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Neoliberalizing Race

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I. Globalization, Race

*I*f the eighteenth century was considered the age of enlightenment or reason, and the nineteenth century that of imperialism, the second half of the twentieth century has increasingly been identified as the age of globalization. Yet there have been various versions of globalization historically. Early modes of globalization were those stretching across known worlds in their day, among the states and city-states of the East that Gunder Frank analyzes in *ReOrient*, and their trading that stretched into the states and cities of the medieval Mediterranean Near East. There are no doubt others, linked to various empires. These might be called regional globalizations.

The first globalization with fully planetary stretch and pervasive world-making—or world-transforming—implications was the reach of Europeans to expand through exploration. It was ultimately to magnify European power through new access to existing mineral sources elsewhere, and to revive and remake itself through novel supplies of raw materials, new markets, new pools of exploitable labor, and challenging new modes-of-being that prompted novel objects of desire. This proved so far reaching and transformative for the world that it came later to identify itself as the period of "modernization" (not that earlier periods in other sites hadn't experienced moments of birth [*natio*], updating themselves, flourishing, and wilting)—with Europeans regarding themselves as modern, precisely as Habermas and others have long pointed out. But the enormous reach, range, and redirection

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of the European impact across the middle of the last millennium—on learning, commerce, war-making, technological innovation, production, political organization, consumptive capacity, avariciousness, resource destruction, being and belonging, identity and interactivity, modes of thinking and existence, sensibility and sociability—signal a quality and quantity to the globalizing project that was genuinely singular. The notion of modernization in this context reveals less a measure of evolutionary success than a mark of re-making, with all its challenges and pitfalls, assertions and assertiveness, and devastations and destructiveness.

Race is commonly assumed in the popular imagination to be an antique notion, pre-dating this planetary globalization. It is considered a vestige of pre-modern or at least not adequately *modernized* social assertions and arrangements. I have argued extensively against this understanding, asserting that race is an irreducibly modern notion defining and refining modern state formation as this new form of planetary globalization takes shape. "Race" is so conceptually pliable and elastic that, since its early expression in the sixteenth century, it has shifted in meaning over time and space, assuming significance in terms of the prevailing conditions in the social region in which it is invoked. It is believed to account for and comprehend, to shape and order—in short, to manage—the demographic, political, cultural, and economic heterogeneities particular to the region at that time. These meanings overlap and "converse" with other regional landscapes. As a consequence, it is possible to draw generalizations, to identify broad transnational meanings for race at a common point in time.

II. Naturalizing Race, Race-ing History

Since being widely accepted as accounting for human variation, prevailing patterns of racial theorizing and the rule they prompt can be divided between what I call *racial naturalism* and *racial historicism*. Racial naturalism is the idea that those of non-European descent are in some biological sense inherently or naturally inferior. This represents a very long and thick tradition in racial thinking and theorizing, running from the likes of Sepulveda in the mid-sixteenth century, through Voltaire and Blumenbach, Kant and Hume, Carlyle and Spencer, and the eugenicists and Social Darwinists, to the likes of Murray and Herrnstein, Coon and Rushton. Racial historicism, by contrast, consists of the set of claims that those not European or descended from Europeans

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are not inherently inferior but historically immature or less developed. This is a tradition that runs through much of Euro-liberalism, arguably from Locke through such thinkers as John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte, and mid-nineteenth century English political economists such as Merivale and Marx, to the formal colonial policies of assimilationism, developmentalism, and progressivism.

Historicism assumed increasing force as a counter-voice to naturalist racial presumptions from roughly the mid-nineteenth century onward. For a century or so, these two paradigms of racial rule were in more or less sharp and explicit contest with each other, both between and within racially conceived and ordered regimes. Where naturalism underpinned the institution of slavery, historicist racial presuppositions tended to fuel abolitionist movements, proliferating as common sense in the wake of slavery's formal demise, and promoted as civilized moral conscience in the face of persistent naturalist regimes.

Racial naturalism and racial historicism also underpinned different forms of colonizing regimes. In the case of naturalism, examples are the early Spanish colonialism in Latin America and the Portuguese and later Leopold's Belgians in Africa. The British in India and the French in North Africa and the Caribbean are illustrative when it comes to historicism. By the close of the nineteenth century, naturalism found itself on the defensive because of increasingly heterogeneous urban arrangements, intensified migration between colonies and metropoles, and an emergent shift from biologically driven to culturalist conceptions of race. As (a set of) conceptual commitment(s), naturalism was explicitly challenged to defend and rationalize its claims in ways it had not hitherto faced. In short, by the mid-twentieth century, naturalism had shifted explicitly from the *given* of racial rule to the *anomaly*, from the safely *presumed* to the *protested*.

Naturalism increasingly gave way to the common sense of historicism in the later nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, with the violence of an imposed physical repression yielding to the infuriating subtleties of a legally fashioned racial order. In modern constitutional terms, the law is committed to the formal equality of treating like alike (and by extension the unlike differently). This abstract commitment to formal equality, in turn, entails the color-blinding constitutionalism of "racelessness" as the teleological narrative of modernization and racial progress. Racelessness is the *logical* implication of racial historicism. It is the perfect blending of modernist rationality and the maintenance

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of de facto, if "de-raced," racial domination, juridically ordered and exercised.

