

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

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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 familiarity, 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 stereotyping 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, distanciation 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

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

Antiracism, antiracism

Antiracism 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 antiracism 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 antiracism 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 metropolises 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 metropolises. 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 metropolises. 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

encouragement 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, Gandhi 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 metropolises 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 metropolises 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 metropolises 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

incorporation, and so on replicating sameness, Philomena Essed and I have analyzed as central to the logic of cloning culture. Former slaves could compete formally for positions from which they were hitherto excluded as slaves and now excluded for the most part by (relative) lack of education, training, capital, accumulated wealth, and social standing. Likewise, though in different ways and to different degrees, with former colonial or segregated subjects and apartheid's discarded. Equal access to unequal resources and possibilities from positions of unequal preparation and power ultimately entails a third-class ticket to nowhere.

It follows that, fifth – and this is the heart of the argument I am insisting on elaborating – in wake of each of these broad antiracist social, political, economic, and legal mobilizations (for each consisted of the combination), antiracism gave way to the dominant trend of antiracialism. Success in doing away with the legal superstructure of racial subjugation gave way (or in) quite quickly to concerns not so much over differential economic or social access and possibilities as considerations of racial categorization and classification, racial preferences and group-conceived possibilities. Why this common shift in each instance? What is represented in these shifts? What is curtailed, simplified, effected, forgotten, denied? In short, how is the bearing of racial weight shifted in the name of its shedding?

Conceived in this way, one could query why the fight against antisemitism doesn't appear as one of the principal expressions of antiracist social movements. The reasons, I think, are revealing. Clearly, the fight against antisemitism has been global and coalitional. And yet, in declaring antisemitism certainly since the Shoah as the constitutive extreme, always the exceptional case, the struggle against antisemitism has characterized itself in the singular, as exemplary, as unlike any other struggle. It has resisted extension to others who for whatever conceptual reasons, strategic positioning, or political gain would have the mantle cover them. There is a generality, a gesture at least to generalizability if not universalism, fueling antiracist social movements: to be free, like others; to be self-determining, independent, treated as a human being, like others. The case against antisemitism, by contrast, turned on the insistence to be left alone, to be free perhaps but even if it meant others' constriction and devaluation, even destruction. The legacy perhaps of a "Chosen People." That's what exceptionalism amounts to. The national(ist) drive to an independent homeland, the grounds for so many coalitional struggles against invasive forces, became for Jews the destruction of homes and hopes for those perceived

to stand in the way. And yet one could point to the racial dimensions of Israel's very definition only at risk of being ostracised, of being branded irrational, of being bedeviled as racist, as we'll see in chapters that follow. The difficulty to name the fight against antisemitism as such reveals the point at issue. Anti-antisemitism, assimilation, the War of Independence, or Israel's struggle to survive are either too awkward, too nebulous on one register of antiracist commitment, or speak to a specificity too narrow to the task, on another.

Antifascism fares better. It clearly counts as a broad coalitional social movement, its object(s) and ends are well defined without being too delimiting. And yet one can query whether it properly amounts to an *antiracist* movement. One can certainly think of oneself or others as the victims of fascist repression, as bound or moved by a fascist state, without resorting to racial terms, without that social formation being conceived – at least not principally – racially. Pol Pot's Cambodia or Myanmar today perhaps come to mind. One would be hard pressed to say the same thing about European slavery from the early seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries, of colonialism or Jim Crow, apartheid South Africa or latter-day multicultural states. Major critical analyses can be written – consider Nikos Poulantzas's *Fascism and Dictatorship*, for one – in which race barely registers a mention. Indeed, Poulantzas himself points out quickly that there can be fascist regimes or state formations from which racism and antisemitism are mostly if not wholly absent. While racial configuration, as I have argued elsewhere, is constitutive of modern state formation, fascism per se is not, Paul Gilroy's sometime suggestion to the contrary notwithstanding.

