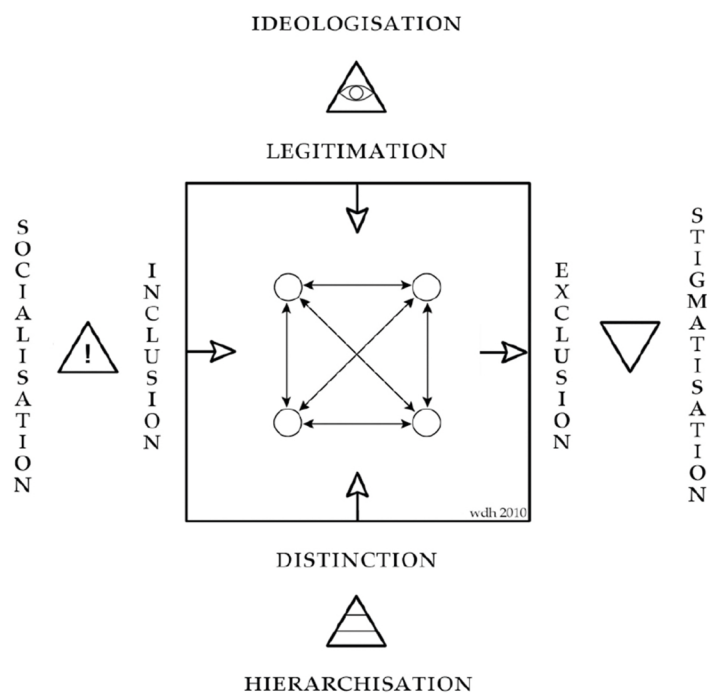


Iris Wigger, Sabine Ritter (Eds.)

# Racism and Modernity

Festschrift for Wulf D. Hund



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## Contents

Preface	1
<b>THE CONSTITUTION PHASE</b>	
The Purity of Blood in Early Modern Spain A New Perspective <i>Max S. Hering Torres</i>	6
"White Like Us" Early Modern King Kongs and Calibans <i>Gary Taylor</i>	31
<b>THE SYSTEMATISATION PHASE</b>	
Artificial Persons, Natural Sub-Persons Hobbes as Aristotelian Contractarian <i>Charles W. Mills</i>	55
Proto-Racism Carolina in Locke's Mind <i>Robert Bernasconi</i>	68
'Race, Class and Nation' Aspects of the Genesis of 'Modern' Racism in Eighteenth-Century France <i>Werner Goldschmidt</i>	83
Natural Equality and Racial Systematics Selected Aspects of Blumenbach's Anthropology <i>Sabine Ritter</i>	102
Removing Indians, Managing Slaves, and Justifying Slavery The Case for Intersectionality <i>David R. Roediger</i>	117
A 'Race' in the Making Robert Knox and the Racialisation of the Irish in Nineteenth-Century British Anthropology <i>Iris Wigger</i>	131

The Origin and History of the Idea of Race <i>Audrey Smedley</i>	149
Racialising Bones and Humanity The Scientific Abuse of Australian Aboriginal Human Remains in Nineteenth-Century German Physical Anthropology <i>Antje Kühnast</i>	162
"All is Race" Benjamin Disraeli's Conceptions of Inclusion and Exclusion <i>Simone Beate Borgstede</i>	179
<b>THE POPULARISATION PHASE</b>	
Antisemitism – the Racist Form of Jew-hatred <i>Micha Brumlik</i>	194
A Letter from Abraham Geiger to Karl Nauwerck <i>Lars Lambrecht</i>	207
'White' Nation – 'White' Angst The Literary Invasion of Australia <i>Stefanie Affeldt</i>	222
Blackfacing Britain <i>Michael Pickering</i>	236
Promoting Racism Elements of Trademark Stereotyping <i>Malte Hinrichsen</i>	257
African Sexuality Reloaded Discursive Shots at Explaining HIV/AIDS <i>Nadine Anumba</i>	273
Contributing Authors	292

## Preface

Freedom and Equality of all humans are concepts based on the theories, norms and institutions of globalised Modernity. They were contemplated in Early Modernity, unfolded during the Enlightenment, and exerted in the course of the Long Nineteenth Century. However, fundamental ambivalences of Modernity appeared from its beginning and still remain present. They contradict the intended and postulated universal validity of these principles through disassociation and exclusion: when in view of the riots in London and other major British cities people are convicted for shop-lifting to severe imprisonment for months and detained without a chance for release on bail in a constitutional state, and when class-bias driven public outrage seems to triumph over the overdue analysis of the wider social causes of rioting, and the underlying deep structural inequalities and polarisation of British society; when the export of human rights and democracy is debated in the West and then practised in a bellicose way in Iraq or Libya; when in a politically controversial and deeply gendered act headscarves for women are banned in French schools while there seems no public outcry regarding Sikh men in Britain wearing their traditional head-dress, and when hereby the modern maxim of religious freedom, intended as a universal good, is compromised when it comes to the freedom of 'another' religion; when Germany is concerned about allegedly abrogating itself,<sup>1</sup> and opinions comprehended scientific about the 'natural' faculties of humans and cultures thereby reach up-most political and social explosiveness.

Wulf D. Hund, whose scholarly work is honoured with this edited collection, has for decades committed his research to the analysis of the ideas and manifestations of these ambivalences and dialectics in the course of the centuries. His works' main focus is the historical-sociologically grounded dissection of racism as a "social relation, ... through which different grades of humanness are postulated".<sup>2</sup>

As a decisive element of "Negative Societalisation" this relation is also an integral part of modern societies. Racism, so the analytical core of the theory, is to be analysed as the central modus of Negative Societalisation:

- 1 "Deutschland schafft sich ab" ("Germany is abrogating itself") is the title of an in Germany presently highly popular and controversially discussed volume of the former Finance Senator of Berlin and Social Democrat Thilo Sarrazin.
- 2 Wulf D. Hund, *Rassismus*, in: Hans Jörg Sandkühler, ed., *Enzyklopädie Philosophie*, 2nd ed., Vol. 3, Hamburg 2010, pp. 2191-2200, here p. 2191. All translations are ours.



"Societies structured by domination are not held together by their own culture and tradition alone, but also through grading those of the others as inferior, or denying them entirely".<sup>3</sup> The unity of subaltern and dominant groups creates subhumans, whose construction affects the Social in two ways: On the one hand, an outside of society is created through the others' discrimination and dehumanisation, which then defines inwardly an array of accepted sociability: "Inclusion is organised through Exclusion".<sup>4</sup> In this way, it is possible to generate and recognise individualities within the hierarchically structured polity and enable their integration – despite their persisting unequal life prospects and status. Those however, who are excluded from the legitimate society, are denied any individual profile. They are stigmatised, de-socialised and reduced to representatives of an inferior cultural or racial type. In the sense of Negative Societalisation, racial types include individuals who are culturally denounced and thus constructed as the other.

In a recent article, Hund has explained this inter-relation with a diagram that clarifies the pattern of Negative Societalisation and makes it transparent through abstraction.<sup>5</sup> A society, in which different groups interact in diverse connections and intertwinements, is accordingly constituted through four forces: through *Legitimation*, which is – in societies structured by domination – reliant on ideology. Through *Inclusion*, the success of which is secured by means of socialisation. Through *Distinction*, whose basic modus is hierarchisation. These forces permeate through society, as the arrows within the social nexus show. Society is stabilised as a consequence of a fourth force, which is operating with stigmatisation: *Exclusion*. It displaces from the societal cohesion while at the same time forming an essential part of its fabric: "With its help social cohesion is organised in a racist fashion through energies that are directed toward the outside and against others, though they are generated and fed through inner conflicts".<sup>6</sup> The contradictions of Modernity, the synchronicity of the slogan "Liberté – Égalité – Fraternité" with slavery, race typologies, the disenfranchisement of women and colonised peoples, antisemitism, class judiciary, and islamophobia (and the relative struggles against them) can in the light of this be seen as social facts that are linked by a constitutive rather than a contingent relation.

3 Id., *Negative Vergesellschaftung, Dimensionen der Rassismusanalyse*, Münster 2006, p. 123. For more information on Wulf D. Hund's research and a full list of his publications, see [www.wulfdhund.de](http://www.wulfdhund.de).

4 Ibid.

5 On this and the following cf. Wulf D. Hund, *Negative Societalisation. Racism and the Constitution of Race*, in: id., Jeremy Krikler, David Roediger, eds., *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, Berlin etc. 2010, pp. 57-96, here pp. 85-87; the diagram can also be found on the cover of this edited collection.

6 Wulf D. Hund, *Negative Vergesellschaftung*, p. 125.

This edited collection investigates in seventeen essays, especially written for Wulf D. Hund, the connection between Racism and Modernity. Friends and colleagues describe, illustrate, reflect on and explain facets of the genesis of modern racism from its constitution in early Modernity, and its systematisation and scientification in the Enlightenment, to different parameters of its popularisation – partly explicitly, partly implicitly, as modes of a Negative Societalisation.

Reflecting on the constitutional phase of modern racism, *Max S. Hering Torres* analyses the 'limpieza de sangre' in early Modern Spain, and *Gary Taylor* the racialised King-Kong myth from the sixteenth century onwards.

*Charles W. Mills* opens the series of chapters discussing the philosophical, scientific and political systematisation of modern racism, with a reflection on Thomas Hobbes as an Aristotelian Contract theorist. *Robert Bernasconi* critically reviews John Locke's position on the issue of slavery, while *Werner Goldschmidt* elaborates on the genesis of racism in France in the Age of Enlightenment. *Sabine Ritter* addresses ambivalent aspects in the thought of German anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in the eighteenth century. The nexus between race, slavery and capitalism in the USA before the Civil War is illuminated by *David Roediger*. Representations of the Irish as a race in the work of the infamous race-theorist Robert Knox and the context of Victorian Anthropology are examined by *Iris Wigger*. *Audrey Smedley* explores aspects of the origin and development of 'race'. *Antje Kühnast* analyses the abuse of the human remains of Australian Aborigines through German Anthropology in the nineteenth century. *Simone Borgstede's* discussion on the concept of race in the work of the English conservative politician and novelist Benjamin Disraeli closes this section. Formally, as well as with regards to content, his work can be considered as the intersection of the systematisation and the popularisation of race and racism.

*Micha Brumlik* opens the third and final section, on the popularisation phase, with a chapter that theorises antisemitism as the racist specificity of Jew-hatred. *Lars Lambrecht* presents an edited, contextualised and commented letter from Abraham Geiger, dating from the eve of the German 1848 revolution, as a new source on Jewish emancipation. With *Stefanie Affeldt's* contribution the focus shifts from Europe to Australia: the politics of whiteness in invasion novels are the subject of her analysis. *Michael Pickering* reflects on minstrelsy in Great Britain as a concept different from its American model. *Malte Hinrichsen* explores the popularisation of racism in advertising and *Nadine Anumba* closes the book with an analysis of the discourse on HIV/AIDS in different German newspapers and magazines of the 1980s.

On the basis of the originality, internationality, and the historically grounded analytical insight of the individual chapters and their collective intellectual vigour this edited collection aims at providing a multi-faceted and substantial contribution to the discussion of the connection between Racism and Modernity. As editors we hope sincerely that *Racism and Modernity* will do Wulf D. Hund and his work honour, and enrich the academic field of racism analysis in many ways.

We owe the completion of this edited collection mostly to its authors, who have kindly provided us with a treasure of inspiring, fascinating and thought-provoking texts. Secondly, we would like to thank Antje Kühnast and Stefanie Affeldt very much, both fellow authors, without whom we could not have completed this book on time. We are greatly indebted to Antje, who proofread – with great competence, sensitivity and patience – the manuscript, and Stefanie, who impressed us with her technical ingenuity and patience with us, and was in charge of the layout of the book. Together with Dagmar Engelken, they also did a wonderful job – translating, with professionalism and great speed, three chapters from German into English. Thank you!

We also would like to warmly thank our colleagues and friends at Loughborough University, England, who kindly supported us in the proof-reading of chapters written by non-native English speakers: Thank you to Daniel Conway, John Downey, Dave Elder-Vass, Emily Keightley, Jim McGuigan, Karen O'Reilly, Michael Pickering and Martha Wörsching.

As former students of the Hamburg University for Economics and Politics (now Department of Socioeconomics at the University of Hamburg), we share our alma mater with Wulf D. Hund, who has been working here as a highly dedicated and inspiring Professor of Sociology for a long period in his career, and up to his forthcoming retirement. With him we embrace this place as our 'intellectual home', and we are proud and immensely grateful to have won the generous support of the *Gesellschaft der Freunde und Förderer des Fachbereichs Sozialökonomie (vormals HWP) e.V.* – that is the Association of the Friends and Supporters of the discipline Socioeconomics (formerly HWP) – for this edited collection. Many thanks!

We would like to dedicate *Racism and Modernity* to Wulf D. Hund to mark the occasion of his retirement in autumn 2011.

Sabine Ritter and Iris Wigger

## The Constitution Phase

# The Purity of Blood in Early Modern Spain

## A New Perspective

Max S. Hering Torres\*

The aim of this chapter is to present an interpretative model of the "purity of blood" idea in Spain from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, in order to highlight the variability of the concept. Towards this end, we propose a new perspective on this subject through an exploration of three layers of meaning: sets of norms, society and discourse. The article will discuss the way in which norms were adjusted to social changes and examine how positive law opened up new spaces for social coexistence. On the basis of these observations, we attempt to reconstruct the operations of the discourse of power as a means of legitimization found both in law and society, the intention of which was to endorse the socio-normative functionality of the system of purity of blood in Spanish society. This discussion takes the form of an initial set of questions which encourages the development of a new interpretation.

### Introduction

According to the canon-law of the Middle Ages and early modern period, in Europe the children and grandchildren of heretics were prohibited from holding both ecclesiastical and public offices. Even though this prohibition covered two generations, the principle of purity of blood proved even more iniquitous with regard to the harm it caused neophytes. According to the dogma of purity, all descendants of Christian converts in Spain were prohibited from holding benefices, entering into clerical and secular positions or becoming members of universities (*Colegios Mayores*), military and religious orders and, of course, the Inquisition, if scrutiny of their genealogy (*información genealógica*) revealed a stain in their lineage. This meant that, in general, the descendants of Jews and Muslims who had converted to Christianity were relegated to an inferior social and professional position due to their alleged "stained origin", regardless of their possible Christian fidelity and devotion. It is thus evident that the concept of purity of blood served to distinguish "Old" from "New" Christians, thereby establishing a hierarchical relationship which, under the mantle of a supposed Christian unity, conserved ancient antagonisms. The doctrine of pure blood emphasized genealogy and the past, and thus, necessarily, the religious lineage of a person or a group.

\* I would like to thank Sabine Ritter and Iris Wigger for their insightful comments and for inviting me to collaborate in this editorial project in honor of Wulf D. Hund. I am also grateful to Jim McGuigan for his proofreading, as well as to James Weisskopf for his invaluable idiomatic help.

On the basis of past affiliations, the Old Christian was regarded as "pure" and the neophyte as "impure". It must be pointed out that according to this doctrine, it was precisely the process of forced assimilation which brought about the notion of purity of blood. Why? The conversion of the Jews, by force, to Christianity (in 1391, 1414 and 1492), was accompanied by four social transformations in their lives: (1) they were freed from the yoke of anti-Jewish norms, (2) enjoyed new privileges, (3) rose in society and (4) in some cases practiced their Jewish religion under the guise of Christianity (crypto-Jews). In the end, these four factors led to a proportional increase in the fear, mistrust and envy of them as a rising minority group.

This growing collective distrust and suspicion was the basis of a new juridical definition of the Jewish neophyte arising from the notion of impure blood. It is worth pointing out that the dogma of purity of blood initially resulted from what was thought of as the problem of the Jewish converts. Later on, the same system was imposed on the Moriscos (any Muslim of Spain or Portugal who converted to Catholicism), but only beginning with the subsequent conversions of Muslims in 1502 and of mulattoes, mestizos, *tercerones*, *cuarterones* and other gradations of mixed blood after the conquest of America.