III. Neoliberalizing Race

The Second World War is commonly assumed to have revealed the extreme dangers of racial conception and thinking, and what such commitments entail if not inevitably bring about. By the late 1940s, race was being challenged as a scientifically vacuous, morally repugnant, and politically dangerous notion. European societies especially sought to expunge race from social reference. This rejection, however, presupposed racial conception and its political order to be predicated quite exhaustively on its naturalistic interpretation. Following first the anti-colonial and then the civil rights struggles, increasingly the commitment regarding race in social arrangements came to be expressed as color blindness, or more generally as racelessness. In Western Europe this followed almost immediately its painful wartime experiences and its drive to reconstruct, reconfiguring as much Europe's imagination of itself as the material conditions of its well-being. In the United States, the stress on color blindness took a couple of decades longer to solidify, materializing first as a characteristic expression of the civil rights regime and then as a reaction to its commitment to affirmative action. One was not supposed to judge intellectual or moral competence, or for that matter physical prowess, by the color of a person's skin. Color blindness, or racelessness more generally, claimed to judge people according to individualized merit and ability. When members of a racially identified group were repeatedly judged to fail or to be less qualified, it would be attributed to the cultural deficiencies of the group, historically developed, rather than as naturalistically determined. Color blindness, far from inconsistent with racial historicism, was its contemporary extension, the perfect cultural corollary for emergent neoliberal political economies.

The increasing stress on individualized merit and ability was coterminous with structural shifts in state formation, from welfarism to neoliberalism, ever since the second half of the 1970s. Neoliberalism took hold of political imaginaries as capitalism vigorously sought to expand its market reach, and as technologies of travel, communication, and information flows became speedier and more sophisticated, shrinking distances and compressing time. As globalization took on dramatically

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new forms, its regimes of management and rule developed novel strategies. Eventually, these cohered under the rubric of neoliberalism.

Neoliberal commitments were increasingly institutionalized under the rule of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and Helmut Kohl, and have structurally transformed the state. From the 1930s through the 1970s, the liberal democratic state offered a fairly robust set of institutional apparatuses concerned (in principle at least) with advancing the welfare of its citizens. This was the period of social security, welfare safety nets, various forms of national health systems, the expansion of and investment in public education (including higher education, and in some states to the exclusion of private and religiously sponsored education), and the emergence of state bureaucracies as major employers. Since then, and as a reaction, the state has been molded into a structure increasingly securing privatized interests from the perceived contamination and threat of those deemed not to belong, to have little or no standing, the welfare of whom is calculated to cost too much, economically and politically.

Neoliberalism is identified as the undertaking to maximize corporate profits and efficiency by reducing costs, most notably as a consequence of taxes, tariffs, and regulations, thus expanding the freedom of flows of capital, goods, services, and more recently of information. It is committed to let the market regulate itself so far as the artificial constraints of politics will allow, placing faith in its capacity to optimize resource allocation and expand employment capacity as a result of sustained profitability and subsequent economic growth. It follows that neoliberalism is committed to de-nationalize industry and "de-unionize" labor in the name of limiting state regulation and reducing public costs, and so rolling back the need for public funding.

In short, September 11 hastened and heightened the shift already well underway from the caretaker or pastoral state of mid-twentieth-century welfare liberalism to the traffic-cop state of the turn of the millennium. The latter, by contrast, seeks to facilitate the privatization of property, revenue generation, utilities, services, and social support systems, including health care, aid, and disaster response and relief. The privatization of services is particularly revealing, shifting the traditional caretaking functions of the modern state (emergency relief, etc.) increasingly to charitable institutions. This inevitably produces bifurcated experiences of social goods and access, such as health care, education, and even public highways. In turn, privatized property, which is equated with nationalist identification and supplemental state

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enforcement, has functioned to re-homogenize the body politic. Where the welfare state, with all its contradictions and failings, still produces a modicum of social egalitarianism, the neoliberal state exacerbates inequality, further privileging the already privileged.

In essence, neoliberal states are restricted to securing conditions for privatized interests to flourish, and to shaping (policing may not be too strong a term) the flows of information, capital, and consumer goods to these ends. Grover Norquist, the person most identified in the United States with articulating the neoliberal commitment, famously boasted that his "goal is to cut government in half in twenty-five years, to get it down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub." The rhetorical flourish and disarming bluntness of Norquist's expression notwithstanding, the claim is somewhat misleading, if not downright disingenuous. The emphasis is less to get rid of the state—what, in any case, exactly would that mean?—than to shift its priorities radically, to redirect it to represent different interests, to do different work. Support for institutions of state violence (i.e., military, police, homeland security), their enactment, and (re)enforcement spiral upward at the cost of a diminishing treasury burdened by dramatic tax reductions for the wealthiest and consequently crimped state revenues and squeezed social welfare spending. Social welfare commitments, including subsidized education and health care, would be de-funded and the resources sustaining them shifted to repressive state functionalities, such as the police, military, and prisons. Far from dismantling the state, or drowning it, neoliberalism would make it more robust, more intrusive, more repressive.

The social ends of state emaciation, accordingly, are not that social spending should terminate. Rather, in being redirected into private hands, social spending and charitable giving are fashioned by and for the social and political interests of those with capital to spare. Those recalcitrant states or population factions not willing to support (or that indeed resist) the neoliberal political economy of structural adjustment, debt creation, and regulation, are subjected to more direct force by the military or police. In the extreme, "uncooperative," "rogue" forces, or unruly populations (states, communities, groups) are subjected to "necropolitical" discipline through the threat of imprisonment or death, physical or social. These forces of unruliness are likewise defined through racial extension and rearticulation. Where the prevailing social commitments for the liberal democratic state had to do with social well-being revealed in the registers of education,

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work, health care and housing, the neoliberal state is concerned above all with issues of crime and corruption, controlling immigration, and tax-cut-stimulated consumption. The contemporary slogan of neoliberalism might as well be: The state looks after your interests by encouraging you to choose to lock yourself in (to gated communities) while it locks the undesirables up (in prisons) or out (by way of immigration restrictions). Where the liberal democratic state was concerned in the final analysis with the welfare of its citizens, the neoliberal state is concerned above all with their security.