If race is not a necessary condition for conceiving fascist social formations or states – that it may be a sufficient condition is a different question – it cannot be so for antifascist social movements either. And as Michael Hanchard has pointed out, notable antifascist commitments have been marked more than occasionally by their own racist articulations (one can say this also about antiracist social movements, though more awkwardly). One can be against fascism, give one's life to the cause, having paid scant attention to whatever racial dimensions might be operative at all. Here too one can distinguish antiracism from antifascism by asking not what each resists but what each is for. If anti-antisemitism is reactively about the particularities of letting Jews be, the refusal to be picked out, antifascism concerns the generalities of living free from physical and ideological repression and from the broadly totalizing and insistently homogenizing social, economic, political, legal, and cultural conditions promoting such

reductive statist repression and constraint in the name of the at once masculinized and emasculated nation. Antiracism concerns facing down those repressive and constraining conditions conceived, mobilized, and effected in the name of and through racial conception. Intersecting as they all may be at various historical moments, they remain analytically and sometimes historically discrete.

To be clear, to reiterate: I am suggesting that in the wake of whatever nominal successes, antiracist struggle gave way in each instance to anti-racial commitments at the expense of antiracist effects and ongoing struggle. It is telling to note that Daniel Patrick Moynihan noted something like this emerging shift as early as 1968 in the case of the civil rights wake, in an article presciently entitled "The New Racialism." The material gains of the civil rights movement, he was suggesting presciently, were being stymied or set back by the emerging emphasis on rendering any reference to race illegitimate, irrespective of the (inclusionary or exclusionary) motivation or implication. Antiracism requires historical memory, recalling the conditions of racial degradation and relating contemporary to historical and local to global conditions. If antiracist commitment requires remembering and recalling, antiracism suggests forgetting, getting over, moving on, wiping away the terms of reference, at best (or worst) a commercial memorializing rather than a recounting and redressing of the terms of humiliation and devaluation. Indeed, antiracism seeks to wipe out the terms of reference, to wipe away the very vocabulary necessary to recall and recollect, to make a case, to make a claim.

Antiracism, it turns out, takes hold – becomes insistent, one might say begins to make itself heard – once the antiracist struggles have achieved their initial but incomplete goals. Antiracism marks the moment that a society is accepted into (or even as a momentary moral leader of) the world. It marks, in a word, the moment of globalization's relative (and repeated) triumph. To be of the world, in the world, a worldly society, racism nominally has been rejected. Now the category of race must be erased. But we are being asked to give up on race before and without addressing the legacy, the roots, the scars of racism's histories, the weights of race. We are being asked to give up on the word, the concept, the category, at most the categorizing. But not, pointedly not, the conditions for which those terms stand. In the beginning was the deed; in the end, to undo the deed, the word should not be uttered.

Even more ironically, the call of antiracism, while representing the triumph of the global, is always a *local* call, in a word, the reduction of the

global to the local, the work of the global silently by making the local do its work *only at the local level*. There is no global *antiracial* movement. Look about, find it you will not. Where antiracisms were – how do I lapse here into the past tense? – truly global movements, antiracism is never more than a local call. Why, it must be asked. What is going on here?

As an end in itself, antiracism, it turns out for the most part, is whiteness by another name, by other means, with recruitment of people of color to act as public spokespersons for the cause. The targets of racism, by contrast and for the most part, are concerned less with and about the category than with the conditions, the artifice and fabrication, of their restriction and exclusion, their humiliation and degradation. They are concerned, in short, less with the concept of race than with the culture(s) of racism, the cultivating of racisms. Antiracism is about decategorization, a gesture necessarily by the racially dominant towards those they racially suppress. Antiracism, by contrast, involves itself centrally, among other things, in what Fanon has called decorroboration by the racially repressed of the racially self-elevated. It seeks to remove the condition not indirectly through removal of the category in the name of which the repression is enacted. Rather, it seeks to remove the structure of the condition itself. This is not to say that categorically getting beyond or over race is not a worthy cause. The question has deeply to do with what one takes oneself to be getting over and beyond, and how then to achieve the *aufhebung*, “the overcoming.”