### **The Model**

The following section will explore the historical nature, development and conceptual variability of purity of blood to elaborate an interpretative model for the subject. To achieve that purpose, we start with a hypothetical statement of the model, for which the corresponding proofs will be provided later in this essay.

a. Purity of blood may be understood as a concept originally pertaining to a legal category, that is, a *category of normative character*. As a norm it was based on the evident socio-cultural changes arising from conversion to Christianity, and imposed on society (from 1449 to the end of the sixteenth century) as a means of regulating social relations.

b. As a result, the norm of purity of blood determined the social "reality" and everyday life of society and purity also became a *social category* (from 1449 to 1835).

c. For the purpose of justifying relations of power and legitimizing the social reality unleashed by such norms, purity of blood equally turned into a *discursive category* (1547-1675).

On the basis of this conceptual triad, purity of blood may be explained in terms of three levels of meaning (*Bedeutungsebenen*), naturally deter-

mined by their obvious interdependences and interactions. Each level will be outlined with reference to a temporal framework, a geographical framework and, above all, a given practice and knowledge. Based on this theoretical postulate, the structure of this essay follows the above-mentioned order of ideas, with the aim of sustaining the proposed model,<sup>1</sup> step by step, in an empirical manner.

### a. Purity of Blood: A Normative Category

*Purity of blood* may be regarded as a normative category since it originated as a *Sentencia-Estatuto* (statutory sentence) in the City Council of Toledo in 1449. Some authors have stated that "Statutes for the Purity of Blood" existed even before then. Nevertheless, we are unaware of and even doubt the existence of juridical ideas that would have justified their implementation. In the case of the 1449 *Sentencia-Estatuto*, however, we find heated legal controversies in which, on the one hand, its defenders tried to give it validity, while on the other, its critics tried to overturn it. It was in the course of this juridical debate – a discursive blending of jurisprudence and theology at the time – that the legality of the *Sentencia-Estatuto* acquired its strength as a normative category.

On 26 February 1499, Álvaro de Luna, a favorite of King Juan II of Castille (1406-1474), imposed a tax of a million maravedis on the city of Toledo and commissioned a powerful convert, Alonso Cota, to collect it. The mayor of Toledo, Pedro Sarmiento, exploited this situation to initiate a campaign against the tax, the King and also the converts in the city: a campaign which finally led to bloody riots. Once again, both the Jews and neophytes served as scapegoats for the social and economic tensions between the city and the King. After the violent anti-Jewish riots, the Toledo *Cabildo de Jurados and Regidores* (Council of Jurors and Aldermen) promulgated the *Sentencia-Estatuto* on 5 June 1499. Its main paragraph was the following:

[We] pronounce and declare that, insofar as it is well-known, both by canon and civil law, that the converts of Jewish lineage, being of doubtful faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, onto which they frequently spew forth their shallowness, [still] practicing Judaism, may not hold public or private offices or benefices where they may effect injuries, harms or ill treatments to pure [lindos] Old Christians, nor may they serve as witnesses against them.<sup>2</sup>

1 This model was previously developed in my book, Max Sebastián Hering Torres, *Rassismus in der Vormoderne. Die "Reinheit des Blutes" im Spanien der Frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt etc. 2006.

2 "pronunciamos y declaramos que por quanto es notorio por derecho así canonico como civil, que los conversos de linaje de los judios, por ser sospechosos en la

As this passage shows, the term "purity" [limpieza] had not yet emerged. On the other hand, we do find the word *lindos*. According to Menéndez Pidal and Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, this term may be understood as a conceptual precedent for "purity", since *lindo* (pretty, fine, elegant, etc in ordinary Spanish) and *limpio* (clean) derive from the Latin *limpidus* (impeccable).<sup>3</sup> It is likely that *lindo* was related to *limpieza* (purity) in the last three decades of the fifteenth century. It is worth pointing out that in the middle of the fifteenth century the idea of purity of blood had barely developed: it had not yet attained the status of a structured concept based on explicit arguments and was just beginning to evolve into a legal category. The above-mentioned *Sentencia* vaguely refers to "both by canon and civil law" to give it legitimacy without, however, mentioning any specific provisions. So, while we cannot be certain about which norms this referred to, we do know that Castilian law had been restructured during the reign of Alfonso the Wise (1252-1284) and the new laws became known as the *Siete Partidas* (the Seven-Part Code). In fact, a later set of laws, the *Órdenes de Alcalá de Henares* (1348), which confirmed the *Partidas*, revoked an endless number of anti-Jewish norms.

In the absence of solid legal precedents, the authors of the *Sentencia-Estatuto* also resorted to the fear, envy and prejudices which predominated in the Old Christian society. The *Sentencia* declared that the converts were "descendants of the wicked lineage of the Jews" and were not only responsible for practicing Judaism but also for robbing, suppressing and destroying Christian society.<sup>4</sup> In short, it prohibited Jews from holding any and all public positions. The *Sentencia* was employed to expel 14 Jewish converts from their posts, an illegal act, given that it had been approved neither by the King nor the Pope. Pope Nicholas IV (1397-1455) had even condemned the *Sentencia* in a Bull issued on 24 November 1449, *Humani Generis Inimicus*, which condemned the law and excommunicated its authors on the grounds of undermining Christian unity.<sup>5</sup> Even before the Bull,

fé de nuestro Señor e Salvador Jesuchristo, en la qual frecuentemente bomitan de lijero, judaizando, no pueden haber oficios ni beneficios públicos ni privados tales por donde puedan hacer injurias, agravios e malos tratamientos a los christianos viejos lindos, ni pueden valer por testigos contra ellos ...". Antonio Martín Gamero, ed., *Historia de la ciudad de Toledo*, Toledo 1862, published the "Sentencia que Pedro Sarmiento, asistente de Toledo, y el comun de la ciudad dieron en el año 1449 contra las conversos", pp. 1036-1040. The quotation is found on p. 1037.

3 Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*. Ensayo introductorio por Francisco Márquez Villanueva, Granada 1991, p. 13.

4 Martín Gamero, *Historia de Toledo*, pp. 1038f.

5 Vicente Beltrán de Heredia, *Las bulas de Nicolás V acerca de los conversos de Castilla*, in: *Sefarad* 21, 1961, pp. 22-47.



the future Bishop of Coria, D. Francisco de Toledo, the *Relator* Fernán Díaz de Toledo and the Bishop of Cuenca, D. Lope Barrientos had opposed the *Sentencia*. These were examples of the widespread controversy about its legal validity, the details of which are beyond the scope of this essay. Nevertheless, the *Sentencia* went into effect, and although it was annulled on 10 June 1471 because of its obvious legal defects, it paradoxically became a juridical prototype for the rest of the Iberian Peninsula. Gradually, with the approval of both the King and the Pope, the norm, now known as the "Statutes of Purity of Blood", began to spread among a large variety of bodies and institutions, as follows: a number of provinces (Guipúzcoa, 1482, Vizcaya, 1511 and Villa de Espinosa de los Monteros<sup>6</sup>); religious orders (San Jerónimo, 1486; the Dominicans, 1489 and the Franciscans, 1525), the Colegios Mayores (Santa Cruz de Valladolid, 1488, San Clemente de Bolonia, 1488, San Antonio de Sigüenza, 1497, Colegio Mayor de San Ildefonso-Alcalá, 1519); the Cathedral Chapters (Badajoz, 1511, Seville, 1511, Córdoba, 1530, Burgos de Osma, 1563, Valencia, 1566, the Capilla Reyes Nuevos in Toledo, 1530, the Cathedral of Toledo, 1546, and Jaén, 1552), military orders (Calatrava,<sup>7</sup> Alcántara, 1483 and Santiago, 1527), la Casa de la Contratación (the body responsible for colonial trade, 1510) and, of course, the Holy Office of the Inquisition.<sup>8</sup>

To conclude this section, we should emphasize that the "Statutes of Purity of Blood" were mainly implemented in spheres of power. Not necessarily at the pinnacle of power – the Royal Councils – but in those spaces which controlled sinecures, privileges, territorial government or religious indoctrination, or which exercised a monopoly over knowledge and salvation.

### **b. Purity of Blood: A Social Category**

The implementation of the 1449 *Sentencia-Estatuto* (Statutory Sentence) of the Council of Toledo did not automatically lead to the creation of a mechanism for investigating the genealogy of converts. At that time, this was not regarded as a necessity: the collective memory afforded "common knowledge" which allowed the authorities to distinguish between supposedly "pure" and "impure" descent. In the mid-fifteenth century conversions were a recent occurrence (1391-1414), which made it easy to trace a per-

<sup>6</sup> Date unknown.

<sup>7</sup> Date unknown.

<sup>8</sup> There are several incognitos about the date of the implementation of the "Statutes of Purity of Blood" in the Inquisition. See: Hering Torres, *Rassismus in der Vormoderne*, pp. 72-80; especially footnote number 46 on p. 75.

son's genealogy. By the time two or three generations had passed, however, the past became ever more opaque and cloudy for three basic reasons. (1) At that time names and surnames did not have any official character, nor were they at all definitive. Depending on circumstantial needs, each individual customarily used the ones which seemed the most convenient to him or her. (2) An intermingling of New and Old Christians took place; the former changed their residences and acquired baptismal names. (3) Finally, the concept of purity of blood had developed within the framework of the problem of the Jewish converts, and when physiognomy no longer offered clues to a person's religious past, his Otherness had to be "visualized" in terms of impurity of lineage. As a consequence of this phenomenon of mimesis, it became indispensable to create a bureaucratic system that could investigate a person's genealogy, one that was supposed to be structured and well-run so that it could accumulate genealogical knowledge as well as oversee the norms and control their implementation. The "Statutes of Purity of Blood" had spread through a great variety of institutions and bodies in the whole of the Peninsula, creating the need for archives and a network of information that would allow the authorities to ascertain a person's identity. Uncertainty about an individual's past had such an effect on the system of purity of blood that "proofs" (*pruebas* or *probanzas*) began to be applied in the sixteenth century, that is, the genealogical scrutinies known as *informaciones genealógicas*.

Initially, the system, as a normative category, was intended to hinder the social mobility of the New Christians within the existing order and thus protect the spheres of power. It is analytically interesting to ask in this context to what extent this theoretical intention actually coincided with its practice in daily life. To answer this question, it is adequate to examine, from a micro-historical perspective, a typical case of the usage of genealogical information at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It was precisely at that time that fears and prejudices about converts were being revived, due to the migration of New Christians from Portugal to the commercial centers of Castille (1580, 1598 and 1601), as a result of the union between the thrones of Portugal and Spain (1580-1640).

In the case in question, Matías de Pozo, a resident of Alcázar de San Juan, applied for a *colegiatura* or fellowship at the Colegio Mayor of Alcalá de Henares. He had previously been the chaplain of that institution, whose purity of blood had been confirmed (*acto positivo*) in 1618. He had obtained the post of chaplain despite multiple intrigues against him and adverse testimonies which claimed that he descended from a Jewish fam-

ily named Villareal.<sup>9</sup> He succeeded in demonstrating that the allegations were false and part of a plot against him, and thus, four years later, in 1622, hoped to obtain the *colegiatura* at the same Colegio Mayor. However, in accordance with the bureaucratic norms of the times, he had to submit, once more, to a troublesome and costly scrutiny of his lineage.

His application began to run into trouble when Cristóbal de Arias, also a resident of Alcázar de San Juan, likewise sought a *colegiatura* in Alcalá de Henares. Matías de Pozo's election was at risk because Arias came from a prestigious and influential family: some of his relatives had been part of the military orders or members of the Inquisition or chosen for the Council of Alcázar de San Juan. In fact, when Matías de Pozo was summoned to give testimony in the investigation of the Arias family lineage, his attitude showed that he was evidently worried and did all he could to sabotage Arias's chances.

The scrutiny of Cristóbal de Arias's lineage began on 20 March 1623, six months after the one involving Matías del Pozo. This enabled Matías del Pozo to testify in the case of Arias, after Arias had testified in the case of del Pozo.

What hidden tensions can we uncover in this case? Matías del Pozo testified on 3 April 1623 and referred in his testimony to a parish priest of Alcázar de San Juan, Pedro Rodríguez Tocino, who had sent him a letter of great importance for the case. Summarizing its contents, Matías del Pozo stated that Cristóbal de Arias was the descendant of a butcher named Gonzalo Martín Romero. Given that a butcher's occupation was thought to be vile and stigmatized as unclean, the official in charge of the genealogical investigation (= *informador*), Felipe Villegas, ordered Matías del Pozo to present the letter in order to prove his allegations. Claiming that he had destroyed the letter, Matías was unable to comply with the order. As a result, the same investigator did not hesitate to challenge his credibility, arguing that "we cannot give much credit [to Matías del Pozo], since he is a youth and would not have been able to learn about something which took place in Alcazar so long ago".<sup>10</sup> Despite this, the parish priest was summoned to present testimony and, though no one expected it, he confirmed that he had been the author of the letter. Pedro Rodríguez even insisted that the genealogical tree of Cristóbal de Arias was "infected with Jewish blood", due to his probable links with the Chillón-Quintanilla family. To

9 Archivo Histórico Nacional (hereafter AHN), Madrid, Univ., leg. 533, exp. 20, without fol., informaciones genealógicas Matías del Pozo, Alcalá de Henares 1618.

10 AHN Madrid, Univ., leg. 511, exp. 2, witness no. 1, without fol., informaciones genealógicas de Cristóbal de Arias Quintanilla, Alcalá de Henares 1623.

support his allegation, he called upon other witnesses and these, in turn, called upon others to accredit their testimony. The *informador*, who had previously questioned the veracity of del Pozo's declaration, paid special attention to one witness who had been mentioned in the course of other testimonies, and was believed to be the person able to confirm the "impure" and "vile" ancestry of Cristóbal de Arias.<sup>11</sup> This witness was a former *comisario* (an inquisitorial administrator and advisor on religious matters, usually a priest) of the Inquisition, Fernández de Vergara, whose testimony showed undeniable contradictions. He first stated that all the members of the Arias family, including the Quintanilla branch, were Old Christians, of pure blood. However, after the investigator asked him to state the truth or face excommunication, he declared that the genealogical tree of Cristóbal de Arias showed that he was related to the Chillón family of merchants and thus "notoriously of a disqualified lineage".<sup>12</sup>

The hesitancy and ambiguity of the witness led the investigator, Villegas, to question his version and he could detect the strong tensions which existed in the community of Alcázar de San Juan. The *informador* put so much pressure on Fernández de Vergara that the witness later withdrew his testimony and explained the reasons for his version: he pointed out that a long time before, when he aspired to obtain a post as an official of the Inquisition, relatives of Cristóbal de Arias had slandered him and for that reason, after assuming the post, he promptly proceeded to avenge himself and insult the brother-in-law of his arch-enemy Gonzalo Martín Romero as a "butcher [and] Jewish or Moorish dog". In view of the vagueness of this accusation, it is possible that the main intention was to vilify his enemy. In this context it would not matter whether he called him a "Moor" or a "Jew", since the important thing was to show his enemy's unequal status and prove that he was a social inferior deserving exclusion. This development apparently helped to spread the rumor in the community that Cristóbal de Arias's ancestors might have been Jews or Muslims.

It is easy to see how this struggle for power created tensions among the families of a community which later emerged in the investigations. On the one hand, Matías del Pozo did all he could to sabotage Cristóbal de Arias's candidacy in order to increase his own chances to obtain the *colegiatura*, while on the other, Fernández de Vergara, despite the passage of time, still felt a grievance against Arias's ancestors and tried to avenge himself. The other witnesses, who are not explicitly mentioned in this article, endorsed

11 AHN Madrid, Univ., leg. 511, exp. 2, witness no. 14, without fol., informaciones genealógicas Cristóbal de Arias Quintanilla, Alcalá de Henares 1623.

12 AHN Madrid, Univ., leg. 511, exp. 2, witness no. 19, without fol., informaciones genealógicas Cristóbal de Arias Quintanilla, Alcalá de Henares 1623.

his versions and covered him in their testimonies. Unfortunately, the *limpieza*-records for Cristóbal Arias are presently in a deteriorated state and the final conclusion of the investigation has not been conserved. For that reason, let us turn, for the moment, away from the question of whether Cristóbal de Arias was able to get a *colegiatura* at the Colegio Mayor.