These transformations in the structure of the social fabric are rationalized to secure individuals, their families, and those they choose to care about. At the macro level neoliberalism expresses itself in terms of the nation over (even at the expense of) the state. The state is to stand for protecting *me and those like me*—my national family—and the rest be damned. The traditional language and objects of racial humiliation, expunged from social characterization because at odds with the rabid individualized communalism, are not so much erased as similarly structurally transformed. They now silently reference those who threaten their fiscal well-being (notably the perpetually unhealthy) or the social security of the nation (namely those deemed *death approaching*, mainly young Muslim men and those, even entire nations, identified as or with them).

In the U.S., the Minutemen, a vigilante border patrol group fueled by Latin American anti-immigrant sentiment with tacit approval from the Bush administration, has been protesting recently under the slogan, "This is America, get off my property." In this, the Minutemen perfectly represent neoliberal state commitments. The traditional state function of border enforcement is abrogated to a private, self-promoted vigilante group. The claim to America is staked as a national one, the belonging to which is implicitly characterological. One is taken to belong because one embodies the characteristics—the character—of presumptive Americans, with rugged individualism racially coded as white. Public land, the property of the nation, is privatized and becomes enclosed, from which the group can expel those who do not "belong." There is a privatizing, too, of extreme political expression, encouraging private sphere expression of views that the official representatives of the state, with its nominal commitment to neutrality and formal equality, cannot be seen to stand for or express.

If the Minutemen trade on racial presumption implicit in the representational codes they readily express and circulate, racial meanings

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have animated neoliberal attacks on the welfare state. The most obvious example is the strident vocal attacks on the "Welfare Queen." She is projected as the stereotypical single black mother of multiple children (usually portrayed as having different fathers), minimally educated, irresponsible, refusing work, and collecting welfare while partying all night long: sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, at state expense.

Where the figure of the Welfare Queen suggested that the welfare state did nothing but support idle, undeserving, and overly fertile black women, the image of state support for the undeserving poor of color was branded into the social imaginary by the determined attack on affirmative action from the mid-1970s onward. Affirmative action was considered unacceptable to the neoliberal stress on individual merit because it was seen as rewarding undeserving people on the basis of group attributes or achievements, not on individual effort and excellence. Indeed, for neoliberals committed to privatizing individualization, the standard racism (i.e., rewarding people for no reason other than their membership in a racial group) came to be considered affirmative action. Liberalism's very instrument for undoing the effects of racism became neoliberalism's poster child for the condition of racism itself.

These attacks on affirmative action reveal a deeper critical concern for neoliberals troubled over race. In the U.S., neoconservative critics of the state implicitly identify it as representing blackness and the interests thought most directly to advance black life. As a result both of serious application of antidiscrimination legislation and of affirmative action policies, the state became the single largest employer of African Americans. The perception among critics of these programs accordingly devolved into the view that black people are either employed as beneficiaries of affirmative action or they are supported by welfare. In short, from the 1970s on, the state increasingly came to be conceived as a set of institutions supporting the undeserving (recall the identification of Bill Clinton as "the first black President," first by Toni Morrison but taken up quickly by neoconservatives out to do him in). Fear of a black state is linked to worries about a black planet, of alien invasion and alie*nation*, of a loss of local and global control and privilege long associated with whiteness.

Neoliberalism, therefore, can be read as a response to this concern about the impending impotence of whiteness. Neoliberalism is committed to privatizing property, utilities, and social programs; to reducing state expenditures and increasing efficiencies; and to individual

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freedom from state regulation. As the state was seen to support black employment, to increase expenditures on black education, and to increase regulation to force compliance, white neoconservatives began to find neoliberal commitments relevant to their interests. It was but a short step from privatizing property to privatizing race, removing conception and categorization in racial terms from the public to the private realm. It does not follow, however, that the state purges racism from its domain. Rather, the state is restructured to support the privatizing of race and the protection of racially driven exclusions in the private sphere where they are off-limits to state intervention. California's happily defused experiment with the Racial Privacy Initiative best represents the sort of structure that proponents of neoliberal commitment seek to put in place.

The Racial Privacy Initiative was a ballot proposition placed before the California electorate in the November election of 2003. It was intended to restrict state government from collecting any racially identified data except principally for criminal justice investigations (police profiling) or certain sorts of medical research. It was designed to make it impossible to track ongoing racial discrimination across a wide range of social indices, including residential, educational, and employment. While the proposition significantly failed to garner electoral support, its terms of conception should be noted. The Racial Privacy Initiative was not a proposal to outlaw racial discrimination, address the past, or redress structural racism. It was, to put it bluntly, the "protection of private racial discrimination initiative," the undertaking not just to privatize racism but to protect ongoing discrimination in private, to restrict it from scrutiny and intervention.

An example from a different social context illustrates the implications of such a policy. Having run out of beef one day, a privately run soup kitchen in Paris discovered by accident that if it made soup with pork neither Muslims nor Jews would eat it. This "identity soup," as it came to be called, served as the rallying cry for those explicitly considering Europe to be white and Christian, for those jingoistically calling for "Ours before the *Others*." The outcry for or against this expression of continental nativism notwithstanding, this sort of private expression would be beyond the reach of state restriction in the U.S. (though a number of municipalities in France subsequently banned it). The neoliberalizing of race accordingly entails the delimitation of public interventions to curtail racisms and the discriminations on which they invariably rest.