The shifts from broad, globally interconnected antiracist social movements in each instance mapped above to local and much narrower antiracist commitments represent a turn to formalism in the face of impending material shifts of potentially immense proportion. Antiracist social mobilizations in each historical case fueled gathering momentum to open up institutional access and invigorate competition, to transform voting patterns and relations of power, to undo the easy and complacent stabilities of neighborhoods and cultural sedimentation. Privileges came unfixed, profitabilities were imperiled, property desanctified, powers challenged. Antiracist mobilization had sought in each case to end the immobilizing and terrorizing conditions racist order had made manifest and maintained, manufactured and managed. The immobilization under racist repression gave way – if not in – to mobilization, terror turned to transformability, trauma triggered trespass, all threatening if not an overturning at least a turning over.

No sooner had these shifts been successfully signaled, if not fully effected, than the force(s) of racial order reached for the formalism of the

law. In the face of instabilities and insecurities, state recourse in each instance quickly reduced to an insistence upon formal equality. There are of course some not insignificant differences between the instances I cite. Nevertheless, at the level of generalization, Reconstruction, “We shall overcome,” and “a new South Africa” all gave way in a blur to a state-mandated nonracialism, the drive for some sort of substantive equality to a nominal categorical blindness under but neither before nor beyond the law. Formalism “saved” racism in each case by abandoning (or at least threatening to abandon) race. Call this *born again racism*.

Born again racism is racism without race, racism gone private, racism without the categories to name it as such. It is racism shorn of the charge, a racism that cannot be named because nothing abounds with which to name it. It is a racism purged of historical roots, of its groundedness, a racism whose history is lost. In the wake of the UN Conference on Racism in Durban, Condoleezza Rice (then US National Security Advisor and now the most senior and visible African American in the Bush administration) apparently recommended that those in the United States should forget (about) slavery, as the enactment of civil society, she insisted, necessitates forgetting – really erasing – the past.

Born again racism, then, is a racism acknowledged, where acknowledged at all, as individualized faith, of the socially dislocated heart, rather than as institutionalized inequality. “I understand that racism still lingers in America,” declared President George W. Bush, addressing the NAACP for the first time six years into his presidency. “It’s a lot easier to change a law than to change a human heart.” In short, born again racism is an unrecognized racism for there are no terms by which it could be recognized: no precedent, no intent, no pattern, no institutional explication. That, at least, is the vision. It is a perfectly transparent – a virtual – racism, unseen because see-through. It is a racism of profiles denied, the claim to perfected clones and copies, privatized preferences, policed boundaries, and policy restraints.

The formalism of “separate but equal” in the US historical context couldn’t quite pull off that picture. “Separate but equal” rationalized the differential quality for blacks and whites of public accommodations such as railway carriages and public education facilities so long as each group equally had access to some such public accommodations, no matter the differential quality. The legal sleight of hand was to equalize nominal access at the expense of equalizing the standard or quality of accommodations. Equality in this scheme would be preserved so long as a black

person could ride in a third-class carriage or study in a third-class institution no matter that first-class facilities in each case had been reserved exclusively for whites. A devil's contract, to be sure.

The magic of law's formalism in these instances had to be too heavily and visibly undergirded by the force of physical violence to remain broadly and self-consciously comfortable over an extended period. By contrast, the Racial Privacy Act promoted by Ward Connerly and the same forces that undid affirmative action in the state of California has captured all too well the dual logic of constraining public intervention regarding racial matters. If Ward Connerly and his (reverse robin) hoods would have their ways, the state would be constrained from registering race, specifically or abstractly, in any case other than for law enforcement profiling or for medical research, while liberating private discrimination from public constraint. There is a double limitation on public intervention: direct discrimination by public agencies is delimited, but the state and its agencies are almost completely constrained from preventing properly private discrimination. And where California runs, the rest of the US seems ready to rush. Racism is crucified in public only to be born again in private. The implications are volcanic, burying the gains of the civil rights movement – not to mention of the anticolonial and anti-apartheid struggles in other national contexts – beneath the rubble of antiracist eruptions.