Before returning to that matter, it is vital to examine Matías del Pozo's records in order to understand the reasons for his behavior and, above all, to uncover the malevolence between the two candidates and their supporters. We should recall that Matías del Pozo's lineage was scrutinised before Cristóbal Arias' was, a fact which helps to clarify Matías del Pozo's statement and more accurately reconstruct Cristóbal de Arias' attitude. During the investigation of Matías del Pozo's case, Cristóbal de Arias was called to testify on 7 November 1622. The peculiarity of the case is that Cristóbal de Arias testified in favor of Matías del Pozo's application! Nevertheless, it was evident throughout the process that Arias had not testified against Matías del Pozo in order to avoid suspicion. He had apparently mobilized other witnesses to bear witness against his opponent, which is why he did not want to present his case with so much evidence. For example, Bartolomé Sossa, a resident of Madrid, testified on 20 November 1622 that he had heard some guests in a tavern saying how easy it was to join the Colegio Mayor of Alcalá de Henares, because even Matías del Pozo had done it, despite having relatives with vile occupations, like cobblers and tanners. Said occupations were stigmatized as dishonorable activities in this historical period and were often considered to be Jewish trades as well.<sup>13</sup> In addition, this rebuke was aggravated by the testimony of another witness, Alonso de Nieba, who stated the following on 11 December of the same year: "And he said that it seems to him that they would be descendants of the Jews who, in the time of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel, were ordered to be baptized or leave their Kingdoms".<sup>14</sup> After the genealogical investigator for the del Pozo case had recorded 56 testimonies, he searched in the municipal archive of Alcázar de San Juan and was able to find documents which failed to confirm the statements made up to then. He noted that the del Pozo family had acquired lands in 1472 as Christians and that it was therefore inconsistent to state that they had converted when the edict expelling the Jews was promulgated in 1492. In the course of these testimonies the consolidation of two opposing bands became evident, since most of the witnesses hostile to Matías del Pozo spoke in favor of Cristóbal de Arias

13 AHN Madrid, Univ., leg. 533, exp. 20, witness no. 7, fol. 7-10, informaciones genealógicas de Matías del Pozo, Alcalá de Henares 1622.

14 AHN Madrid, Univ., leg. 533, exp. 20, witness no. 10, fol. 12f., informaciones genealógicas de Matías del Pozo, Alcalá de Henares 1622.

and vice versa. Unfortunately, Matías del Pozo's record is also in a poor state: thus, for the moment, we will leave the matter unresolved.

By way of conclusion, it has been shown that Matías del Pozo's statements were not only the result of the fight between rivals, but also an obvious retaliation against Cristóbal de Arias, who had got his acquaintances and relatives to testify against del Pozo. Nevertheless, we should point out something which is not always clear in other investigations: the investigator's interest in solving the case. It was not accidental that the two applicants were asked to prepare a statement that would clarify the precise social tensions existing between them. The "memorials" prepared by Matías del Pozo<sup>15</sup> and Cristóbal Arias<sup>16</sup> referred to the hostility between the two groups, their retaliations and the two men's wish to obtain the fellowship. In short, this case proves how memory operated as a battle weapon and how purity of blood was used as an instrument molded to self-interest in this framework.

But what happened to the two applicants? On consulting the university enrollment book, we find, despite all the plots and intrigues, that both applicants became members of the Colegio. However, an important detail should be considered: the respective dates of their enrollment enable us to deduce that Cristóbal de Arias faced more obstacles than his rival. He presented his application on 20 March 1623 but only joined the Colegio on 12 July 1625;<sup>17</sup> i.e., two years later, whereas Matías del Pozo obtained the fellowship by 1 October 1623 at the latest.<sup>18</sup> By the time the genealogical inquiry was over, the genealogical researchers had recorded no fewer than 276 statements, to which should be added the 294 testimonies related to the investigation of Matías del Pozo in 1618. In other words, the inquiries about the two candidates turned into a "genealogical odyssey" in which more than 570 testimonies were taken. Although del Pozo did not manage to ruin the candidacy of his rival, he undoubtedly obstructed it, as Arias had to wait more than two years to join the Colegio. In the light of this occurrence, it is surprising that the argument based on "impurity" should have been favorable to the less-privileged applicant and worked to the detriment of the one enjoying a higher social status. One characteristic of the case was that the exaggeratedly adverse and hostile testimonies brought

15 AHN Madrid, Univ., leg. 533, exp. 20, witness no. 10, fol. 14, informaciones genealógicas de Matías del Pozo, Alcalá de Henares 1622.

16 AHN Madrid, Univ., leg. 511, exp. 2, without fol., informaciones genealógicas de Cristóbal de Arias Quintanilla, Alcalá de Henares 1623.

17 AHN Madrid, Univ., lib. 1233, Libro de Recepciones de Colegiales, fol. 67.

18 Ibid., fol. 63.

out, from the start, the influence of the candidates' respective social standings and their lust for power.

We have seen how, against this backdrop, the descent of each candidate was simply a fabrication supported by witnesses: the versions which favored or discredited them reflected the personal, family or economic ties each had to those who testified. The notions of "rumor" and "truth", reality and fiction, were confused and arbitrarily interchanged in accordance with the fallibility of memory. Thus, memory was constructed from the present, was relative and prone to manipulation and had political and/or social ends. In many cases, memory was simply the reflection of the subjectivity of a group: therefore, under the pretext of purity of blood, the person's renown was transformed into an argument to determine relations of power. We should also recall that an individual's past was reconstructed within a certain context, a cultural context shaped by prejudices against Jewish and Muslim converts. Although the cases involving purity of blood undoubtedly evoke the mechanisms employed in the tribunals of the Inquisition, inquiries into such purity were not based on concern for possible violations of norms. Rather, they resulted from the supposition that impure Christians who sought public office were innately guilty. It is undeniable that this system of segregation perpetuated the hatred against Jews and Muslims in a society where the members of those religions had, due to conversion, partly merged into the general population. In fact, the obsession with genealogical definitions not only perpetuated the presence of the imagined enemy but also the phobia regarding him. To that extent, the alien was an invention, someone who had not existed before but whose fictitious presence was now required to fill a place in society, the whole aim being to justify discrimination and make it effective and, naturally, wield it in favor of oneself and to the detriment of others. To conclude: there is no doubt that purity of blood amounted to a system of social segregation which operated under the pretext of having an enemy, an *Other* whose inferiority would be widely accepted.

### **c. Purity of Blood: A Discursive Category**

As a discursive category, purity of blood was mainly founded on theological ideas<sup>19</sup> (1547-1675). In Spain, its conceptual development originated

<sup>19</sup> It is important to point out while the theological discussion of purity was not absent in the north of the Iberian Peninsula, including the land of the Basques, the historiographical aspect was much more important and led to a nuancing of the arguments which distinguishes that region from the rest of the Peninsula. See: Max Sebastián Hering Torres, *La limpieza de sangre y su pugna con el*

in the justification and implementation of purity of blood undertaken by the Cathedral Chapter of Toledo in 1547. Theological hermeneutics, which claimed a monopoly on the truth, gave the concept validity and imparted legitimacy to a social reality resulting from the norms regarding purity: the statutes of *limpieza de sangre*. We now turn to purity of blood as a discursive category, breaking it down into the following themes: (1) concepts of Judeo-Christian purity, (2) the doctrine of sin, (3) the Crucifixion of Christ, (4) the dogma of Original Sin and, last, (5) the invention of a biological basis for impurity.

(1) *The concept of Judeo-Christian purity and impurity* was an indispensable condition for the construction of the notion of purity of blood. According to the tradition of both the Old and New Testaments, purity is a state which allows mankind to present itself before God. As a corollary, the state of "purity" or "impurity" is the reflection of the moral conscience of a person.<sup>20</sup> On the basis of this notion, Biblical purity may be divided into "Levitical purity" and "inner purity". According to the Old Testament, Levitical impurity basically has to do with states and processes, for example: birth, leprosy, skin diseases, corpses, the emission of semen and menstruation. In addition, to vilify God or have contact with paganism was also considered to be a source of "impurity". In the case of moral transgressions, the offender could purify himself through ablutions, baths or the sacrifice of unpolluted animals.<sup>21</sup> For that reason, to attain and preserve purity, it was essential to obey dietary precepts, sacrificial norms and, in general, the moral codes of Leviticus.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ sets forth a critique of "ritual purity" by underlining the importance of "inner purity". This change of moral perspective gave "ritual purity" a subordinate role in early Christianity and it is highly probable that it was only finally removed from Christianity in the third century. The teachings of Jesus Christ became the dogma that a man's state of "purity" or "impurity" was not determined by the food he ate, but rather by his thoughts, feelings, words or acts. This ethical mandate implied a drastic change, since morality shifted from a concept of external

pasado, in: Torre de los Lujanes, 50, 2003, pp. 105-121 and Mikel Azurmendi, *Y se limpie aquella tierra. Limpieza étnica y de sangre en el País Vasco (siglos XVI-XVIII)*, Madrid 2000, pp. 17-85.

20 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, New York [1966] 2003, pp. 19-78.

21 Leviticus 11; 17; 17, 1-16; 22, 8; 24, 10-23; 11, 32; 15, 7. 16; 1, 1-5, 26. See, above all, Leviticus 4, 1-5, 13. See: Peter Bensch, *Rein und Unrein. Das biblische Sexualtabu*, Gelnhausen 1996, pp. 69-108; and Douglas, *Purity*, pp. 19-78.



purity to an internal one:<sup>22</sup> in Christian thought, "purity" or "impurity" were no longer qualities that could be embodied in or transmitted by objects; rather, they were lodged inside a person's being.<sup>23</sup>

To understand this better, it is worth explaining the conceptual relation between biblical purity and purity of blood. The Archbishop of Toledo, Juan Martínez de Silíceo (1477-1557), called the Levitical rituals perverse practices, given their obvious link with Judaism. Paradoxically, however, he did not hesitate to refer to some principles of Levitical purity when they provided a convenient justification for the purity of Christian blood. In arguing for approbation of the "Statutes of Purity of Blood" before the Cathedral Chapter of Toledo, he cited the Book of Numbers 3 to justify that decision:

Moreover, so that no division may be caused in the Holy Church of God with regard to that Statute, it is shown, by what is written in the Holy Scripture in the Book of Numbers in Chapter 3 where God gave his command, that of the twelve Tribes of Israel, only those who were of the Tribe of Levi would be devoted to the Temple and Priesthood, and on pain of death no one else could be Minister in the Tabernacle and Temple of God.<sup>24</sup>

According to Numbers 3, the divine election of the tribe of Levi is evident from its exclusive right to the tabernacle and the priesthood. In other words, the principle of Levitical purity and the exercise of religious office were interdependent. Martínez de Silíceo extrapolated this principle from Numbers and applied it to the circumstances of the Cathedral Chapter of Toledo, denying groups considered "impure" access to ecclesiastical posts, especially targeting Jewish neophytes. The archbishop challenged his critics and stated that Moses had never been condemned for dividing the Church and that it was thus unfair to attack his own effort to implement the statutes of purity in the Council of the Cathedral. But fanatics like Escobar del Corro, Costa da Mato and Torrejoncillo, among others, distanced themselves from that reasoning and did not appeal to "Levitical purity", relying instead on the New Testament concept of "inner purity".

22 Annette Höing, *Gott, der ganz Reine, will keine Unreinheit. Die Reinheitsvorstellungen Hildegards von Bingen aus religionsgeschichtlicher Perspektive*, Altenberge 2000, pp. 46-51.

23 Mark 7, 18-23. See also Matthew 15, 11-20; 23, 1-39; Luke 11, 39 and James 4, 8.

24 "Item que no sea hacer division en la S.[anta] Iglea [Iglesia] de Dios guardando el dho [dicho] Estatuto muestrase por lo que està escrito en la Sagrada Escritura en el libro de los numeros en el Cap. 3 donde mandò Dios, que de los doce Tribus de Israel solos aquellos, que fuesen del Tribu de Levi fuesen dedicados el Templo y Sacerdocio, y so pena de muerte ninguno otro podia ser Ministro en el Tabernaculo y Templo de Dios". Biblioteca Nacional (hereafter BN) Madrid, *Relación del Estatuto de Toledo*, Ms. 13038, fol. 112. See Numbers 3, 5-10.

(2) St. Augustine (354-430) defined the *principle of sin* by affirming that: "sin is the act against eternal law, whether it be through thought, word or act".<sup>25</sup> The Bible sets forth the many forms of sin and correlates them with normative catalogues of conduct. Nevertheless, in the case of both normative and moral violation, it is not God who punishes but sin itself, because each act "externally has a transitory character, but it is everlasting in its essence".<sup>26</sup> Thomas Aquinas (1225/6-1274) introduced the concept of *macula* (stain) in this relationship: "The stain of sin remains in the soul even when the act of sin is past. The reason for this is that the stain, as stated above ..., denotes a blemish in the brightness of the soul, on account of its withdrawing from the light of reason or of the Divine law".<sup>27</sup> In this sense, to be culpable is a kind of fruit of the sin and a consequence of the inner struggle between morality and concupiscence – something intrinsic to every practitioner of Christianity. But, if concupiscence and sin affect every Christian regardless of his religious lineage, how could theologians justify the purity of blood doctrine by means of the theory of sin? The doctrine of purity of blood once more evidences a profound distortion of the Christian concepts of purity and sin, which were adapted to the predominant situation at that time. Although the Sevillian inquisitor Escobar del Corro was not the first to define *purity of blood*, he was surely the first to do so in a completely Manichean fashion, recurring to the principle of the stain. In his *Tractatus Bipartitus de Puritate* (1623), he declared the following:

Purity is thus the quality which is bequeathed by the ancestors to their descendants, when none of them [the ancestors], as far as memory may reach, descends from Jews, Moors, heretics or converts, and they are not infected by the smallest stain. It [purity] is, in turn, the brightness which is derived when all of the ancestors and parents have constantly observed the Catholic creed and have bequeathed it to their descendants.<sup>28</sup>

As may be seen, this definition of purity allowed for the creation of its own antinomy by employing a semantics of denial and inverting its premise. Escobar presented the following definition of "impurity":

By contrast, impurity is the smallest stain on one's ancestors, who lived in accordance with Mosaic laws, the Muslim sect or heretical beliefs. This

25 Augustinus, *Contra Faustum*, in: *De Vtilitate credendi de dvabus animabus contra fortvnatvm contra adimantum contra epistvlam fvndamenti contra faustum*, Iosephus Zycha ed., Wien 1891 (= *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 25), 249-797, lib. XXII, c. 27, 621.

26 Piet Schoonenberg, *Theologie der Sünde. Ein theologischer Versuch*, Zürich etc. 1966, p. 77. Author's translation.

27 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, see 2, I-II q. 86

28 Author's translation. Juan Escobar Del Corro, *Tractatus Bipartitus De Puritate Et Nobilitate Probanda*, Lugdunum 1637, fol. 51.

impurity is transferred to and inherited by all of the descendants; for that reason, those who are honorable, devout, who always long for purity, have rejected and opposed those men, no matter how loathsome, whose lineage is considered to be infinitely impure.<sup>29</sup>

Impurity of blood was attributed to the neophytes, especially those of Jewish or Muslim descent, with the aim of perpetuating their religious distinctiveness, controlling the process of their assimilation, and, in the end, keeping a close watch on their possible access to power. In accordance with the strategy of their arguments, the apologists of purity of blood applied ideas about stain and sin to Christians of Jewish or Muslim origin or those with heretic relatives. But the creation of this new notion of impurity was diametrically opposed to the principle of sin. Whereas a Christian might be absolved of his sins through repentance, confession, mortification of the flesh and indulgences, a neophyte was guilty of being genealogically impure, an impurity of a perpetual and indelible nature.

(3) *The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the collective guilt of the Jews.* In response to the question of who was to blame for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Christian dogmatism has singled out the Jewish people for nearly twenty centuries. In this sense, the accusation of deicide has been the backbone of the whole body of argumentation about purity of blood.

During the seventeenth century, theologians Vicente da Costa and Francisco de Torrejoncillo declared that the "Hebrews and their descent" were of "notable and ancient nobility" and represented the "people chosen by God".<sup>30</sup> On the surface, it seems astonishing that the Jews who descended from Shem, one of the sons of Noah, should be praised. However, it is understandable for the following reason: the opponents of the "Statutes of Purity of Blood", like Bishop Alonso of Cartagena,<sup>31</sup> the Franciscan monk Gaspar Useda, and the Dominican theologian Agustín Salucio,<sup>32</sup> insisted that Christianity had developed on the basis of Judaism and that in the

29 Author's translation. Escobar Del Corro, *Tractatus Bipartitus*, fol. 52.

30 Vicente da Costa Matos, *Discurso contra los judíos/traducido de lengua portuguesa (sic!) en castellano por el P. Fr. Diego Gauillan Vela ...*, Casa de Antonia Ramirez, Salamanca 1631, pp. 19f.; and Fray Francisco Torrejoncillo, *Centinela contra Judíos*, Julián de Paredes, Madrid 1674, pp. 124f.