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The social traumas of post-Katrina New Orleans offer ample illustration of these shifts from the pastoral care of welfarism to the curtailed neoliberal state in the case of the U.S., leading the way both in definition and implementation of what we can properly now mark as the Age of Neoliberalism.

In the past couple of budget cycles, hyper-conservatives in the U.S. have targeted programs for the poor because they offer easy fiscal and political targets, and convenient ideological rationalizations. At the same time, defense budgets, whether narrowly or broadly interpreted, have spiraled upward. Thus, the defense budget for FY2006 increased five percent from the previous year and almost twenty-five percent from its 2002 total. The $40 billion worth of cuts in the 2006 budget projections were focused overwhelmingly on social programs like student loans, health care, and welfare for the poor. If one factored into the figure for the defense budget the entire range of institutional apparatuses sustaining the military presence at home and around the world (including $35 billion for Homeland Security, funds to fight in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the considerable sums for their respective reconstructions), the total would reach a staggering $900 billion, up roughly thirty percent since 2002.

Funding for education, health, housing, and transportation, as well as emergency relief, has been cut repeatedly. Since 2003, when it was incorporated into the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been reduced by ten percent (if President Bush had had his way the cuts would have come closer to 25 percent). Between 2002 and 2004, for instance, states cut their budgets supporting public higher education by a total of ten percent, adjusted for inflation. While first-rate public universities today receive only five to twenty-five percent of their operating budgets from their states, they typically are able to spend half or less on education per student than top-tier private universities. Students of color are overwhelmingly educated at public institutions, when they make it into higher education at all, while private universities are the preserve of wealthier whites. The cuts have had a debilitating effect on disaster preparedness and reconstruction, undercutting the agency's ability to sustain support for those most in need, as witnessed in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and ceding to uncoordinated private charities the responsibilities of evacuation, clean-up, reconstruction, and care. The results have been more disastrous than the natural event of the hurricane itself.

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As with personal or corporate bankruptcy, the emaciation of the social support sector due to the shrinking of government revenues forces a radical restructuring of public programming and state governments. The immediate implication of such state restriction and ultimately devastation is to redistribute wealth upwards. The point, explicitly articulated by neoconservative pundits and neoliberal proponents, including politicians, is to put more wealth into the hands of the already wealthy. Expenditures of the wealthy (largely on themselves), the public is repeatedly told, are supposed to trickle down into jobs for the less well off. (Foreign policy is fueled by the same logic.) But the mission, as much as any, is also to elevate the decision-making, social engineering, and effective powers of the well off. The social effect of state emaciation, accordingly, is not that social spending should end completely. Rather, in being redirected into private hands, it is fashioned by and for the social and political interests of those with capital to spare.

The elevated factions of social class in traditional racial states (the U.S. and South Africa are prime examples) have traditionally been white, or more precisely representing the interests of those occupying the structural class position of whiteness (and maleness). The U.S. Census Bureau reports that in 2000 the top five percent of white wage earners received wages almost double those of the top five percent of black wage earners. Unsurprisingly, the largest contributors by far to political campaigns are white men. Under this mandate of radical privatization, funded institutions and activities become dramatically less diverse in their programming, scope, commitments, and, notably, in their employment patterns. Given that the language of race itself—not just as an organizing principle of the state but as an analytic category for social critique—is being eroded and erased, it becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to sustain a critical focus on the pernicious effects of this restructuring.

I am suggesting that race is a key structuring technology not just of modern state formation but also, more contemporarily, of neoliberalism as the driving condition of late modern capitalist state formation. Neoliberalism represents the shift from a caretaker or pastoral state of welfare capitalism to a "traffic cop" or "minimal" state, ordering flows of capital, people, goods, public services, and information. In diluting, if not erasing, race in all public affairs of the state, neoliberal proponents nevertheless seek to privatize race alongside most everything else. Categories of race disappear from statistical ledgers of discrimi-

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nation, thus leaving untouched the condition they are supposed to articulate, to mark and express as well as identify and assess. Devoid of race in the public sphere, racism—as modes of racially driven exclusion, debilitation, and humiliation—is freed to circulate as robustly as individuals or non-government (or non-government funded) institutions choose in private.

IV. Managing Heterogeneity

Throughout modernity, race fashioned inclusion and exclusion, ordering demographic diversity and shaping population heterogeneity to the reproduced benefit of those structurally in power, invariably identified in the racial scheme as white. With neoliberalism, race is purged from the lexicon of public administrative arrangements and assessments while remaining robust and unaddressed in the private realm. One can ask, then, how heterogeneity and its challenges are managed under neoliberal conditions of racial privatization.

At the center of neoliberal commitments is the principle that people should be free to express and exercise their preferences as they see fit. Since preference expression throughout modernity has been, to a greater or lesser degree, formulated in racial terms, preference expression and its products continue to carry racial weight. Cultural preferences, for instance, remain to a considerable extent racially predictable, as expressed by what music members of racially ascribed groups tend to listen to, what sports they prefer to play or watch, and so on. At the interfaces, this can be the cause of some tension, if not friction. It thus requires some massaging, if not persistent management. Accordingly, the two primary modalities of such racial management are mixture, on the one hand, and duress and invasive violence, on the other.