There is no history, one might say, without remembrance: no history of or for those not remembered, whose past is not made present, whose past is deemed to have no presence. There is no remembering of some pasts – of those not simply marginalized in a society but marginalized because of and through their pasts – then, and so no history (for them) either. And no history of and for them means their absence from the (ethno)national history that is taken to make up the society's frame of reference, its sense of itself. The Museum of Ethnography in Budapest lists 23 or so ethnic groups in the history of Hungary, but not Jews. Jews are absent from the national narrative of Hungary, at least as told today by that national museum. This despite the fact that as late as the onset of 1944 there were approximately 750,000 Jews in Hungary, over 100,000 in Budapest alone. Today the Jewish population of Hungary is a mere 16,000, the rest largely annihilated by Nazis and their Hungarian supporters in that fateful final year of the Shoah.

If you are not memorable, if you have no worthy history, then you are deemed to have no claim not simply on national remembrance but on the nation-state itself, because you are seen to have no place in it. On parallel

logic, the death wish of racial classification in the United States and elsewhere is at one with the absence of racial slavery from national consciousness, with the absence of those cultures considered marginal to the prevailing national narrative. In introducing a bill in the US Senate to promote increased teaching of American history and civics in the wake of 9/11, Senator Lamar Alexander, former Republican presidential candidate, emphasized that “American history has been watered down, textbooks are dull, and their pages feature victims and diminish heroes.” This individualization of heroic history, “so our children can grow up learning what it means to be American,” is designed to remove the categories for claiming redress, to remove the stain of pained group histories from the national record, to make children American, to nationalize them, by lobotomizing racial violence from historical consciousness. It is, as Norman Mailer has characteristically put it in writing about George W. Bush’s belligerence, the case of “white man’s unburdening.” The logic is fast being generalized: Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine . . .

Born again racism reappears whenever called upon to do the dirty work of racist politics but purged of its categorical stiffness. Indeed, shed of its stiff categoricity, raceless racism operates in denial, anywhere and anytime. The concern over police profiling, for instance, has quickly shifted from denying its prevalence, if not its possibility, to affirming that there is nothing wrong with profiling for the sake of security and anti-terrorist vigilance. The concern over victims of state violence has shifted from claims of protecting the innocent to dismissive rationalizations of collateral damage (read: they are really not like us, or shouldn’t have been there – where “there” just happens to be their home or neighborhood).

Collateral damage, as Mahmood Mamdani remarks, is not an unfortunate by-product of war but its very elaboration. One-time concerns about spheres of influence and area studies in geostrategic competition have now given way to narrow concerns about control of strategic global resources and fitting “our” (US, British, Israeli, or begrudgingly European) geostrategic and security interests. The register of race has shifted from the broadly institutional, from which it is at least explicitly excised, to the micro-relational of everyday interactions, on the one hand, and the macro-political strategizing of geo-global interests, on the other. The two in the end go hand in glove, to extend that bloody metaphor I invoked earlier. Palestinians are the most pressed contemporary targets of this dual logic, though anyone today who is or is mistaken for a Muslim is deemed fair game.

This exemplification of the contemporary logic of race reveals what I am driving at: that in the name now even of a denial of formal racial reference, in the shift from racial reference to perverted insecurities, there is the recognition that the histories of racisms, including their histories of the present, are those of terror and death, of death's production, of terror and death in the name of identity and identification. These histories render it impossible to think of race in the absence of racism, to erase race and not have its histories of death and destruction haunt. The racially subjugated are the ghosts of slave and colonial pasts, and by extension of postcolonizing presents. *They* are see-through people, traces of history all but erased from the record. In all the cases of post-World War II wars fought by the US, wars not fought in the United States but always elsewhere seeking to externalize the threat of the strange and the alien, the targets may be characterized in classical ethnoracial terms as not white: Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq again or without cease in the past decade – not to mention all those proxy wars in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, and not to forget the immediate global war on terrorism. The Balkans, too, resonate at the margins of Europe with thickly, if complex, ethnoracial undertones.