31 Manuel Alonso, ed., *Alonso de Cartagena, Defensorium Unitatis Christianae*, C. Bermejo, Imp., Madrid 1943, pp. 66f.

32 See Elvira Pérez Ferreiro, *Francisco de Uceda, El Tratado de Uceda contra los estatutos de limpieza de sangre. Una reacción ante el establecimiento del Estatuto de Limpieza en la Orden Franciscana*, Aben Ezra, Madrid 2000, pp. 65-154 and Agustín Salucio, *Discurso Hecho por Fray Augustin Salucio Maestro en Santa Teologia, de la Orden del santo Domingo, acerca de la justicia y buen gobierno de España, en los estatutos de limpieza de sangre: y si conviene, o no, alguna limitacion en ellos*, BNM, R. 30055, pp. 1-6.

end all men descended from Adam.<sup>33</sup> Since this Christian notion could not be refuted, the only alternative was to accept it, praise the "lineage of the Jews" before the deicide, but, following Christian logic, also to assert that the "Jewish stock" had been cursed after the Crucifixion. In view of the strategy behind this reasoning, it could be argued that the idea of "Jewish malice" responsible for the execution of Jesus Christ invalidated the "divine election" and "ancient nobility" of the Jews, relegating them to the most hateful state imaginable.<sup>34</sup>

Following this line of thought, theologians Da Costa Matos and Torrejoncillo elaborated a theory about the "marks" of the Jews, which were considered to be evidence of the disgrace they suffered for their unforgivable sin.<sup>35</sup> From the time of the Crucifixion, the "Universal Mother" would have taken note of the Jews' lack of belief and marked certain signs on their bodies for the rest of eternity.<sup>36</sup> On some of them, these "inheritable marks" were not obvious, while on others they were clear and impossible to hide. Some New Christians might be recognized by their lengthened spines, which ended in a kind of small tail. From the word for this tail, *rabillo*, Torrejoncillo deduced a pejorative etymology for the word *rabbi*, *rabino*. He was also convinced that the Jews shed blood through their private parts, and a great many maggots entered into and exited from their bodies when they slept. Other characteristics which he insisted revealed Jews and converts were allegedly the shape of their noses or calves, or hunchbacks; their extreme weakness; their lack of cleanliness and the terrible stink of their bodies. The right hand of Jewish children, he suggested, bled at the moment of birth and was stuck to their head. It was also believed that Jewish men commonly menstruated on Fridays. According to Da Costa Matos, a *rabbi* had warned, before his death, that the "Jewish plague" and its sickness – impurity of blood – could only be cleansed with Christian blood, referring to the supposed sacrifice of Christian children during Easter.<sup>37</sup> In this way the idea of the collective guilt of the Jews for the death of Jesus Christ was perpetuated, a culpability that was defined as the inheritable and immutable essence of the Jews. Specifically, it was constructed as an indelible stain which inclined the neophytes to sin.

(4) *The principle of original sin as a "Jewish problem"*. Priest Baltasar Porreño, basing his arguments on biblical passages,<sup>38</sup> discussed the ques-

33 BN Madrid, Ms. 13038, Carta de la Universidad de Alcalá, fol. 63-68, see fol. 64.

34 Costa Matos, *Discurso contra los judíos*, p. 21.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

36 Torrejoncillo, *Centinela*, p. 169.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 169-175.

38 Ezekiel 18, 19-20; Exodus 20, 5.

tion of whether parents bequeathed sinfulness to their children.<sup>39</sup> The argument in favor was essential to the notion of purity of blood, since purity immortalized the principles of guilt and stain through genealogical categories. Hence, such a theory had to be supported by biblical authority. The apologetic tendency of Porreño quickly became evident when he advocated the idea that sin could be inherited. Citing the Bible<sup>40</sup> and above all Thomas Aquinas, he argued that God punished children for the sins of their parents: "Let us proceed and we shall see how God punishes the sins of the parents in the children, a true thing, since Saint Thomas and the Theologians affirm that for the sin of the parents the children may be chastised with corporal punishment".<sup>41</sup> According to Porreño, it was undeniable that the habits of children originated in their parents and therefore God punished the former to remove them from an evil path, as must have been the case, day by day, with the descendants of the murderers of Jesus Christ.<sup>42</sup> With regard to this point, Da Costa Matos' argument resorted to an analogy between original sin and the Crucifixion, comparing them to the bite of a serpent:

These serpents bit the people, as the sacred text says, and another [serpent] bit the world in Paradise; those bitten by that serpent irremediably died and there was no remedy for the wounds of the other, the remedy for that one was to look at the hanged serpent and for these ones, to place one's eyes on Jesus Christ, and his Cross .... They raised Jesus Christ on the Cross, so that the world might see him, and wherever a sinner came to believe in him he found a remedy for his ills, no matter how grave and burdensome they were.<sup>43</sup>

In this passage the author draws a conceptual comparison between the transgressions arising from original sin and the crucifixion, but clearly distinguishes their effects. On the one hand, the Jews would irremediably die because of their crime, and on the other, Christians would find salvation through their faith in Christ. It is clear, in these two cases, how the sin of the parents of mankind, and later, the consequences of concupiscence were both factors which, though inheritable, could be controlled and were compatible with salvation, always providing that the Christian believer kept within the parameters of his religion. By contrast, the Jews' guilt for the Crucifixion was passed down from generation to generation and, despite their conversion to Christianity, would always continue to be a motive for their damnation and eternal death. For many Old Christians, being Jew-

39 "filius non portabit iniquitatem patris", BN Madrid, Ms. 13043, fol. 71, Porreño, *Defensa del Estatuto*.

40 BN Madrid, Ms. 13043, Porreño, *Defensa del Estatuto*, fol. 73. See also Book of Tobit 3, 3; Book of Daniel 9, 16; and Jeremiah 32, 18.

41 BN Madrid, Ms. 13043, Porreño, *Defensa del Estatuto*, fol. 72.

42 *Ibid.*, fol. 73.

43 Costa Matos, *Discurso contra los judíos*, p. 34.

ish was defined by blood, which was a bearer of vice and Jewish guilt.<sup>44</sup> Torrejoncillo argued in a similar manner:

In short, the Jews, denying the coming of the Messiah, persecuted the Christians with riots and imprisonment; and they became, almost by generation, as though it were original sin, the enemies of Christians ... it is not necessary to have a Jewish father and mother, one alone is sufficient; it does not matter if it is not the father, the mother is enough, and even if she is not whole [of Jewish blood], half is sufficient and not even so much, a quarter is sufficient and even an eighth, and the Holy Inquisition has revealed in our times that even those who are twenty degrees removed have been known to practice Judaism.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, it was a matter of creating a second original sin, this time an exclusively Jewish one, with no possibility of redemption and originating from the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Sin and the collective guilt of the Jews formed the metaphorical essence of the stain in the blood. This stigma of "stain" was therefore finally attributed to all neophytes – including baptized Muslims (*moriscos*) – even though they could not be "justifiably condemned" for the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

(5) *The "biologization" of impurity*: Purity of blood, as a discursive category, was basically of a religious nature in Early Modern Spain; but it is important to point out that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the defenders of purity did not hesitate to interweave it with medical terms and concepts in order to give impurity of blood an explicit biological basis; thus, we may speak of an imminent "biologization" of purity of blood. Nevertheless, the adjective "biological" may be a source of confusion since, for some academics, "the biological" implies a modern context and is related to a scientific discipline which originated in the nineteenth century. However, when utilizing the expression "biological", I refer to the idea that "difference" may be a matter of "immutable heritage" through meanings and concepts about the body and blood. In line with this logic, imaginaries about the human body may naturally be derived from and promulgated by the natural sciences of the nineteenth century, but they may also involve theological assertions, Aristotelean ideas and the notion of humoral pathology, i.e., they represent a fusion between theology and medicine typical of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is a great variety of examples of the "biologization" of purity of blood in Spain during this historical period, but due to shortage of space, we will only refer to a few of them.

In his work *Primicia de la Santa Iglesia de Toledo* (1645), theologian Castejón Fonseca stated that "inclinations proceed from humors: we receive these from our ancestors, we may receive this poison from any

44 Ibid., pp. 94f.

45 Torrejoncillo, Centinela, p. 55.

of them".<sup>46</sup> The reference to the medical theory of humors found in Hippocrates, Aristotle and Galen is evident. Within this parameter of authority an analogy was made, in general terms, between poison and a possible inheritance of an inclination towards sin. This predisposition to the malign is explained as "Jewish perfidy" and as a "noisy character inclined to business dealings",<sup>47</sup> thus defining it as a question of descent and therefore, an inheritable trait. By saying that the pernicious character of the Jews was immutable and thus continued to show itself in neophytes, Castejón Fonseca had formulated what might be called "a biological determinism, but of a theological character".

With regard to Otherness, not only were the spirit and conduct regarded as factors determined by descent and humors, but physiognomical qualities were also cited. Along with Aristotle, Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas, Inquisitor Escobar de Corro believed that physiognomical qualities (*qualitates Physiognomiae*) and the nature of humoral fluids (*complexionis*), as well as temperaments and moral characteristics (*affectibus, qui sunt inclinationes naturales ad bene vel pravè operandum*) were transferred at the moment of conception (*instanti conceptiones*).<sup>48</sup> The inquisitor basically interlinked three ideas which already existed in that epoch: the inheritance of guilt and of physical and moral features. This was a unique use of said conceptual amalgam to legitimize the notion of purity of blood and enforce it, to the detriment of the neophytes.

In his *Treynta y cinco Dialogos de agricultura Christiana* (1589), Franciscan friar Juan de Pineda (1521-approx. 1596) mentioned a mother's milk as a possible source of contamination. The warning about this danger was relevant, due to the presence of Jewish or Muslim convert wet nurses who helped women to avoid their maternal breast-feeding functions. But these assertions were not arbitrary or unusual at that time, given that they found theoretical support in Galenian medicine, for example, which stated that menstrual blood did not really disappear during pregnancy, but was channelled to the mother's womb to feed the foetus. In other words, it was believed that a woman's body went through a very important change after giving birth: some of the blood which had nourished the embryo during pregnancy was transformed into milk, that is, menstrual blood no longer

46 "[l]as inclinaciones proceden de los humores: estos recibimos de nuestro ascendientes, de qualquiera podemos recibir este veneno", Diego de Castejón y Fonseca, *Primacia de la Santa Iglesia de Toledo*, vol. 2, Diego Díaz de la Carrera, Madrid 1647, fol. 1030.

47 Diego de Castejón y Fonseca, *Iglesia de Toledo*, vol. 2, fol. 1026, 1030.

48 Escobar del Corro, *Tractatus Bipartitus*, fol. 65. See also Albert A. Sicoff, *Los estatutos de limpieza de sangre. Controversias entre los siglos XV y XVII*, Madrid 1985, p. 263.

went to the womb but the woman's body channeled it towards the breasts, turning it into milk. Essential to this argument was the theological and medical assumption that both the virtue and the vices of persons were harbored in their blood, and since blood was transformed into milk, milk too would bear the same virtue or vices. This position shows how religious dogmatism had added anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim tendencies to the misogyny which predominated at that time, a conceptual combination upheld by theological and medical authority. For many moralists of the age, the threat posed by wet nurses was not only expressed in theological treatises, but also led to persecution by the tribunals of the Inquisition.<sup>49</sup>

In other cases, emphasis was placed not on mother's milk but on other somatic aspects. The inquisitorial doctor Juan de Quiñones said that the heretic Francisco de Aranda (auto de fe, 4 July 1631) suffered from menstrual flows. On the basis of these beliefs, he proposed a study of the somatic characteristics of the New Christians in order to combat heresy more effectively. The more Quiñones questioned the position of theologians like Torrejoncillo or Aznar Cardona – who both believed in the existence of the exaggeratedly large noses and imaginary tails of the Jews – the more he emphasized two other corporeal anomalies of the Jewish converts, a belief which confused reality with fiction: circumcision and menstruation. "Fixing on its principle, while this sign of a flow of blood every month in the Jew cannot be called natural, it may be said that it is almost natural, since all of the descendants of those who clamored for, and said: 'Your blood &c' are naturally born with it".<sup>50</sup> And a few lines below that, he wrote:

...and by that the identity of the person is known ... and when recognition is difficult because of the aspect of the face, one has to recur to seeing the hidden signs which there are in the body ... like the ones which betray those who are found circumcised ... If you find any one who suffers this flow of

49 See also the case analyzed by Manuel Sánchez Moya and Jasone Monasterio Aspiri, *Los judaizantes turolenses en el siglo XV*, in: *en Sefarad* 32/2, 1972, pp. 307-340, here p. 335: "Para que le das a tu hija de la leche de aquella perra judía?" ("Why do you give your daughter the milk of that Jewish bitch"). See also John Edwards, *The Beginnings of a Scientific Theory of Race? Spain 1400-1600*, in: *id.*, *Religion and Society in Spain, c. 1492*, Great Yarmouth-Norfolk 1996, pp. 625-636, here p. 630.

50 "Esta señal de flujo de sangre cada mes en los judíos, atendiendo a su principio, si no se puede llamar natural, puedese decir casi natural, pues naturalmente nacen con ella todos los descendientes de los que clamaron, y dijeron: Su sangre, &c.", Juan de Quiñones, *Al illvstrissimo y Reverendissimo Señor, Don Fray Antonio de Stomayor, Confessor de la Sacra, Católica y Real Megestad del Rey D. Felipe III. el Grande, N. S. de su Consejo de Estado Inquisidor General de España, y Comissario general de la Santa Cruzada, &c.* (B.N.V.E. 8/16), fol. 20.



blood, they should be remitted to the Holy Inquisition, since they cannot cease being Jews or apostates.<sup>51</sup>

According to Quiñones, Jewish culpability for the deicide manifested itself through such corporeal anomalies, a constant feature that was "almost natural", because the Jews were born with them despite their conversion. If we take into account the fact that Christians regarded the circumcision of Jews and Muslims as a loss of their manhood, feminization and a sign of their impotence, we clearly see that these pejorative descriptions gave the uncircumcised Christian a positive, virile image, as opposed to the negative one of the Jewish convert. Thus, the body of the Jewish man was not only feminized through menstruation, but the act of circumcision cast further doubt on his manliness.

All of this shows how human relations were structured by means of the signification given to biological characteristics derived from theological, Aristotlean and humoral-pathological concepts, for the purpose of creating differentiated collectivities.

## Conclusion

To finish this chapter it is important to assemble the material which has been presented, readdress the interpretation proposed at the beginning and close with a number of general conclusions. The system of purity of blood in Early Modern Spain incorporates legal, social and mental phenomena, all of a historical nature. Consequently, it is feasible to trace "three levels of meaning" as an analytical tool for the process referred to herein. In this sense, each "conceptual layer" may be understood as a historical, geographical and epistemological framework which encloses a number of given practices. In accordance with this formulation, it is important to stress that purity of blood was not a static constant, but just the opposite: it had a variety of meanings and was adjusted to specific dynamics within its historical context. In addition, it is important to emphasize that none of these conceptual layers represents an isolated chronological and conceptual unit. Rather, their meeting points, interactions and interdependencies should be highlighted. Basing ourselves on these three levels, we are able to assert the following:

51 "y que por ella se conoce la identidad de la persona ...y que cuando el reconocimiento es difícil por el aspecto del rostro, se ha de recurrir a ver señales ocultas que ay en el cuerpo ... como contra los que se hallasen circuncidados ... Si hallara alguno, que padecieran este flujo de sangre, los remitiera a la Santa Inquisición, pues no pueden dejar de ser judíos o apostatas ..." Quiñones, *Al illvstrissimo*, fol. 21.

1. As the Jews (1391, 1414 and 1492) and later the Muslims (1503) converted to Christianity, a new mechanism of exclusion was implemented: one no longer based on religious affiliation but on imaginaries about blood and genealogical categories. The conversions gave rise to a social-cultural change – the Jew or Muslim "problem" turned into the "problem" of the converts – and consequently, a new legal definition of the neophyte became necessary. As a result of this socio-cultural change, the norm of the *Sentencia-Estatuto* (1449) was instituted, with the aim of excluding *judeoconversos* from the City Council of Toledo. From the Toledo *Sentencia-Estatuto* onwards, those norms (1449-end of the sixteenth century) spread through a great variety of institutions and bodies. During the course of their implementation, we observe a systematic effort to reserve spheres of power (city councils), religious mediation (cathedral chapters, religious orders), education (universities), economic influence and territorial control (military orders) and of socio-religious discipline and control (the Holy Office) for Old Christians, accompanied by the exclusion of converts.