A. Racial Mixing

Free choice is best informed and exercised through interactions with others, through the free flow of commerce checked and bounded only by the security of agents and their social arrangements. Preferences, after all, can only be successfully expressed and exercised in secure environments. Certainly commerce thrives when people can interact and mix. On this account, mixture is considered to express and expand market possibilities (not unbounded mixture, to be sure, which can spiral out of control, but mixture subject to well-established controls long

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set in place and bounded by racial presumptions about merit, excellence, and beauty, taken as unquestioned givens). Racial mixing may be desirable, but its product, while inflecting determining inputs from each of the ingredients, is exhorted ultimately to mimic the cultural and performative standards of those embodying historical power—in short, of whiteness.

Brazil is often considered the exemplar. Brazilians use varying terms in differing circumstances to make polite reference to people often as lighter or, more occasionally in disparaging terms, as darker than they are in fact. This preference indicates a desire for what whiteness symbolically represents, if not for whiteness itself. It is not unlike what was expressed by the young schoolchildren in Brown versus Board of Education (1954) in the U.S. context. This way of characterizing the matter presupposes some objectivity, some fixity, to the racial palette.

Another way of looking at this color flexibility is to tie it less to the "actual" color of a person, whatever that might mean or however it might be fixed, and more to a rhetoric of social characterization as racially understood. Thus, terms for "lighter" mark the referent in the speaker's eyes (even when it is self-characterizing) as appealing or virtuous, while terms that are characteristically associated with darkness mark their target as the opposite. Livio Sansone reports that his visibly darker survey respondents in Bahia often refer to parents and partners by way of terms indicating lighter colors than appearance seems to suggest. Those who are wealthier would also more likely be designated by lighter color terms than those who are not.

Here the syntax of racial terms effect a semantic field the significance of which is more in their meaning-making than in any claim to the reductive objectivity of their referentiality. By casting this as a tendency, I am not suggesting that racial reference in Brazil has come completely unglued from color assumptions about referents, only that these connections are not as fast and fixed as racial characterization traditionally (pre)tends to presume.

Making blacks and blackness if not invisible then less definitive in the national self-identification and imaginary means that *mixing* effects two contradictory if complementary political dynamics. For one, it makes it far more difficult for those marked as black, as African descended, to organize politically around that self-understanding. If the nation sees itself as mixed (if lured heavily by Euro-mimesis, ethno-racially understood), then emphasizing blackness as the grounds for political organizing flies in the face of national personality, of the

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being of the nation itself. It is seen as a retreat, as reactionary, as needless recourse to an *ancien regime* of race, and so as verging on racism itself. Denial of blackness and indigeneity as categories, character(s), or cultures undermines the possibility of launching a recognizable countermovement. At the same time, mixing (*mestizaje/mesticagem* in the Latin American context) as metonym for Euro-mimesis has tended to render blacks as the unwanted, as the national *familia's* black sheep, the *patria's* illegitimate child.

If a whitening mixture is actually or effectively the official mandate and domineering (though not altogether dominating) discourse, then Indians (mostly) and blacks (a little less so) become inputs in the calculator of mixture. This suggests the inputs themselves are not fixed in place but assume some fluidity, more so historically in the case of Indians than blacks. This instability, stabilized only in the mixed product, makes almost any organization ordered around the terms of input difficult, though not impossible. For one thing, the input categories themselves are kept unstable, with people dropping in and out of them depending on personal circumstances, prospects, relationships, and social relations more broadly. For another, such organizing is largely reactive, and requires considerable conscience- and consciousness-raising simply to enable the conditions of conceptual possibility for the organization to emerge. The volatility and motility of ethno-racial definitions undermine the stability necessary for longer term political effect, exacerbated, as they often have been, by globally dominant institutions and state powers for geopolitical and, lately, neoliberal purposes.

Throughout Latin America, *mestizaje* was married with *blanqueamiento*, or whitening, the pairing presided over by Euro-mimesis and consummated by racial democracy as national commitment. In the longer analysis, the marriage stabilized whiteness at the sufferance of any potential competitors. The conjugation of mixture and Euro-mimesis extends the political power of whiteness as the prevailing structural condition of any racially heterogeneous society through the application of the general principles in and to other local circumstances.

In the name of progressing beyond race, mixing deeply reinscribes the traditional assumptions not just of racial identification, but of racial derogation, denigration, and denial—in short, of racisms. Since the 1980s, various social scientists have demonstrated deep racial disparities on almost every significant social index (life expectancy, income, education, employment, residential access, infant mortality,

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incarceration) in societies robustly marked by racial mixture and by (post)colonial histories of racism (most notably but far from only in Brazil). Yet even as it proves to be a distraction from these indices, racial mixtures reinforce the skewed social conditions represented by race, drawing critical attention away from, and leaving pretty much in place, the traditional structures of racial debilitation.

At the same time, *blanquiamiento* as a policy of whitening undercuts the lure of "passing," so much part of the lore of the United States and to a lesser degree of South Africa. If one can "whiten up," so to speak, by a mix of intercoursing, cultural and even moral *mestizaje*—indeed, where "enlightening" *mestizaje* is projected and promoted as national character, as aspiration—the pull of passing would seem to be largely moot. *Mestizaje*, one might say, is passing made more or less legitimate, manageable, more or less livable (envy and resentment, disdain and denial notwithstanding).

In short, Latin America indicates the ways in which racial mixture is structured in favor of presumptive whiteness as the measure of merit. It signals the direction of racism(s), the silenced but still gripping debilitations, under the normalizing constraints of neoliberal commitments to deregulation and de-unionization, privatization and individualization, reduction in public services, and maximization of free trade. Mixing accordingly offers the mode and metaphor for fixing in place traditional structures and relations of racially conceived power. Mixing is able to work its way in states legible to the forces of global political economy, those states willing and capable of regulating their debt, reducing public expenditures, and sustaining economic growth.