Following Foucault, Ruthie Gilmore has gone so far as to define racism in terms of a relation to death. Racism, she notes, is the likely promotion of the premature death of those individuals and groups subjected to the debilitating terms and conditions of racist configurations and exclusions. There is something unsettlingly significant in her insight: racism both involves the increased probability of premature death for those who are the victims of its violence and foreshortens the lives of those who, but for its institutionalized pressures and effects, for its mark(s), would very likely (inevitably?) live better, longer, more productive, less fraught lives. The death at issue may be physical or social, and where social it renders those suffering it significantly more vulnerable to physical death too. Racism, then, produces the conditions, directly or indirectly, that serve to foreshorten life directly but also foreshorten life's opportunities. Racism of course includes delimiting, whipping, hanging, beating, bombing, shooting or gassing. But it is also targeted or collateral malnutrition (a lack of food and bad food), stress formation, physical debilitation, humiliation, and degradation.

This way of conceiving racism is not meant to belittle or ignore everyday racist micro-expressions such as security guard harassment in stores, sidewalk epithets, refusing or rude taxi-cab or bus drivers and passengers, dismissive, anxious, and unhelpful school teachers, or presumptuous

anti-affirmative action litigants. While much of recent accounts about racial matters – in the US especially – have focused on these latter micro-expressions, they are disturbing as much because of their cumulative effects to debilitate and render unwelcome their racially conceived objects, to extend their exclusion, and to heighten the likelihood of foreshortened lives as they are outrageous in themselves. In short, accumulated everyday racisms dispose their object populations, exposing them to extended abjection, rendering them readier, more vulnerable targets of legitimated violence and ultimately unnoticed or overlooked death.

Everyday expressions serve accordingly as a form of what Mahmood Mamdani calls “racial branding,” marking a group and its members as vulnerable and thereby disposing them guiltlessly to abject treatment and in the final analysis extermination. Considering racism as the rationalized disposition or vulnerability to premature death is intended to shift the prevailing sense in racial studies that racist violence is now anomalous, largely exceptional, and secondary to the lingering conditions of individuated hate or discriminations. This erosion ignores the relation of the everyday to large-scale institutional violence, of individuated expressions to the likes of ethnoracial cleansing, obliviousness among inhabitants of globally powerful states to terrorizing invisibility, and routine threat to large-scale, state-directed preemptive strikes.

If one’s own survival is heightened by the reassuring spectacle of another’s death, as Achille Mbembe insightfully puts it in writing about “necropolitics,” then national survival is borne out by keeping death at bay, by ensuring that if there is to be death it is the death of those not one’s own. Israeli security and survival, in the limit case, have come to be hitched to the demise of those characterized as threatening them. Palestinian death and destruction (of property, institutions, security itself) are evidence – insurance – of Israeli defiance of death. And perhaps vice versa. A cruel and ultimately self-defeating logic, one that is generalizable, revealed especially in its apparently racial production and rationalization. My killing those supposedly racially not like me secures the projection of my racial being; but in predicating my security on a foundation that motivates a counter-killing equally racially predicated, my security is coterminously and at the deepest level an insecurity. Security through the destruction of those not (like) me is tantamount to the insecurity and ultimately threat and fear of death of the self-denyingly secure.

I am concerned in what follows with mapping out some of the more or less programmatic threads of these lingering logics of racial threat and

terror, of violence and death, and of the inextricable entanglements of security with insecurity and the undermining of safety. I am concerned to ask, to reveal, what gets unmasked in the revelation of these logics, in these linkages, what haunts us as we remember and forget, in what we remember to forget and forget to remember. And to consider the remaining racial effects on how we think and live the social betwixt and between of racial arrangement and order, of racial states. The claim of the evaporation – the death – of race is really a claim not about racial death but about “the end,” the disappearance, of racism, seeking to evade thus the violent and deadly ends, all those threats, large and small, geopolitical and everyday, in the service of which racisms continue to be pressed into practice.

The wider project buried in the general line of argument in this book, then, is to insist on a double shift in the study of racial matters: First, from the increasing focus on race and racial classifications to the more troubled, connected, and underlying concerns with racisms, with racially produced exclusions, violence, destruction, and their threat. And second, relatedly, from the growing focus on cultural representations of racial expression to the ongoing and too often overlooked threats and manifestations of violence and violations, disease, death, and destruction activated, represented, and rationalized in the name of race.