2. In a slightly diachronic way, the norm began to influence society in the form of a system of segregation (1449<sup>52</sup>-1835<sup>53</sup>). As it became more and more difficult to determine the past of any individual, networks and systems of genealogical inquiry proliferated, which obviously varied according to the institution, the period and the region. But the following point is important: such practices formed new social realities in daily life, characterized by the use of purity of blood for political and social ends. An individual's past was constructed in a cultural context shaped by the prejudices against *judeoconversos* and *moriscos*, but also permeated by the lust for power, along with slander and polemics.

3. In the face of a new normativity and social reality, apologists for purity found justifications for those phenomena (1547-1675) and, through the power of discourse and the word of God, provided purity of blood with validity, order and veracity. In this task use was made of the concept of biblical purity and the doctrine of sin, as well as then current ideas about the crucifixion of Christ and the theory of Original Sin, to give them an interpretation that would prove harmful to Judaism. As a corollary and in line with the logic of purity, New Christians continued to bear this guilt, despite their baptism. Later, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the con-

52 Implementation of the Statutory Sentence in the city council of Toledo.

53 According to Jaime de Salazar y Acha, *La limpieza de sangre*, in: *Revista de la Inquisición* 1, 1991, pp. 289-308, here p. 294, Queen Isabel II (1833-1868) suppressed the requisite of genealogical information for public offices in 1835; even the proofs of pure blood required for the army and navy stopped being applied on 16 May 1865.

ceptual machinery of medicine was integrated into that of the inquisitors and apologists for purity, in order to rationalize the theological abstraction of guilt through the somatization of genealogical difference.

We would like to close this chapter with a few reflections on the racist character of the concept of purity of blood. Purity of blood began the metamorphosis of a "religious anti-Judaism", characteristic of the Middle and Early Modern Ages in Europe, into a "religious-racial anti-Judaism". In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the term "race", based on the structure of thought which shaped the notion of purity of blood, meant the possession of a "defect" or "stain" (*mácula*) in one's lineage, i.e., to be a Christian of Jewish or Muslim descent.<sup>54</sup> It may be superfluous, then, to clarify that in this context "race" did not correspond to the kind of category, derived from modern natural sciences, which is used to distinguish different groups of mankind. That is why it is necessary to speak of its nuances: the principles of purity of blood came together in a functional racism, even though arguments based on theology and Aristotelian natural sciences determined its theological and proto-scientific character, methods which are not glimpsed in contemporary racism. All this enables me to propose the term "racial anti-Judaism", an oxymoron which expresses the fusion between the argument of "purity of blood" based on both theology and the Aristotelian sciences, on the one hand, and the diffuse and contradictory wavering between descent (lineage/"race") and religious affiliation, on the other.

At the end of the seventeenth century and especially in the eighteenth century, the "problem of the converts" began to vanish both for the inquisitors and the genealogical investigators. Meanwhile, the problem of *mestizaje* became more and more pressing in Spanish America, a phenomenon that would influence the development of eighteenth century society and give a new virulence to the concept of purity of blood. Thus, purity of blood in America acquired a singular meaning and impact. In the West Indies, in the face of uncontrollable mixture, purity served as a device of social exclusion, but one which was legitimized by phenotypic factors, mainly skin color. That is, what had been a mechanism of segregation used against the neophytes turned into one used against the *mestizo*, *mulato*, *tercerón*, *cuarterón*, *chino*, *salta atrás*, *lobo*, *jíbaro* and, among many other

54 Cf. Max Sebastián Hering Torres, *Limpieza de sangre – Rassismus in der Vormoderne?*, in: *Wiener Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Neuzeit (Themenheft: Rassismus)* 3, 2003, pp. 20-37; Max Sebastián Hering Torres, *Limpieza de sangre. ¿Racismo en la Edad Moderna?*, in: *Tiempos Modernos Revista electrónica de Historia Moderna* 4/9, 2003, pp. 1-16; Hering Torres, *Rassismus in der Vormoderne*, pp. 200-250.

categories of mixed blood, the *no te entiendo*. This process of *mestizaje* helped to blunt the sharpness of the socio-phenotypic differences involved in purity of blood and emphasize its fictitious nature.

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# "White Like Us"

## Early Modern King Kongs and Calibans

Gary Taylor

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), M. G. Lewis' *The Isle of Devils* (1815), and Merian Cooper's *King Kong* (1933) all derive from an anecdote about a Portuguese woman raped c. 1533 by a large ape on a tropical island, first recorded in Antonio de Torquemada's *Jardin de Flores Curiosas* (1570), and quoted in many seventeenth-century texts about geography, magic, philosophy, and science in every major European language. This pornographic, misogynous narrative of bestiality and cross-breeding was quickly adapted for explicitly racial discourses. But modern interpretations of all these texts as simple allegories of race or colonialism elide their relationship to primatology. The contact zones of early modern imperialism were also contact zones for the first sustained interaction between Europeans and the other great apes. The empathic turbulence created by those encounters challenged the security of the human/animal divide. Read ecocritically, Torquemada's tale and its long afterlife suggest that modern racism was and is, in part, used by whites to redirect and defuse the equatorial primate threat to metaphysical definitions of human uniqueness. Read formally, these narratives demonstrate that modern white identity depends on the limits of simile and the treacherous translation of pronouns.

A memorable scene in Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* dramatizes "La Lourstane Card Game".<sup>1</sup> One character – here an S. S. officer in occupied France during World War II – has a card, naming a famous real or fictional person, placed on his forehead. The name, invisible to him, can be seen by the other players. The officer asks them questions (using the first person singular pronoun, as though he were the figure named on the card), and on the basis of their "yes" or "no" answers must try to guess the name. Discovering that the person visited America, but was not born there, he asks if "my native land" was "exotic". – Yes. The Nazi guesses that the character's "native land is the jungle", and that he traveled "from the jungle to America". "Did I go by boat?" – Yes. "Did I go against my will?" – Yes. "On this boat ride, was I in chains?" Yes. "When I arrived in America, was I displayed in chains?" – Yes. "Am I the story of the Negro in America?" – No. "Well then I must be King Kong."

In a 2009 interview Tarantino endorsed his Nazi character's interpretation of King Kong as an allegory of African-American slavery.<sup>2</sup> Almost

1 Bruce Boehrer, Celia Daileader, Georges T. Dodds, Jorge Flores, Ana Paula Ferreira, Deborah Solomon, and Ayanna Thompson gave me indispensable feedback and assistance at various stages of my work on this project.

2 National Public Radio, "Fresh Air", broadcast 27 August 2009, available online at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=121969155>.

everyone allegorizes King Kong, and there's nothing new about describing him as a "brutal black buck"<sup>3</sup> or an "enormous African social climber".<sup>4</sup> Tarantino's summary repeats almost verbatim a paragraph in a 1975 film journal.<sup>5</sup> But there is surely something problematic about a white man equating black men with a large, violent, roaring ape who abducts a white woman. Some of the same problems are created by the common critical association of Shakespeare's Caliban with "an African of some kind", probably "a (negro) slave".<sup>6</sup> Those problems can be traced back to the fact that both modern myths, Caliban and Kong, were inspired by the same once-famous, now-forgotten sixteenth-century narrative, an early specimen of primatology which demonstrates that our most fundamental metaphysical and social taxonomies depend on the limits of simile and the treacherous translation of pronouns.

Tarantino's Nazi's "I" refers to Merian Cooper's 1933 *King Kong*, itself "an autobiographical, self-referential film".<sup>7</sup> Cooper was inspired by "a childhood image of the giant ape carrying off a screaming woman into the jungle".<sup>8</sup> At the age of six, Cooper had been given a copy of Paul B. DuChailu's *Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa*. DuChailu's account of his travels in what is now Cameroon and Gabon made an important contribution to primatology; his detailed physiological descriptions taxonomically differentiated the gorilla and the chimpanzee. DuChailu's book inspired Cooper's lifelong pursuit, as aviator and navigator and documentary film-maker, of the "difficult, distant and dangerous".<sup>9</sup> Like Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*, Cooper's *King Kong* is an unembarrassed, Eurocentric, male, nostalgic replay of what was then called "The Age of Discovery". Doyle and Cooper yearned to recreate, for themselves and other belated white boys ("the boy who's half a man, or the man who's

3 Andreas Hairston, Lord of the Monsters: Minstrelsy Redux: King Kong, Hip Hop, and the Brutal Black Buck, in: *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 18, 2007, pp. 187-199.

4 Mark McGurl, Making It Big: Picturing the Radio Age in King Kong, in: *Critical Inquiry* 22, 1996, pp. 415-445, here pp. 416, 418, 438.

5 David N. Rosen, King Kong: Race, Sex, and Rebellion, in: *Jump Cut* 6, 1975, pp. 7-10, here p. 7.

6 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Morton Luce, The Arden Shakespeare, London 1901, p. xxxv. For a full history of interpretations of the character, see Alden T. and Virginia Mason Vaughan, *Shakespeare's Caliban: A Cultural History*, Cambridge 1991.

7 James Snead, *White Screens/Black Images: Hollywood from the Dark Side*, ed. Colin McCabe and Cornel West, New York 1994, p. 17.

8 Ronald Haver, *David O. Selznick's Hollywood*, New York 1980, p. 76.

9 Cf. Mark Cotta Vaz, *Living Dangerously: The Adventures of Merian C. Cooper, Creator of King Kong*, New York 2005, pp. 14-17, 211.

half a boy"),<sup>10</sup> the adrenalin-charged and testosterone-driven experience of finding and conquering a new world. They wanted to relive, emotionally, the voyages of early modern European global expansion.

Cooper's modern myth replays one very particular early modern narrative. The 1933 film differs from its acknowledged sources – Doyle's *Lost World*, DuChaillu's account of equatorial Africa, the 1920s scientific expedition that captured and brought back to New York two Komodo dragons – in four key elements.

- (1) The protagonist is a non-human primate.
- (2) The primate protagonist is physically larger than any other animal or human in the story.
- (3) The primate protagonist is the "king" of a mountainous tropical island.
- (4) The primate protagonist is violently obsessed with one particular white woman.

Three of those four elements occur in *The Isle of Devils*, a verse tale written in 1815 by the Gothic novelist Matthew Lewis, and often reprinted from 1827 to 1929. A European woman is shipwrecked on a mountainous tropical island, where she is protected from all the other predators – and then raped and impregnated – by a creature specifically called the island's "king". The island's "monarch" is a "giant" whose limbs are "giants"; the "gigantic" figure uses a torn-up tree as a club. The giant is called "black", "dark", "sable" and "ebon", and his blackness contrasts with the whiteness of his "fair" "pale" victim, whose breasts and arms are compared to snow, whose eyes are blue, whose hair is golden, whose brow is ivory, whose skin is white. Anyone who has seen *King Kong*, in any of its incarnations (Cooper 1933, Guillermin 1976, Jackson 2005), will recognize this visual binary. Lewis anticipates even the "huge eyes" of the black protagonist and his "spreading nostrils". In the final image of *The Isle of Devils*, the dark giant "king" clammers up the highest point he can reach, and stands there "like some dark tower", emitting "hideous yells" and a "savage howl", spreading "his arms ... wide" – and then he plunges headlong from that height to his death.<sup>11</sup> Cooper just changed the tower to a skyscraper and added some airplanes.

Lewis wrote *The Isle of Devils* on his voyage to Jamaica, where he had inherited a slave plantation, which he described in his *Journal of a West In-*

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World*, London 1912, epigraph.

<sup>11</sup> M. G. Lewis, *The Isle of Devils*, in: *Journal of a West India Proprietor Kept During a Residence in the Island of Jamaica*, ed. Judith Terry, Oxford 1999, pp. 160-183. Cooper could have read it in editions of 1827, 1834, 1845, 1861, 1912, or 1929.



*dia Proprietor*. D. L. MacDonald convincingly argues that, for Lewis, "Jamaica is an isle of devils because it is an island inhabited largely by black slaves".<sup>12</sup> But Lewis himself gave the poem an epigraph from *The Tempest*, and claimed that he found the story in "an old Italian book called *Il Palagio degli Incanti*, in which it is related as a fact, and stated to be taken from the *Annals of Portugal*, an historical work" (p. 159).<sup>13</sup> The Italian book does indeed cite as its authority "Castañeda in his *Annals of Portugal*". Like *The Isle of Devils*, the Italian describes an island inhabited by "evil spirits", but unlike Lewis it specifies that they are "in the form of monkeys".<sup>14</sup> Lewis, focused on his racial allegory, left out the primates – as, of course, does Tarantino's racial allegory. Race, in Lewis and Tarantino, is a way of eliding the other primate.

Through *The Isle of Devils* we can trace four key elements of the 1933 King Kong back to 1605. But that Italian source opens up a treasure trove of early modern narratives about an incident that allegedly occurred in the 1530s on a mountainous tropical island visited by Portuguese sailors. Written descriptions of that oral history began to circulate in the second half of the sixteenth century; they recur in many seventeenth-century European texts, historical and scientific and literary. In all these retellings, the anecdote inevitably raises issues of gender, race, and empire, but behind and above all those questions is the great ape's challenge to the security of the human/animal divide. What happens when, instead of eliding him, we make the other primate primary?

At least six early accounts of the incident attribute it to Fernão Lopes de Castañeda's history of the Portuguese discovery and conquest of India, published between 1551 and 1554, and by 1600 translated into Spanish, Italian, French, and English.<sup>15</sup> The defining European encounter with primates should have been Portuguese, because Portuguese ships led the

12 D. L. Macdonald, *The Isle of Devils: The Jamaican Journal of M. G. Lewis*, in: Tim Fulford, Peter J. Kitson, ed., *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780-1830*, Cambridge UK, 1998, pp. 189-205, here p. 197. Terry endorses and develops this argument (pp. xix-xxi).

13 The title-page of the first edition emphasizes the historical source: M. G. Lewis, *The Isle of Devils. A Historical Tale, Founded on an Anecdote in the Annals of Portugal*. (From an unpublished Manuscript.), Kingston, Jamaica 1827.

14 Strozzi Cigogna, *Del Palagio de gl'Incanti & delle gran meraviglie de gli spiriti & di tutta la Natura loro*, Venice 1605, pp. 211f. (Not identified in Terry's commentary.)

15 Fernão Lopez de Castañeda, *História do Descobrimento & Conquista da India pelos Portugueses*, ed. Manuel Lopes de Almeida, 9 vols., Porto 1979. Only the first of Castañeda's nine books has ever been translated into English: Nicholas Lichfield, tr., *The first Booke of the Historie of the Discoverie and Conquest of the East Indias, enterprised by the Portingales*, London 1582.