Mixing in this way offers one of the principal ways of regulating heterogeneity in different social circumstances, globally configured. Understood in this way, mixing establishes the horizon of possibility, the limits for heterogeneity, while making it seem as though there are no limits. Sometimes people, even whole populations, refuse to be bound by these constraints, refuse to subject themselves to the discipline of debt regulation and structural adjustment, to denationalization and state restriction—in short, refuse to give up their compelling identifications for the sake of greasing neoliberalism's tracks. Then more invasive technologies of control are invoked by the traffic-cop state. The force of flows becomes more assertive.

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B. Racial Duress: Violence

"Rogue states" are those states that have "proved" for a variety of reasons that they cannot be controlled or managed by the "soft hand" of debt regulation and structural adjustment in the new global scheme of neoliberalism. These are the sort of states identified by George Bush as representing the "axis of evil" (Iran, Iraq, North Korea) as well as Syria, Palestine, Venezuela, and Cuba. If the Euro-mimesis at the heart of racial mixture holds out to those engaged in the mixing the possibility of entering even a diminished whiteness, then rogue states are states (if properly states at all) of various sorts of non-whiteness, structurally understood, of anti-whiteness—which is to say, anti-Americanism. In short, they are states of reconfigured racial definition.

These states represent a more radical difference or otherness than those states properly plugged into the neoliberal global network of robust and unrestricted trade, free markets, and exploitable labor forces and natural resources. Their management logically requires a greater degree of invasiveness, of the imposition of duress or violence to control, than those states where intercourse is considered more appealing. Falling outside the reach of control through commerce, debt regulation, and structural adjustment, they are subjected to increasingly invasive measures of control, their supposed racial distinction opening them to external imposition, restraint, and ultimately violence.

This, then, suggests a new modality of occupying or potentially occupying state formation made possible conceptually by the projection of permanent racial infantilization, humiliation, or what I have elsewhere called "philistinianization." Palestine offers the most obvious example. It has been marked as the first "permanently-temporary" state, to use Eyal Weizman's incisive characterization. State boundaries are rendered impermanent, flexible according to the occupier's needs and whimsical determinations, visible only to the day's militarized cartographic dictates. Permanent impermanence is made the marker of the very ethno-racial condition of the Palestinian, and through the Palestinian to the possibility of the Arab as such. Although Lebanon is the latest case in the transformation from the neoliberal political economy of debt creation and regulation to the necropolitical by disciplining an otherwise unruly population through the threat of immediate and painful death, Palestine has embodied this form more or less since 1982. Palestine is the laboratory case for neoliberal regulation through aggression and violence.

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Hamas and Hizbullah have been widely characterized recently as "states within states," in good part because of the services they offer, the sense of militarist self-defense they have self-consciously constructed, and the loyal following they have conjured. While there is a sense to this, it is overly simplistic and predicates the picture as a contrast and competitor to "legitimate" and conventional state formations. It is more compelling to understand both as representing robust, organized responses from the realm of civil society to the sort of state demise and destruction that an aggressive, militarized neoliberalism has signaled for those state formations not passing its test for legitimacy. In this sense, such organizations are less competitors than complements to states shirking their longer-standing caretaker commitments in favor of their purely repressive functions. The Sadrists have recently announced a similar undertaking to establish services throughout Iraq for inhabitants of all affiliations failing to receive support from a state close to perishing.

The Palestinian in this conceptual scheme stands for one always between, always ill-at-ease, homeless at home if never at home in his homelessness. He is the explicit embodiment of Levinas's facelessness: shifting, shiftless, unreliable, untrustworthy, nowhere to go, nowhere to be, the persona of negativity, of negation, of death's potential. He is the quintessential Nobody, as Memmi characterizes the figure of the colonized, the embodiment of enmity, almost already dead. The territory of the state, at any rate, is multiply divisible, broadly between three islands but more locally between multiplying settlements, both overlooking and cutting off one local population from another. Indeed, the determination of the local, of who belongs and who does not, of the very meaning of occupier, is being rendered increasingly and deliberately ambiguous, doubtful. Possession is nine-tenths of belonging, of being, to twist a cliché.

This self-estrangement, this *unheimlich* homelessness, is instrumentalized through the elevation of the state's security apparatus as the primary mode of governmental rationality and instrumentality. The main modalities of the terrorizing state today include targeted assassinations, expulsions, threatened deportations, "collateral damage," perpetual imprisonments, and "preventive" detentions under the most trying conditions, accompanied by incessant provocations. Emergent leadership and political elites are constrained, if not killed. Proliferating checkpoints make Palestinian movement all but impossible, painfully snail paced, and they make life miserable. Access especially to

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and within city centers is open and closed according to the calculations of security risks, military movements, and political whim. The population is economically and politically isolated, starved of the means to even a modicum of stable social life. Access to work and workplaces, hospitals, and education is severely restricted. The availability of food, medicine, and other basic necessities is carefully managed and manipulated. People die daily as much from debilitation as from bullets in numbers that do not show up on the daily roster of the dead.

