian David Starkey, interviewed on BBC, pompously pronounced that rioting white youth had come to 'act black'.

Are we postracial yet? Hell, no, the evidence screams back.

All of this, it seems to me, is the obvious response, much as I hate to put it thus. Less obviously, Harvard critical race legal scholar Charles Ogletree (2012) has suggested that the response 'depends' on the evidence one looks to: in some respects America is postracist, in others not. The affirming or negating responses nevertheless give in to the question, they presuppose its credibility, assume its seriousness. They take for granted a conception of 'the postracial condition' widely ascribed to, about which there has been all too little critical public discussion.

There is another, if related, line of questioning necessary here, suggesting a different trajectory of analysis. What work is the 'postracial' doing, as conception and claim? What is the recourse to postraciality producing socially, by design and/or implication, as social conception and ordering? In short, as racial articulation? And posed in this way, why now? Why the popularity of the 'postracial,' and not just in America but pretty much wherever race has (had) significant resonance? (Parts of Latin America, most notably Brazil, may be interesting, if telling, exceptions.) Why is it that public racist expression has become far more virile

and vicious in the name of the postracial than it had been since the 1960s. What (and who), it might be asked in the face of this fact, is the postracial for?

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The notion of 'the postracial' can be traced genealogically and interactively to conceptions of 'colourblindness' and the US civil rights movement, to anti-apartheid's 'nonracialism' (as articulated most clearly, for example, in the mid-1950s Freedom Charter), and broadly to the post World War II romance with racelessness. More deeply, immediately, and directly, 'the postracial' resonates conceptually and temporally, culturally and politically, with neoliberalism. The postracial, in good neoliberal spirit, is committed to individualising responsibility. First, it renders individuals accountable for their own actions and expressions, not for their 'group's'. By the same token, it supposedly does not ascribe responsibility to one's racial group for the actions and expressions of the supposed group's individual members. In this latter sense, the neoliberal's scepticism about the agency of social groups generally could be claimed to encourage the erosion of racial connectivity and, by extension perhaps, of any ontological claim to racial groups more broadly.

If liberalism's economic anthropology is centred around *homo oeconomicus*, neoliberal anthropology, as Foucault (2008) suggests, rests squarely on the heroic Man of Enterprise: he who makes and makes it up, the man adept at managing, if not manipulating, mixture, social intercourse, and mash-up. Committed to innovation and design, he works at opening up, prising open, entry for the sake in the end of nothing else but self-advantage, self-possibility, self-profit. If there is social benefit as a result, it would be a fortuitous value added, but that cannot be the goal or mandate. Looking good and looking cool. Self-minded in his hipsterdom, flaunting prowess and profit, but also projecting braggadocio and whatever can be gotten away with. Seemingly in full control even as he borders on being out of control, he networks only with the like-minded and like-looking. He makes things on the basis of innovative design, making things happen by making things up. Fabrication and self-making, creation and recreation as the presiding sensibility of the time. This makes evident too why recreational activity – extreme sports, extensive game playing, and so on – has been transformed, literally re-created, from what we do occasionally or on the side, a hobby, to a prevailing mode of profitable capitalisation and professionalising practice.