European exploration of sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean rim, the natural habitats of all the non-human great apes (orangutan, chimpanzee, bonobo, and gorilla), which until the early modern period were unknown to Europeans. But Castañeda's nine volumes contain no trace of the incident.<sup>16</sup>

The earliest extant account occurs, instead, in *Jardin de Flores Curiosas*, a book of "humanity, philosophy, theology, and geography" written by Antonio de Torquemada (1506?-1569), published in Spanish in 1570.<sup>17</sup> It was soon translated into French (1579) and Italian (1590), then English (1600, reprinted 1618). Torquemada's dialogue includes "The most wonderfull History of a woman begotten with child by an Ape".<sup>18</sup>

wee haue knowledge of the like happened in our time no lesse monstrous, nor woorthy of admiration, then this which you haue rehearsed; and there are as yet many which founde themselues present, and can giue witness thereof. It was in this sort, as I haue heard it through true relation of many persons, most woorthy to be beleueed. A woman in Portugale for a hainous offence by her committed, was condemned, and banished into an vninhabited Iland, one of those which they commonly call the Isles of Lagartes, whether shee was transported by a shippe that went for India, and by the way set a shoare in a Cock-bote, neere a great mountaine couered with trees and wilde bushes, like a Desert. The poore vvoman finding her selfe alone forsaken and abandoned, without any hope of life, beganne to make pittifull cryes and lamentations, in commending her selfe vnto God, him to succour her in this her lamentable & solitary estate. Whiles shee was making these mournfull cōplaints, there descended from the mountaine a great number of Apes, which to her exceeding terror and astonishment, compassed her round about, amongst the which, there was one far greater thē the rest, who standing vpō his hind legs vpright, seemed in height nothing inferiour to the common sort of men: he seeing the woman weepe so bitterly, as one that assuredlie held her self for dead, came vnto her, shewing a cheerefull semblance, and flatteringly as it were comforted her, offering

- 16 Georges T. Dodds, *Monkey-spouse Sees Children Murdered, Escapes to Freedom! A Worldwide Gathering and Comparative Analysis of Camarena-Chevalier Type 714, II-IV Tales*, in: *Estudos de Literatura Oral* 11-12, 2005, pp. 73-96, discrediting the Castañeda origin on pp. 80-83. Dodds is primarily interested in antecedents of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan of the Apes*, which contains two white women marooned on an island off the coast of Africa, Tarzan's mother and his eventual wife Jane; his mother fends off an attempted rape by the "king" of the apes there, and Tarzan is raised by the apes after her death. Tarzan makes King Kong look, by comparison, politically correct.
- 17 Antonio de Torquemada, *Jardín de flores curiosas en que se tratan algunas materias de humanidad, philosophia, theologia, y geographia, con otras cosas curiosas, y apazible*, Salamanca 1570.
- 18 Id., *The Spanish Mandeuile of Miracles; or, The Garden of Curious Flowers*, tr. Lewis Lewkenor, ed. Ferdinando Walker, London 1600, fol. 31-33, here fol. 32 recto (marginal note).

her certaine fruites to eate, in such sort, that he put her in hope that shee should not receaue any damage of those other Apes, taking her by the arme, and gently as it were inuiting her to followe him to the mountaines, to the which she willingly condescending, he led her into his Caue, whether all the other Apes resorted, prouiding her such victuals as they vsed, where-with & with the water of a Spring neere therevnto, she maintained her life a certaine time, during the which, not being able to make resistance, vnlesse she would haue presently been slaine, she suffered the Ape to haue the vse of her body, in such sort that she grew great, and at two seuerall times was deliuered of two Sonnes, the which as she her selfe saide, and as it was by those that saw them afterwards affirmed, spake, and had the vse of reason. These little boyes, being the one of two & the other of three yeeres aged, it happened that a ship returning out of India, passing thereby, and being vnfurnished of fresh water, the Marriners hauing notice of the Fountaine which was in that Iland, and determining thereof to make their prouision, set them selues a shore in a Cockbote, which the apes perceauing, fled into the thickest of the mountaine, hiding themselues, wherewith the woman emboldened and determining to forsake that abhominable life, in the which she had so long time against her will continued, ranne forth, crying as loud as shee could vnto the Marriners, who perceauing her to be a woman, attended her, and carried her with them to their ship, which the Apes discovering, gathered presently to the shore, in so great a multitude, that they seemed to be a whole Army, the greater of which through the brutish loue and affection which he beare, waded so farre into the Sea after her, that hee was almost drowned, manifesting by his shrikes and howling how greuouously he took this iniury done him: but seeing that it booted not, because the Marriners beganne to hoise their sailles and to depart, he returned, fetching the lesser of the two Boyes in his armes, the which, entring againe into the water as farre as he could, he held a great while aloft aboue water, and at last, threw into the Sea, where it was presently drowned: which done, he returned backe fetching the other, and bringing it to the same place, the which in like sort he held a great while aloft, as it were threatning to drowne that as hee had done the other. The Mariners moued with the Mothers compassion, and taking pittie of the seely Boy, which in cleare and perfect words cryed after her, returned back to take him, but the Ape daring not attend them, letting the Boy fall into the water, returned, and fled towards the mountaines with the rest. The Boy was drowned before the Marriners could succour him, though they vsed their greatest diligence: At their returne to the ship, the woman made relation vnto them of all that happened to her in manner aboue rehearsed, which hearing, with great amazement they departed thence, and at their arriuall in Portugall made report of all that they had seene or vnderstode in this matter. The woman was taken and examined, who in each poynt confessing this fore-saide history to be true, was condemned to be burnt aliue, aswell for breaking the commaundement of her banishment, as also for the committing of a sinne so enorme, lothsome, and detestable. But *Hieronimo capo de ferro*, who was afterwards made Cardinall, beeing at that instant the Popes *Nuncio* in Portugall, considering that the one of her faults was to saue her life, and the other to deliuer her selfe out of the captiuity of these brute beastes, and from a sinne so repug-

nant to her nature & conscience, humbly beseeched the King to pardon her, which was graunted him on condition, that shee should spende the rest of her life in a Cloyster, seruing God and repenting her former offences.

AN[TONIO]. I haue hearde this history often ...

The ape here is not an emblem or analogy; he is an individual, demarcated from the rest of his kind.<sup>19</sup> The narrative derives its reality-effect, or historicity-effect, from the specificity of its incidental details. Girolamo Capodeferro (named only here) was papal nuncio to Portugal between 24 December 1536 and 22 December 1539 (and made cardinal in 1544).<sup>20</sup> This detail establishes that the woman was allegedly returned to Portugal in the three year period from late 1536 to late 1539, which means she was abandoned on the island at some time between 1530 and 1536. A key element of the story thus allegedly happened in a European capital in the lifetime of the author and many of his first readers. The "King" whom Capodeferro beseeched would have been John III, "the Pious" (reigned 1521-57). The place "they commonly call the Isles of Lagartes" [sic] – "*lagartos*" in Torquemada's Spanish – is named only here, and harder to identify, since "big lizards" (Spanish and Portuguese *lagartos*) inhabit many tropical islands along early Portuguese sea routes around Africa to the Spice Islands.<sup>21</sup>

19 For this distinction see William B. Ashworth Jr., *Emblematic Natural History of the Renaissance*, in: Nicholas Jardine, J. Anne Secord, and Emma C. Spary, ed., *The Cultures of Natural History*, Cambridge 1996, pp. 17-37.

20 Dodds, *Monkey-spouse*, p. 77.

21 Antonio de Torquemada, *Jardin de Flores Curiosas*, ed. Giovanni Allegra, Madrid 1982, p. 182. Dodds says they are "Now known as the Cayman Islands" (*Monkey-spouse*, p. 76), but gives no evidence for the claim, which seems improbable. The Cayman Islands had been part of the Spanish empire since the voyages of Columbus in the 1490s, and never on any Portuguese routes to or from "India" (a place-name which at the time could refer to anywhere in the Indian Ocean, from Madagascar to Indonesia). Torquemada says "the Portugals as you say, haue not stirred out of the Coast of Affrica and India, the farthest that they went, being to the Iles of Molucca" (Spanish *Mandeuile*, fol. 19). Several early modern texts record *lagartos* at various places in the Caribbean, but no "islands of large lizards" there. The most famous such island is Komodo in Indonesia. The only great apes indigenous to islands are orangutans, whose natural habitats do often overlap with that of the saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*, largest of all living reptiles), found on many islands from southern India to northern Australia and the Philippines. Mandrills are found on the Cameroon line of volcanic islands in the Gulf of Guinea, discovered by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. In the late sixteenth century a Portuguese pilot identified "the *Lagarto* with the two sisters, that is, the cockodrill [= crocodile] Islands so called" between Macao and Japan, see Jan Huygen van Linschoten, *Discours of Voyages into y<sup>e</sup> Easte & West Indies*, London 1598, p. 393. I have found no parallels for "Lagartes", which must be a simple typographical error or misreading in the English edition.

No written source for the story is named; it is explicitly "heard ... through true relation of many persons" and "hearde ... often".<sup>22</sup> A prefatory "[t]able wherein are containd the Names of those Authors, whose authorities are alleaged in this Treatise" includes "*Herman Lopes de Castaneda*" (sig. 2), specifically cited on fol. 26.<sup>23</sup> Torquemada comprehensively referenced his stories, before and after this one, and he knew Castañeda's work, but he did not attribute this story to that, or any other, written source, instead relying on the testimony of reliable living witnesses.

The story was repeated in the 1590s by a Portuguese soldier who spent many years in Asia, Francisco Rodrigues Silveira; but his manuscript (now at the British Library) was not printed until the nineteenth century. Another apparently independent account occurs in a history of Portuguese expansion published in 1675.<sup>24</sup> Neither Portuguese source attributes the story to the famous Portuguese historian Castañeda. Neither does a book by the French adventurer Vincent Le Blanc published in Paris in 1649, and translated into English in 1660. Le Blanc claimed to have "heard" the story, and implicitly dates the incident to the period before 1534; like Torquemada he attributes the woman's pardon to a papal nuncio in Lisbon.<sup>25</sup>

The first version to name Castañeda as a source was an often-reprinted Latin book on magic, written by the Jesuit Martin Delrio (1551-1608), living in the Spanish Netherlands.<sup>26</sup> Delrio makes one key change to Torque-

- 22 The English text abridges Torquemada's response, which in the Spanish original emphasizes "negocio tan público y con tantos testimonios" (Jardin, p. 185), "the trial so public and with so many witnesses" (my translation). Torquemada would have been about thirty years old at the time the trial allegedly occurred.
- 23 Torquemada, Jardin, describing him as "coronista del Rey de Portugal", narrating an event in India in 1536 "en el octavo libro de su *Crónica*" (p. 166). This reference may have prompted later (incorrect) attribution of the "ape-rape" anecdote to the same source.
- 24 Francisco Rodrigues Silveira, *Refomacao da Milicia e governo do Estado da India Oriental*, ed. Benjamin N. Teensma, Lisbon 1996, p. 229; Francisco de Brito Freyre, *Nova Lusitania*, Lisbon 1675, p. 62. I am grateful to Dr. Jorge Flores for calling my attention to both these sources, which are not recorded by Dodds.
- 25 Vincent Le Blanc, *Les voyages fameux du sieur Vincent Le Blanc*, Paris 1649, Pt. 2, p. 120; Francis Brooke, tr., *The World Surveyed, or The Famous Voyages & Travails of Vincent le Blanc*, London 1660, pp. 79f. Dodds translates the French original, and notes that "Cardinal Cayetan" was never a papal nuncio (Monkey-spouse, pp. 85f.). Dodds refers to, but had not seen, the 1660 translation, which specifies that "the woman was accosted by a great Monkey or Drill".
- 26 Martin Delrio, *Disquisitionum Magicarum libri sex, quibus continentur accurata curiosarum artium, et vanarum superstitionum confutatio, utilis Theologis, Iurisconsultis, Medicis, Philologis*, Louvain 1604, p. 151: "quod Castanneda retulit

mada's narrative, which was followed by other seventeenth-century authors, then by Lewis and *King Kong*: unable to persuade the woman to return to his island, the great ape tries to follow her, and dies.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to his scholarly scrupulousness elsewhere, Delrio mis-titles Castañeda's book "the annals of Portugal", does not cite a page, chapter, or year, and does not name the island or papal nuncio.<sup>28</sup> Subsequent texts perpetuate all this suspicious vagueness about Castañeda. Delrio's 1599 Latin account certainly preceded, and influenced, the source cited by Lewis, Strozzi Cicogna's *Del Palagio degl'Incanti*, another book on magic, published in Italian in Venice in 1605, reprinted in Latin in 1607.<sup>29</sup> Delrio's account was repeated verbatim in Guazzo's famous witch-hunting manual, first printed in Milan in 1608.<sup>30</sup> Delrio, Cicogna, and Guazzo all referred the story to Castañeda (and had the ape die). So in 1642 did Sinibaldus, quoting Delrio.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, Tyson's classic 1699 text of comparative primate anatomy retold "that Story of *Castanenda* in his *Annals of Portugal* ... of a Woman who had two Children by an *Ape*" – though he too was quoting second-hand, from seventeenth-century Italian and German professors of medicine.<sup>32</sup> By 1699 the account had become an authoritative part of a shared

*in Annal. Lusitaniae*", sig. K4. The text was originally published in Louvain in three volumes in 1599-1600, and then again in 1603; I have seen only the 1604 edition. Dodds mentions (Monkey-spouse, p. 80) a 1617 Mainz edition (pp. 156f.) and translates a 1611 Paris abridged translation (p. 213). Perhaps Delrio – and the subsequent Catholic writers Cicogna, Guazzo, Sinibaldus, and Licetus – did not cite Torquemada because that book had been placed on the Index of Prohibited Books by the Portuguese Inquisition in 1581, or because by the 1590s critics had begun to mock its credulity.

- 27 Delrio, *Magiarum*, sig. K4: "subsequitur & ipse furens, tamque diu navim natatu insequitur, donec undae natantem vicere". Dodds ignores this variant.
- 28 By contrast, on the same page Delrio in a marginal note cites "Cardan. lib. 16. de variet. Lemnium li.I. de occult. nat. mirac. c.8", sig. K4.
- 29 Strozzi Cicogna, *Del Palagio de gl'Incanti & delle gran meraviglie de gli spiriti & di tutta la Natura loro*, Venice 1605, pp. 211f., translated in Dodds, *Monkey-spouse*, pp. 78f.
- 30 Francesco Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, Milan 1626, pp. 60f. (Book I, Chap. 10); *Compendium Maleficarum*, ed. Montague Summers, tr. E. A. Ashwin, London 1929, pp. 110f. This account was mistakenly identified as the "archetype" of the ape-rape narrative by H. W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, London 1952, p. 275; Janson was himself citing Rudolph Altrocchi, *Sleuthing in the Stacks*, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1944, pp. 97f., 254 (citing the Ashwin translation).
- 31 Giovanni Sinibaldus, *Geneanthropeiae*, Rome 1642, p. 218: "in annalibus Lusitaniae apud Castannedam, quam Martinus Delrio" etc. Not noted by Dodds.
- 32 Edward Tyson, *Orang-Outang*, London 1699, sig. G1v. Not noted by Dodds. Although Tyson was writing in English, he gave the story in Latin, quoting

pan-European discourse. It had also entered specifically literary texts.<sup>33</sup> Its influence, through "a complex and sustained form of intertextuality", would continue throughout the eighteenth-century.<sup>34</sup>

This is not a pretty story. It is particularly revolting for women readers. After all, Torquemada's original occurs in a conversation between three men about women having sex with dogs and other animals – the stuff nowadays of internet pornography sites. (Although named men overwhelmingly dominate documented cases of interspecies sex, pornographic fantasies typically display unnamed women.) Torquemada's unnamed woman, exiled for an unspecified "heinous offence", was morally tainted even before committing bestiality. Some early modern courts took pregnancy as proof of consensual sex.<sup>35</sup> Slavoj Žižek claims that Peter Høeg's novel *The Woman and the Ape* "materializes" the "standard vulgar" "fantasy" "of a woman who wants a strong animal partner, a 'beast'", rather than a civilized modern man.<sup>36</sup> But a man wrote that novel (and a male critic praises it), and its genre establishes that Høeg's tale is precisely that: a fantasy. Torquemada's narrative, by contrast, forced readers to confront the uncomfortable materiality of its material: it defictionalized and historicized bestiality and cross-breeding, giving them the status of a "modern fact", defined as "what happens at a particular time and place, under particular circumstances".<sup>37</sup> Torquemada reported testimony by multiple contemporary observers, like modern "scientific facts" established by "a multiplication of the witnessing experience".<sup>38</sup> All versions of this story belong to what Donna Haraway calls "simian orientalism", a modern scientific discourse that simultane-

the Italian professor of medicine, Fortunius Licetus, de Monstrorum Causis [Padova 1616], lib. 2. cap. 68. p.m. 217. He noted that "'tis quoted too by" Antonius Deusingius (a seventeenth-century Professor of Medicine at Gröningen), specifying "Fassicul. Dissertat. select. de Ratione & Loquela Brutorum", p.m. 196 (which I have not identified) "and others" (unspecified).

33 Lope de Vega, *Los Torneos de Aragón*, Act I, 75-122, translated by Dodds, pp. 77f.; *Sieur de Clairville* [= Onésime Sommain], *L'Amelinte*, Paris 1635, pp. 149-151, translated by Dodds, pp. 83-85.

34 Laura Brown, *Homeless Dogs and Melancholy Apes*, Ithaca 2010, p. 32. See also Laura Brown, *Fables of Modernity*, Ithaca 2001, pp. 236-245.

35 Suzanne Gossett, 'Best Men are Molded out of Faults': Marrying the Rapist in Jacobean Drama, in: *English Literary Renaissance* 14, 1984, pp. 305-327.

36 Slavoj Žižek, *The Cyberspace Real*, Saas-Fee, 2000, <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/slavoj-zizek/articles/the-cyberspace-real/>

37 Lorraine Daston, *Fear and Loathing of the Imagination in Science*, in: *Daedalus* 127, 1998, pp. 73-95, here pp. 75f.