The territory of the targeted population is reduced to a state of perpetual siege through closure and curfews, encirclement and sanctions, invasion and repression. Walls are erected, barriers go up, gates are locked, roads blocked, access denied. All critical opposition and any cross-societal solidarity are rendered unpatriotic, their "perpetrators" considered traitorous and treacherous, subject to the high crime of treason, and they can be incarcerated without trial. Ornery organic leaders are marginalized or "disappeared" by one means or another, their replacements handpicked in the name of a democracy promised or imposed. "We want you to choose your leaders, only not him. Or him. Or him…That one will be good so long as he has been trained in the West, one of us, understands our ways, is on our payroll." It is democracy *for* the damned, but not *of* them, as the response to the Hamas electoral victory has more than amply evidenced. If this is the prevailing racial modality for Palestinians, it is not restricted to them, or to assertion only by Israel. As Monica McAlister has remarked regarding the United States, the point has been not merely to support Israel in its "palestinianizing" ventures, "to act with them," but to emulate Israel in circumstances deemed similar, "to act like them" *vis-à-vis* the Middle East and Muslims, and perhaps more generally (i.e., Venezuela, Cuba). It just may be that we are all potentially Palestinians today. But is the potential for "philistinianizing" in each of us, too?

These forms of repression sooner or later prompt resistance from those subjugated and repressed by their measures. Resistance takes many forms, ranging from lack of cooperation to suicide bombings. The modes of resistance most likely to show some success concern themselves with building a more sustained coalitional movement, across ethno-racial distinction and class, national boundaries and religion, gender and generation. Even when targeted "surgical" strikes are ordered, resistance might emerge at great risk, as in Lebanon when Israel invaded in the summer of 2006, or when Palestinian women in

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Gaza bandied together to surround a Hamas house the Israeli military was targeting for air strikes.

Neoliberal jurisdiction thus conjures a set of racisms in which mixture constitutes the national imagination, the (self-)image of the nation. Tanned whiteness and Euro-mimesis become national embodiments. The frivolity and conviviality of carnival and soccer/golf/surfing/skiing become its coloring of culture while the whitening of class elevation and the blackening of impoverishment become its ends. The racial structuring of life's possibilities and delimitations for those who do not "fit"—ultimately the violent rearrangement and *disruption* of the conditions of life and death itself—are unspoken.

V. Cordial Racism

The delicate link between racelessness and racism, mixture and violence, that neoliberal social arrangements forge is revealed most tellingly by the notion of *racismo cordial* ("cordial racism"). Cordial racism offers an illuminating conceptual summary of raceless racism's logic, neoliberally licensed. The concept of cordial racism explicates exclusion or devaluation, though in terms carefully and self-consciously race-neutral. It is a mannered racism (even exaggeratedly mannerist), behavior by the book, racism knowingly in denial. The denial can assume two forms. The first claims that I cannot be racist (saying or doing something racist) because it is not in me, I am not intending it, how should or could I have known it to be racist…What I have said or done is not directed at any individual, and in any case I have treated you as I would anyone in such circumstances.

The other form is to deny that I intend anything mean: It's just a joke. I say these things about all kinds of people (races, genders, people from other parts of the country, indeed, even about members of my own group). A recently popular song in Brazil characterized a black woman as "stinking like a skunk." In the uproar that followed, the song was banned and the singer charged with racism, now a felonious crime in Brazil. This led one comedian to quip dismissively that, "It is natural that people stink, independently of their race."

Here, curiously, the claim to equalize meanness serves to *negate* in two related ways. It is a negation, first and obviously, of the specific wrong—racism—directed at this target. Secondly, it is a failure to recognize, to comprehend, the ways in which traditional victims of racism (almost invariably shades of black-brown or black-associated

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people) are targeted over and over. It fails to consider how this particular targeting at this time reinforces the accumulated targeting (both historically and contemporarily), exacerbates the vulnerability, reiterates the charge of inferiority, sanctifies exclusion, and concretizes and repeatedly cements in place the group's or individual's marginalization through humiliation. That is in fact how everyday racism works, as Philomena Essed has demonstrated so effectively.

So "cordial racism" as a concept softens the edge of structural degradation racially ordered—in and for any society *structured-in-whiteness*. Racial reference vaporizes into the very air we breath. The informalities of *racismo cordial* have seeped across the world, the shadow condition of whiteness. It has blinded the privileged to the debilitations of life's conditions, possibilities, and prospects, racially predicated. They cannot see the foreshortening of life itself, racially indexed, or the drudgery racially doubled in the name of individual decency, privatized effort, and personal cordiality.

The state, as might be expected, offers little counterweight here. The pressure of neoliberal global institutions (the World Bank, IMF, multinational corporate investment and bank loans, etc.) to denationalize and to privatize key institutions intensifies as states intervene to redress past inequities or to render economic distribution more equitable. So the state remains the nemesis of civil society and its social movements, and continues to provide little if any prospect for even identifying, let alone curtailing, racisms rather than prompting new modalities of their expression.

Cordial racism trades on race without naming it as such. If there is no race, there can be no racial harm—so no racism. Evaporation alchemizes the structural into the individual, the pernicious into the cordial, the public behind the veil of ignorant privacy, racisms into the virtues of mixed race (*mestizaje/mesticagem*). Mergence is emergence from the chilling fog of race into denial, the left behind, the new untouchable, the shadow of the shadow. We no longer need to do anything about racism, for there is nothing to do. And there is nothing to do because the index to the condition no longer exists. It is no longer thinkable, so no longer to be bothered about. A new day. Race is so…yesterday, racism so…not us.

The racisms resurrected by neoliberal virtualization are racisms denuded of their conceptual referents. In their muteness, they are racisms unspoken yet unapologetic. Cordial to the bitter end.