Generally conceived, the principal historical prompts for racial conception and derogation have been threefold. For one, race as the marker of difference, distinction, and (potential) debilitation has been caught up with *curiosity*, initially much as nature prompted interest or concern, and later as the lure of cultural fascination. Second, race has served as the mark of *exploitability*, whether as its grounds or its rationalization. Those tagged as ethnoracially different could be made to labor under exploitative conditions, much as work animals might, or might be identified as culturally disposed to excel stereotypically at certain tasks: those of African background at physical tasks and more recently at certain sorts of sport, the English at intellectual labor, Sherpa as mountain guides at high altitudes, Jews at the management of money, and so on. The presumed expertise (or lack) in each case might suggest or rationalize away the supposed use-value identified with each, their supposed (degree of) exploitability.

Finally, in designating difference race carries with it sooner or later the suggestion of *threat*. Whether understood as naturally different or culturally distinct, an ethnoracially identified group might be seen in varying circumstances to conjure or condition, raise or rationalize anxieties about insecurity, possible loss, viral infection, even extinction and survivability.

While curiosity and exploitability have lingered throughout the histories of racial extension, and remain resonant variously within racial reference and mobilization today, it is threat that has assumed overriding contemporary significance in racial matters, absorbing the other two largely into its orbit. Race increasingly and increasingly baldly turned to threat as global condition more or less coterminous with the dominant shift in racial meanings from the natural to the cultural in the post-abolition period as the nineteenth gave way to the twentieth century, and as once distant peoples became (potential) neighbors, competitors, fellow citizens with supposedly divergent political interests. The abolitionist, anti-colonial, civil rights, and anti-apartheid demands for equality in socio-legal rights, educational and economic fair play conjured threat to long-held assumptions of “natural” dominance, settled hierarchies, and cultural superiority. Perceived racial threat fuels fear of loss – of power, of resources, of competitiveness, of life itself – and their attendant antagonisms and aggressivities. This sense of threat, almost invariably tinged with anxiety or exacerbated by paranoia upon racial mediation, tends to articulate self- with social protection, no matter the cost.

All three racial prompts have encouraged, exacerbated, and extended vulnerability, aggression, and violence. But without belittling the suffering prompted by curiosity and exploitability, the aggravations with which they can be identified tend to be mediated by the fact that they each necessitate an engagement – more or less direct interaction – with their objectified subjects. Threat, by contrast, largely does not; in fact, those deemed threatening are held at a distance, whether physically or emotionally, psychologically or politically. Threat undercuts the possibility of such mediation, delimiting engagement to the violence of incarceration or the instrumentalities of incapacitation. In short, threat for the most part seeks distantiation of one sort or another, not engagement, whether spatially or symbolically, materially or rhetorically enacted. But the other side of threat entails also that the group – the “population” – seen as threatening is the one actually threatened: with alienation, intimidation, incarceration, marginalization and externalization of one kind or another, ultimately even with extinction.

It is with a cartographic comprehension of racially emergent and rationalized threats that this book will be concerned, and with their contemporary social arrangements of evasion and evaporation of responsibility but also of the possible conditions and practices of their undoing. In short, *The Threat of Race* concerns itself with changing forms and expressions of

racisms across regions and time, contemporarily articulated if historically indexed. It maps racially articulated delimitations, the territorializations and regionalizations, of life's possibilities. It draws out their denials and refusals, material sedimentations and traces, their erasures and evaporations in public memory and from contemporary state accountability, their failures and fragilities. It considers their representations and rationalizations, their silent implications and their coded suggestibilities, their devastating effects but also their courageous resistances, restrictions, and refusals. And it does so with a view to accounting ultimately for the relation between racial evaporation and erasure as explicit conception of state governmentality under globalizing neoliberal conditions today across a broad swath of societies and the increasing difficulty as a consequence of considering racisms critically, of resisting them. *The Threat of Race*, in brief, concerns itself with tracing out the terrains of race, racelessness, racisms, their refinements and redirections under contemporary social conditions.

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