38 Steven Shapin, *Pump and Circumstance: Robert Boyle's Literary Technology*, in: *Social Studies of Science* 14, 1984, pp. 481-520, here p. 483.

ously disparages Africans, primates, and women.<sup>39</sup> But these examples are earlier than those cited by Haraway, or by Londa Schiebinger's history of primatology.<sup>40</sup>

The Torquemada story's racial politics are equally objectionable, and inextricably entangled with its misogyny. Its central claim, that a woman's intercourse with a primate produced speaking offspring, is clearly related to the racist fiction that sub-Saharan Africans were produced by the sexual union of humans with apes. Winthrop Jordan cited examples of that theory in various eighteenth-century authorities (Linnaeus, Buffon, Camper, Monbodo).<sup>41</sup> But such claims were also made repeatedly, in English and other languages, in the seventeenth century.<sup>42</sup> They lie behind the racism of John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the philosophical foundation of modern empiricism, which declares that "[i]f history lie not, women have conceived by drills". [*Drill* was the seventeenth-century English translation of a West African word for "chimpanzee".]<sup>43</sup> That Locke was probably alluding, directly or indirectly, to the "Castañeda" anecdote is suggested by his appeal to "history", the specific combination of primate father and human mother, and the 1660 English translation of Le Blanc's specification that the woman was inseminated by a "drill".

Given how horrifically nasty this story is, it is not surprising that Shakespeare fans have failed to notice its parallels with *The Tempest* – the most "perfect" of his plays, given primacy in 1623 and interpreted as autobiographical since the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup> It is much more appealing to link Shakespeare to the first successful English colony in what is now the

39 Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*, New York 1989, p. 11.

40 Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*, Boston 1993, pp. 75-114. Simian orientalism can be traced back to classical and medieval texts: see H. W. Janson, *Apes*, pp. 261-286.

41 Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812*, Chapel Hill 1968, pp. 236f.

42 For examples between 1616 and 1697 from Lucilio Vanini, Thomas Herbert, Phillip Salmuth, Henry Bulwer, Henry Whistler, Sir Thomas St. Serfe, John Ogilby, Morgan Godwin, Jean Baptiste Tavernier, Thomas Trapham, and John Evelyn, see Gary Taylor, *Buying Whiteness: Race, Culture, and Identity from Columbus to Hip-Hop*, New York 2005, pp. 320-22, 474-76. These claims specifically target Africans, whereas the original anecdote is much more ambiguous geographically.

43 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Niddich, Oxford 1975, III.vi.23. For a reading of this passage, see Taylor, *Whiteness*, pp. 316-327. (But when that book went to press in early 2004 I was unaware of the "ape rape" anecdote.)

44 Nicholas Rowe, ed., *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, 6 vols., London 1709, i.xxiii.



United States, or to Montaigne's humanist meditation "On the Cannibals". But Shakespearians have failed to find any narrative source for the story of Shakespeare's uniquely-named Caliban and his uniquely-named mother Sycorax.<sup>45</sup> Since Torquemada did not name either the mother or her sons, if Shakespeare decided to use the story he would have had to invent names. In *The Tempest* and the 1600 English translation of Torquemada a woman was "banished" (1.2.266) to "an uninhabited island"<sup>46</sup> for an unnamed crime (1.2.264). Having been "left by th' sailors" (1.2.270) on an island where "spirits ... like apes ... mow and chatter ... and after bite" (2.2.3, 9f.), she on the island "did litter" [give birth to] a "freckled whelp" or "son" (1.2.282f.), a male "monster" (as Caliban is called 35 times). This entire section of Torquemada's work is full of accounts of, and explanations for, monsters, offspring of the unions of women with non-human lovers, and Caliban contains elements of several of them.<sup>47</sup> The father of the child is not named in either Torquemada or Shakespeare, but Prospero says Caliban was "got" [=begotten] "by the devil himself Upon thy wicked dam" (1.2.319f.). Del-rio and other early commentators interpreted the Portuguese anecdote in just this way (assuming what appeared to be a large ape was really an "evil spirit"). Torquemada does not make that claim explicitly here, but elsewhere he deals at length with devils, telling of a man who "was begotten of a deuill" (fol. 73), and of many devils who "sometimes enter into the body of vnreasonable creatures" and "bruite beastes" (fol. 81-81v).<sup>48</sup>

45 For the play's sources, see William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Peter Hulme and William H. Sherman, New York 2004, pp. 85-116. The name "Sycorax" is taken from an account of Magellan's circumnavigation, but that source does not provide her with the biography that Shakespeare does.

46 William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel, Oxford 1987, p. 95 ("Persons of the Play", reproduced from the 1623 text). All references to the play cite this text.

47 For instance, Shakespeare's comparisons of Caliban to a fish (2.2.24-33, 5.1.266) recalls Torquemada's immediately preceding story of the offspring of a woman and a merman (Spanish *Mandeuile*, fol. 29v). Likewise, "puppy-headed" (2.2.148) recalls "men with heads like dogges" and "there is a kinde of great Apes, of the which, I haue seene one with a doggs face, but standing vpright on his feete, each part of him had the shape of a man" (Spanish *Mandeuile*, fol. 16). The ape-rape story is immediately followed by an account of "a ship ... through a violent tempest driuen" on the coast of India, "so that all those that were therein perrished, sauing onely one woman, and a mighty great mastiue, the which defended her from the furie of wilde beastes, vsing daily with her fleshlie copulation, in such sort, that she became great, and in proces of time was deliuered of a sonne" (Spanish *Mandeuile*, fol. 33).

48 Torquemada's examples include two "mastiues" who "were two deuils, set lose by God, receauing of him power and permission thus cruelly to punish a wickednes so detestable, or els they might be two very mastiues indeede guid-

He claims that devils often transform themselves into physical bodies so that they may "without shame or respect ... fulfill in all abhominacion their filthy lust and beastly appetite" (fol. 84v).<sup>49</sup> Apes and monkeys were often associated with the devil.<sup>50</sup> None of these claims about devils or apes is unique to Torquemada, but they all appear in a book containing the first version – and the only version in English available to Shakespeare – of this story of a banished woman who gave birth to a monster on an uninhabited island which might have been near the African coast.

But that is not the end of associations between Torquemada and *The Tempest*. In both, a European woman, after being banished from her homeland, arrives on an uninhabited island in a small boat (1.2.14f.), where she encounters a "deformed and savage" (Persons) "thing most brutish" (356), who considers himself the "king" of the island (342). She is not named in Torquemada, but the marginal note entitles her tale "The most wonderfull History of a woman", and Shakespeare calls his woman "Miranda" (Italian feminine for "wondrous", Latin for "amazed, wondering"). The "thing" she encounters on the island is "not honored with A human shape" (283f.), lives in a cave (342f., 360), and knows and shares all the sources of food and water on the island (1.2.336-8. 2.2.161-6) – but he tries to "violate" her (1.2.347). Had he succeeded, he would have "peopled ... this isle with Calibans" (349f.) – that is, with hybrids created by the unnatural union of a European woman with a "monstrous shape" (3.3.31) native to the island. At the end of the story she sails back to her European homeland with a ship full of European males who had come to the island on a return journey from Africa to Europe. As in Torquemada, the thing she leaves behind is not dead, but it also has no living offspring.

Neither of the two voyages to the Isles of Lagartos involves a storm, but earlier in the book Torquemada, writing "of another sort of Satyrs", describes Europeans

sayling towardes Spaine, the ship in which they went, through a great tempest and storme, beeing driuen with a violent westerne wind to runne along the Ocean Seas, brought them at last vpon the coast of certain Ilands, which seemed to be vninhabited: wher they had no sooner landed to take in fresh water, but there appeared certaine wild men; of a fierce & cruel resemblance, all couered vvith haire somewhat reddish, resembling in each other

ed by the deuill" (Spanish Mandeuile, fol. 70v). Compare Prospero's "spirits in shape of dogs and hounds" (4.1.255), who punish the conspirators.

49 One woman, upon realizing she has been deceived by such a devil, like the woman in the Portuguese anecdote "entring into a wonderfull deepe repentance, and vtterly giuing ouer the world, shee placed her selfe in a Monastery, where shee continued most deuoutly the rest of her life in Gods seruice" (fol. 75).

50 Janson, Apes, pp. 14f.

part men, but onely that they had long tailes full of brisled haire like vnto horses. These monsters ... draue them backe to their ship, forcing them to leaue behind them one of their women which was also landed, vpon whom ... those brutish men, or rather barbarous monsters, vs[d] all sort of fleshly abhominacion and filthy lust, & that in euery such part of her body, as by any possibility they might (fol. 12v).

A European woman on a single ship, driven by a storm to an uninhabited island, is left behind by her compatriots and then viciously raped by "monsters" which in most but not all respects resemble men. Like Miranda, this unnamed woman does not arrive on the island alone, and there is no sense that she is already guilty of any heinous offence. Torquemada's ape-island will not explain everything about *The Tempest*, or even everything about Sycorax, Caliban, and Miranda. Shakespeare's storm and certain details of his text were inspired by accounts of a shipwreck on Bermuda (which one of his probable sources called "The Isle of Devils"). But Torquemada does – like Shakespeare's play but unlike its other putative sources – mix magic and monsters, witchcraft and miracles, devils and geography, skepticism and credulity, classical fables and recent eyewitness maritime narratives. From Torquemada to Tyson, early modern sources situate this story in the uneasy territory between religion, geography, humanism and natural philosophy, where European intellectuals tried to explain anomalies that challenged prevailing definitions of what was human and what was not. As such, they belonged to an early modern epistemological shift, a rejection of Aristotle's assumption that "accidents, anomalies, and monstrosities could not serve as the basis for knowledge". That early modern rejection of Aristotle's insistence on statistical norms led to the experimental method of the new empiricism but also, as Elizabeth Spiller observes, to certain kinds of literary experiment. Spiller's primary example is *The Tempest*.<sup>51</sup> Such thought-experiments took seriously the category of the apparently-uncategorizable anomaly, the "accident most strange" (1.2.178). Like the two sons born by the putative union of a European woman and a primate, Caliban is an anomaly, an interesting exception to the statistical and philosophical norms of human reproduction and classification. What makes him interesting is the challenge he presents to the category "human".

The "contact zones" where European voyagers encountered unfamiliar peoples, which they would eventually categorize as inferior "races", were also the zones where they first encountered unfamiliar species, which they would later categorize as "primates" and "great apes".<sup>52</sup> Some Europeans collapsed the difference between those beings. Torquemada's account of

51 Elizabeth Spiller, Shakespeare and the Making of Modern Science: Resituating Prospero's Art, in: *South Central Review* 26, 2009, pp. 24-41, here p. 25.

52 Mary Louise Pratt, *Arts of the Contact Zone*, in: *Profession* 91, 1991, pp. 33-40.

a human-ape union would explain why Shakespeare imagined Caliban as a "monster" and a "strange beast" (2.2.30), a "mooncalf" (2.2.102, 106, 129), "misshapen" (5.1.268) and "disproportioned" (5.1.291). He belongs to a "vile race" (1.2.357), a noun Torquemada uses for pygmies and satyrs, which he thinks may or may not be human.<sup>53</sup> Miranda once includes Caliban in the category "man", and once excludes him from it.<sup>54</sup> But Caliban is not just a hybrid primate. He is literally and literarily a monster, an incoherent hybrid produced by promiscuously mixing anomalies from many different sources. Early modern accounts did not distinguish chimpanzees from bonobos, orangutans, gorillas, or gibbons; instead, they routinely combined elements of these and other species, creating a "motley, composite being, stitched together from remnants of past traditions and awkwardly linking those precedents with contemporary anecdote and empirical observation".<sup>55</sup> We might call that composite "the undifferentiated ape". Shakespeare gives Caliban an African mother, compares him to a "dead Indian" (2.2.32) and to "savages and men of Ind" (2.2.57) – making Caliban the epitome of what has been called "the undifferentiated Indian", a figure who conflates all the varied human inhabitants of North America, Africa, and the Indian Ocean rim.<sup>56</sup> Finally, Shakespeare also made Caliban a "slave" (as he is called six times in 1.2) and emphasized his "darkness" (5.1.275), thus combining laborphobia with colorphobia in a toxic racist compound.<sup>57</sup>

What do these equatorial primates, Africans, Indians, and colonized slave populations all have in common? None of them are "white like us". Citing Ptolemy's description of the land of Georgia in the Caucasus, the 1600 English translation of Torquemada locates there

five sorts of people, some blacke as Ethiopians, some white like vs, some hauing tailes like Peacocks, some of very little and low stature with two heads, and others whose face and teeth are in maner of horse iawes (fol. 11v).

But this is a serious mistranslation of the Spanish original:

- 53 Torquemada, Spanish *Mandeville*, fol. 13 (men with tails, related to satyrs, wild savages, and the island "monsters" who gang-raped a European woman), fol. 15v (of pygmies, which may be a "race of men" or may be only "beastes, bearing the figure and likenesse of men, with some little more vse of reason, then the other beastes haue").
- 54 Contrast 1.2.443 (naming Ferdinando the third "man", presumably after Prospero and Caliban) with 3.1.50f. (including as "men" only Ferdinand and Prospero).
- 55 Brown, *Melancholy Apes*, p. 35.
- 56 Rebecca Ann Bach, *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World*, New York 2000, p. 180.
- 57 Taylor, *Whiteness*, pp. 147-154.

cinco maneras de gentes: unos, negros como etíopes; y otros, blancos que tienen unas colas como pavones; otros hay como nosotros; otros, unos hombres muy chiquitos, con dos cabezas; y otros que tienen la cara con los dientes, a manera de caballos (p. 127).

Ancient Mediterranean men, like Ptolemy, thought of their own complexions as reddish, brown, or honey-colored. They associated white skin with eunuchs, who were more despised than any other human genre.<sup>58</sup> Consequently, Ptolemy's catalogue of monstrous races included northern barbarians who were "white, with tails like peacocks" (*blancos, que tienen unas colas como pavones*), clearly distinct from others "like us" (*como nosotros*). Tudor Englishmen, by contrast, recognized that they belonged to the northern "geohumoral" climate zone characterized by "white" complexions – but they also knew that they did not have peacock-tails and were not monstrous.<sup>59</sup> Hence Lewkenor the translator or Walker the editor "translated" (transferred) the phrase "like us" so that it applied to "white", leaving the peacock-men in a category of their own.

European expansion created hundreds of new linguistic contact zones, and translation, or mistranslation, has always been an essential component of imperial and racial policy.<sup>60</sup> "The names we give to things, and to organisms", a modern primatologist insists, "really does alter the way we think about them".<sup>61</sup> But the pronouns we give them may be even more important than the names, because pronouns do the work of ideology so inconspicuously. Pronouns are, of course, impossible to translate. The "us" of the linguistic source community always necessarily differs from the "us" of the linguistic target community. Consider the long and detailed description of an animal that we now call the chimpanzee – here translated into modern English, but originally written about 1615 in Portuguese – by a Jesuit missionary in what we now call Sierra Leone. He reported that the local inhabitants "claim to be descended of this animal ... they consider it the soul of their forefathers, and they think themselves of high parentage. They say they are of the animal's family".<sup>62</sup>

What the Jesuit writes down and translates as "they" and "their" must originally have been a spoken "we" and "our". But the European Christian

58 Gary Taylor, *Castration: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood*, New York 2000, pp. 140-155.

59 For "geohumoralism" see Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama*, Cambridge 2003, and Taylor, *Whiteness*, pp. 50-95.

60 Cf. Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from "The Tempest" to "Tarzan"*, rev. edn., Philadelphia 1997.