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Racial evaporation prompts racial skepticism. It prompts skepticism of the very wrongs being claimed to offend in the first instance. Where's the offense? How bad can it be? The offense, if admitted, is less about the exclusions, inequities, or iniquities prompted by the racial characterization so much as it is an offense against society as such for invoking the offending term to begin with. The harm identified is less to the individual or group who have consequently suffered loss than to the society for having to deal with the nonsense of race itself. Can we just get over it, ignore it, *will* it into oblivion as though it never existed and left no legacy? It once marked individuals, to be sure, but now it has (and should have) no reference point, no measure, no determination.

It is often remarked consequently that, in general, racism is the product of ignorance. Not knowing better, whether on the part of individuals or institutions, leads to discriminatory expression, to derogatory reference, to failing to address social issues, to the all too easy possibility of ignoring problems because they aren't identified to begin with. Racism also makes possible the not asking, the failure to collect data, the grounds for ignoring the invisible, and, by extension, the refusal to address deep social inequities which aren't recognized as iniquitous precisely because they are not recognized at all. Racism, in short, is as much cause as effect.

VI. Conclusion

The conceptual and material conditions and implications, effects and challenges of *raceless racisms*, of racist informalisms and individualization, of mannered racisms and racial avoidance amount, in short, to the complex of neoliberalizing racisms. The expansive, almost horizonless proliferation of racially significant, inflected, or suggestive terms globally distributed (many with shifting meanings not only across space and time but from one user or user-group to another) speaks to the complexity of racial arrangements. Yet it refers also to the varieties and range of racial investment.

We can see exemplified here the more or less informal identification of race with class formation. Whiteness on this score amounts to the structural condition identified with relative wealth, education, social privilege, standing, access, and advancement. Blackness structurally, by contrast, can be conceived as exclusion or restriction on these indices. Individuals being elevated along these dimensions are taken to be

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white(r), to be "whitening up." It is also the case that the line of argument followed here reveals how the otherwise attractive celebration of mixture threatens to draw attention away from the materialities of racial injustices, of the debilitating exclusions produced and effected by racisms.

It follows that the individualizing of discrimination and exclusion, and the slipperiness as well as ghost-like quality of racial terms, make it an often thankless, even burdensome task to point out racist discrimination. Critics of racisms are viewed as akin to whistleblowers and often treated analogously—as spoil sports, or paranoid, or just plain delusional, seeing wrong by invoking terms the prevailing social order claims to reject. Racist exclusions accordingly become unreferenced even as they permeate sociality. They are often unrecognizable because society lacks the terms of characterization or engagement. When recognizable, however, they are more often than not in deep denial—the ghost in the machine of neoliberal sociality.

There are two further considerations barely discernible in the preceding line of analysis. The history of racial configuration is profoundly linked in its emergence, elaboration, and expression, to death and violence, variously articulated. Fred Moten has noted that black social life is one angled towards death, both physical and social. Blackness, historically conceived, is "being-towards-death." One could perhaps generalize the point without diminishing the particular and quite pressing exemplification of the principle embodied in the modern histories of blackness. The intense modern experience of any group that has been conjured principally as the object of racial configuration will find its sense of self mediated, if not massaged and managed—in short, *threatened*—through its relation to death. What traces do the voluminous legacies of racially prompted death and violence leave in the making and making over, the remaking, of racially marked communities imagining themselves anew?

Different "minoritized" groups react to this mediation in different ways. For Jews, the slogan "Never Again," articulated by Emil Fackenheim as the 614th biblical commandment, internalizes a vigilant aggressiveness expressed as survival at almost any cost. Radical Muslim political theology rationalizes the violence of its response to what Philomena Essed revealingly identifies as humiliation in terms of the lure of a liberatory reward in the afterlife. American Indians suffer the liquidation of their interests, first in the melancholy of disaffected sociality and in some regional states more recently in the turn to con-

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ventional electoral politics. Blacks respond variously to their persistent minority status and repeated (often spotlighted) invisibility. One type of response includes a turn to an insistent visibility of cultural performance, sometimes celebrating a counter-violence in the wake of a persistent challenge to self-confidence. Another reaction is racially driven political organizing, by assimilating or integrating as best as conditions allow, or (as in the case of Latin America) by an effort to amalgamate through mixing. All responses have decidedly varying results. In each instance, the valence of death lingers, if only as a negative dialectic, modulating the inevitable melancholy or aggressiveness vying for the sense and sensibility the group comes to have of itself.

Virtually every dominant structural or policy response by the state to this relational, racially inscribed "being-towards-death" that insists on what I have characterized as Euro-mimesis once more "minoritizes" the contributions and concerns of the historically "diminutized" and devalued. These responses thus reinscribe the racially excluded as secondary social citizens, as burdens of state largesse. The state suppresses their contributions in their own right to state formation or social reconstruction while silencing the terms of reference for even registering such contributions. In short, they offer both the precursor and perfect exemplification of neoliberal commitment to consumption *sans* the source of production, to pleasure denuded of guilt, excess unrestricted by constraint, fabrication unanchored from fact.

Anti-racist social movements mobilize for greater social recognition, access, equality, and protection from discrimination when focused on race as the principal organizing feature. They will more likely succeed in enabling greater recognition than produce any significant material benefits or dramatic social improvements, as Michael Hanchard has demonstrated in the case of Brazil's *Moviemiento Negro*. Vigorous access, equality, and diminished discrimination require ongoing, relentless, scaled social challenge and change around residential improvements and interraciality, significantly better educational opportunities from the earliest age, steady employment, and public recognition and general enforcement of the importance of antidiscrimination regimes. The ongoing tensions between anti-racist transformation, racelessness, socio-class divisions, persistent debilitations, and variations on the devastations of everyday life reveal in their ambivalence and ambiguity the enormous challenges to face down a half millennium of periodically renewed racial rule. ◉

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