61 Colin Groves, *Primate Taxonomy*, Washington D.C. 2001, p. 303.

62 Manuel Alvares, *Ethiopia Minor and a Geographical Account of the Province of Sierra Leone*, tr. P. E. H. Hair, Liverpool 1990, chapter 1, fol. 51.

listener refused to include himself in that spoken first person plural. He certainly did not consider the chimpanzee a member of *his* family. But we now know that the inclusive African pronoun was correct, and the exclusionary European pronoun a mistranslation. We humans are all members of the same primate family as the chimpanzees. In 1993 the philosopher Peter Singer and others drafted a "Declaration on Great Apes", which argued that the moral equality articulated by the American Declaration of Independence should be extended to all the great apes.<sup>63</sup> In 1998 an article in *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* argued that chimpanzees should be reclassified as a species of the genus "homo".<sup>64</sup> In 2005 scientists reported that the DNA sequence that can be directly compared between the human and chimpanzee genomes is almost 99 percent identical.<sup>65</sup>

Literary and cultural critics cannot measure similarity so mathematically. Shakespeare's contemporary Andrew Battel (born c.1560), the first Englishman to spend years in the Congo and the first to see gorillas first hand, could only pit one simile against another: "in all proportion *like* a man, but that he is more *like* a giant in stature".<sup>66</sup> Simile always asserts difference as well as similarity. By contrast, pronouns force a choice, and their use expresses an individual's, or a culture's, rough calculation of the limits of similitude. Torquemada's Portuguese maritime anecdote fascinated early modern Europeans because it pushed those limits, by asserting, on the basis of alleged multiple-eyewitness contemporary testimony, that humans and apes were more alike than Europeans liked to believe. Contemporary primatology confirms at least some elements of the anecdote. Rape is the normal form of orangutan mating, and is fairly common among chimpanzees. Given the opportunity, orangutans and chimpanzees will rape human females. Between 1595 and 1625 two Portuguese observers in western Africa reported being told, by local informants, about the abduction and rape of women by great apes.<sup>67</sup> These reports, which we might be inclined to dismiss as imperial or racist Euro-male fabrications, have

63 Paola Cavalieri and Peter Singer, ed., *The Great Ape Project: Equality Beyond Humanity*, London 1993, pp. 4-7.

64 M. Goodman, C. A. Porter, J. Czelusniak, S. L. Page, H. Schneider, J. Shosahni, G. Gunnell, and C. P. Groves, *Toward a Phylogenetic Classification of Primates Based on DNA Evidence Complemented by Fossil Evidence*, in: *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution* 9, 1998, pp. 585-598.

65 The Chimpanzee Sequencing and Analysis Consortium, *Initial Sequence of the Chimpanzee Genome and Comparison with the Human Genome*, in: *Nature* 437/1, 1 September 2005, pp. 69-87.

66 Samuel Purchas, ed., *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 4 vols., London 1625, 2:982 (my italics). Battel apparently returned to London in 1610, so Shakespeare might have heard him talk about Congo.

67 Taylor, *Whiteness*, pp. 473f.

since been confirmed by female primatologists.<sup>68</sup> Rape is still rape, whether the perpetrator is human or chimpanzee. But the ape may be treating the woman no worse than he routinely treats other females of his genus. From the perspective of the adult male ape, an ovulating woman may be just another female primate in estrus. Is the ape wrong? A defense attorney would contend that, once she was back among the Portuguese, the woman had every reason to allege that she had been raped. Male bonobo chimpanzees do not rape females, but they do routinely exchange food for sexual favors. In all accounts of the Torquemada anecdote, the ape fed and protected the woman, who had been rejected by males of her own species. From the perspective of the male ape, the alleged intercourse may have been normal and consensual. Humans can form strong emotional bonds with other primates, and vice versa. One reason that chimpanzees do not make good "pets", and have never become a real "companion species", is that they are too much like us; they easily get frustrated, emotionally jealous, and violent.<sup>69</sup> The alpha male primate in the Torquemada anecdote committed infanticide, but human males have threatened, and committed, such crimes, for the same reason, as a way of blackmailing or punishing a female who wants to leave them – especially if she goes off with some other male.

*King Kong* is, of course, misogynist, racist, imperialist, and capitalist. But it is also a love story. The film sanitizes that love story, in typical Hollywood fashion, by taking out the sex that had always been a part of the Portuguese anecdote.<sup>70</sup> By taking out the sex, Cooper also took out the rape, making it possible for the woman to remain chaste (like Miranda), and for the primate to remain her chivalric protector. But although the sex is gone, surely every spectator sees the love in King Kong's huge eyes, when he looks at his little white pet. Merian Cooper made King Kong a person – violent, of course, but no more so than many other white male protagonists, and heroes, who die for love. And that is, I think, the real core of the Portuguese anecdote, the reason early modern European men

68 Dale Peterson, Jane Goodall, *Visions of Caliban: On Chimpanzees and People*, rev. ed., Athens GA 2000, pp. 191-193; Birute Galdikas, *Orangutan Reproduction in the Wild*, in: C. E. Graham, ed., *Reproductive Biology of the Great Apes*, New York 1981, pp. 281-299.

69 In 1061 Peter Damian reported an Italian count had been murdered by his pet monkey, which had been having sex with the count's lascivious wife (Letters 61-90. tr. Owen J. Blum, Washington D.C. 1989, pp. 296f.). The monkey could have been motivated by jealousy, whether or not his emotional bond to the woman had ever been sexually consummated.

70 But that process had already begun in *The Isle of Devils*, where Lewis goes to great lengths to establish the sexual innocence of the heroine, and where both rapes occur as it were offstage, while the woman is unconscious. In *The Tempest*, the rape is attempted offstage, and prevented before the play begins.

kept telling and retelling it. It wasn't really the woman that interested them. They had always had plenty of misogynous stories about lascivious women. It wasn't race that interested them, initially; the woman on the island was European, as were the only men in the story. Europeans had had contact with black men for millennia, had enslaved other humans for millennia, had created empires for millennia. They didn't need new racial theories to justify any of those behaviors. No, the novelty of the historical situation of early modern Europeans, the novelty of the Torquemada story, the emotional core of the narrative, is the distant, difficult, dangerous ape. Philosophically, the most dangerous thing about that other primate was his familiarity, a similitude proven by the fact that he could successfully sire living and speaking children on a white woman. Chivalric protector, king of his domain, rapist, jealous husband, emotional blackmailer, child-killer: that other primate acted just like a man who was "white like us". Or was it men "white like us" who are acting just like primates?

Modern racism can be interpreted, in part, as a defensive reaction to the early modern discovery of the great apes, which threw European thought into the turmoil that eventually led to theories of evolution.<sup>71</sup> That discovery first affected only a small number of sea-going Europeans, like the mariners in the Torquemada story. Once the maritime oral narratives turned into printed texts, they began to be policed by the stay-at-home intellectuals who – unlike working-class mariners – were the keepers and makers of official ideologies. The guardians of human uniqueness and privilege immediately responded to Torquemada's narrative by turning the ape into a devil, thereby folding it back into an utterly familiar Manichean homocentric script. But the repressed, elided great apes kept coming back, more and more insistently real. In 1623, the same year that *The Tempest* was published, Londoners could also buy a new book by an English traveler to Africa, who described the West African apes he had encountered as "a race and kind of people".<sup>72</sup> By the 1640s chimpanzees were being captured, taken from their "exotic" "native land", transported "against their will", "by boat", often "in chains", "from the jungle to" an imperial port city in the North Atlantic, where they were "displayed" as public spectacles in the short period between disembarkation and death. Indeed, like Kong, or the "dead Indian" with whom Caliban is compared (2.2.32), the near-human

71 Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility*, New York 1983, p. 129.

72 Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade: or, A Discovery of the Riuer Gambia and the Golden Trade of the Aethiopians*, London 1623, p. 153. For Jobson's importance to the racial history of the English word "white", see Taylor, *Whiteness*, pp. 101-103.



things continued to be gawked at, even after they died. Those first-hand encounters in Europe produced detailed engravings and printed descriptions, which circulated even more widely among the reading, writing, ideology-making public. Torquemada's story of interspecies sex produces, in the end, no living offspring, but within a century it was being cited as evidence that entire human populations were the result of cross-breeding between humans and apes. By the early twentieth century Herman Bernelot Moens was lobbying for mass hybridization of Africans and chimpanzees.<sup>73</sup> Scientific racism was no longer satisfied with anecdotes; it needed controlled experiments in eugenics. His proposal was defeated, but was its defeat a sign of empathy or of fear? The failure or the success of the experiment might have been equally disturbing. Since the seventeenth century, white men have needed new racial hierarchies to insulate themselves from their disquieting, increasingly-evident proximity to the great apes. Between "us" (Euro-males) and "it" (the great primate) stood lots of "them", the various vertical layers of "inferior races" in the great chain of primates first formulated independently by William Petty (1676?) and François Bernier (1684).<sup>74</sup>

To allegorize the not-quite-human as all-too-human, or vice versa, to reduce King Kong or Ca-ca-caliban to a simple racial allegory, is to evade the ontological challenge posed by human contact with the great apes.<sup>75</sup> One primatologist describes the effect of such interaction as "empathic unrest".<sup>76</sup> In its most intense forms, the forms represented by Torquemada's tale, Shakespeare's play, Cooper's film, it produces what I would call "empathic turbulence". Our concepts cannot cage it. Our pronouns cannot translate it, or them, or us.

73 Piet de Rooy, *In Search of Perfection: The Creation of a Missing Link*, in: Raymond Corbey and Bert Theunissen, ed., *Ape, Man, Apeman: Changing Views since 1600*, Leiden 1995, pp. 195-208.

74 William Petty, *The Scale of Animals*, in: *The Petty Papers: Some Unpublished Writings of Sir William Petty*, ed. Marquis of Lansdowne, 2 vols., London 1927, 2, pp. 30f.; [François Bernier], *Nouvelle Division de la Terre, par les Différences Espèces ou Races d'Homme qui l'Habitent*, in: *Journal des Sçavans* 12, Amsterdam 1684, pp. 148-155.

75 Raymond Corbey, *The Metaphysics of Apes: Negotiating the Animal-Human Boundary*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 178-201.

76 Jan van Hooff, *Primate Ecology and Socioecology in the Netherlands*, in: Shirley C. Strum and Linda M. Fedigan, ed., *Primate Encounters: Models of Science, Gender, and Society*, Chicago 2000, pp. 116-137, here p. 126.

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## The Systematisation Phase

# Artificial Persons, Natural Sub-Persons

## Hobbes as Aristotelian Contractarian

Charles W. Mills

Within modern Western political theory, few ideas have been as influential as that of the social contract. Not merely does its "golden age" (1650-1800) include such central canonical figures as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant, but its revival by John Rawls has given it a new relevance in the last four decades. Contractarian liberalism is now the dominant global ideology of modernity. However, what is usually unacknowledged is that race and racism are central to modernity also, and that the politics of race shapes the politics of the social contract. Modernity's social contract is actually a racial contract, one that draws on pre-modern racial ideas. In this chapter, I will argue that in Thomas Hobbes's version of the contract, his supposedly uncompromising "modern" attack on, and break with, Aristotelian assumptions is in fact only partial. Hobbes's "natural savages" are akin to Aristotle's "natural slaves".

Within modern Western political theory, few ideas have been as influential as that of the social contract. Though sometimes thought of as distinctively modern, its intellectual roots actually long predate this period, originating in the *nomos/physics* (convention/nature) distinction of ancient Greece and the Greek and Roman Stoics' writings on natural law. Indeed, for some commentators, it goes back even further, to the Old Testament covenant with God. It develops in the medieval period as a minority viewpoint on the appropriate relationship between feudal lords and their vassals. But it achieves its triumphant, recognizably modern incarnation only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in what has been called the "golden age" of social contract theory. The century and a half from 1650 to 1800 witnesses the publication of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651), John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (1762), and Immanuel Kant's *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797), all classic texts of ethical and political theory whose ideas continue to shape political debate today.<sup>1</sup>

The success of social contract theory is all the more striking in the light of the somewhat problematic nature of its foundational concepts. We are asked to imagine individuals in a pre-social and pre-political stage of humanity, a "state of nature", who then decide, because of its disadvantages, to come together to create society and the state. The "contract" is then either a literal representation of, or a metaphor for, this act of construc-

1 Michael Lessnoff, *Social Contract*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1986, chapters 1-2.

tion. But since human beings are always in social groups, whether small or large, and never in a state of nature, the account cannot be literally true, so it fails as ur-anthropology. And given what we now know about the power of socialization to shape us all, one may question how far a speculation about pre-social creatures could really yield insights of any value, so that even as a metaphor it faces difficulties. Yet the concept survives – the metaphor, the image, the figure, the iconography, the thought-experiment, whatever term seems most appropriate – continuing to resonate with us, and defying criticism of its implausibilities and counterfactuality. Writing more than sixty years ago, in his introduction to an anthology on the theme, Sir Ernest Barker analyzed this strange resilience:

The general idea of the Social Contract, which has haunted the generations ... may be criticized on various grounds. The critic may urge that it was mechanical, and not organic, in its interpretation of political life; juristic, and not ethical, in its rationale of political obligation; *a priori*, and not historical, in its explanation of political society and political authority. The criticisms have their justice ... But if it was unhistorical, the theory was still historic – and historic in more than one sense. Not only could it show a long and continuous history ... it had also been a factor making for freedom, whether it was applied, as it was by the Huguenots after 1570, to defend the cause of religious liberty, or employed, as it was by the English Whigs in 1688 and afterwards, to buttress the cause of civil liberty ... Even if there had never been a contract, men actually behaved "as if" there had been such a thing ... The theory of the Social Contract might be mechanical, juristic, and *a priori*. But it was none the less a way of expressing two fundamental ideas or values to which the human mind will always cling – the value of Liberty, or the idea that will, not force, is the basis of government, and the value of Justice, or the idea that right, not might, is the basis of all political society and of every system of political order.<sup>2</sup>

It is this normative freight, together with the related recognition that, in Christopher Morris's verdict, "even if we never found ourselves in any pre-political setting, nevertheless our political institutions and arrangements are, in some sense, our creations",<sup>3</sup> that arguably accounts for the continuing appeal of social contract theory. In effect, the metaphor captures both a crucial factual claim and a crucial moral claim: that we make society and the polity and that social structures and political institutions should respect our moral equality. So though at the time Barker was writing, social contract theory seemed to have come to its final demise, undone by the criticisms of utilitarianism and historicism, he might not have been surprised

2 Sir Ernest Barker, introduction to Barker, ed.; *Social Contract: Essays by Locke, Hume, and Rousseau*, New York, 1960 [1947], pp. vii-xliv, here pp. vii f.

3 Christopher W. Morris, introduction, to Morris, ed., *The Social Contract Theorists: Critical Essays on Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau*, Lanham, MD, 1999, pp. ix-xi, here p. x.

at its later resurrection in the hands of John Rawls. Rawls's 1971 *A Theory of Justice* is standardly given the credit for reviving not just contractarianism, but Anglo-American political philosophy as well.<sup>4</sup> Forty years later, political philosophy is one of the most active sub-fields of the discipline, with Rawlsian contractarian liberalism constituting a major pillar, whether as model to be emulated or target to be attacked.

So the social contract is central not merely to the birth of modernity but, reascent, to current moral and political debates. But this inspirational story has a darker side rarely discussed in political theory circles. I have argued elsewhere that the centrality of race and racial domination to the making of the modern world requires a revisionist political narrative of modernity whose implications for the contract, both descriptive and normative, need to be made explicit.<sup>5</sup> Insofar as the contract, as a metaphor, does capture the "mechanical" conception of the polity quite congenial to moderns dubious about communitarian claims of a common, organically conceived-of good; insofar as the contract, as a prescriptive ideal, does embed norms of liberty and justice, of right not might; insofar as the contract, as formal and informal practice, does in some sense represent the behavior ("as if") of "men"; insofar as the contract, as a descriptive and normative framework, does orient liberalism, the political ideology classically associated with modernity, it is obviously crucial to understand how all of these – political conceptions, prescriptive ideals, behavioral norms, theoretical frameworks – are affected by its actual, usually unacknowledged, racialization. In this chapter, I will focus on Thomas Hobbes, the first of the "big four" contract theorists of modernity, to demonstrate how his contract, far from making a clean break with key Aristotelian assumptions as it is standardly represented as doing, translates into a new idiom crucial pre-modern hierarchies.

### **The Contract and Liberalism**

Let us begin by taking a closer look at the key points of social contract theory, which will make clear why, despite all the differences between the ideal polities Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant propose, the contract as an intellectual device has nonetheless come to be seen as central to liberalism. Michael Lessnoff provides a useful list of defining features:

Firstly, contract theory offers an account of political authority that is *voluntaristic*, that is, makes it dependent on acts of human will. Legitimate authority is legitimate because those subject to it have willed to be subject

4 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed. Cambridge, MA, 1999; orig. ed. 1971.

5 Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Ithaca, NY, 1997.



to it. But, secondly, this voluntarism is also *consensual* – the theory postulates a consensus of wills among all those subject to a given legitimate authority ... [T]hirdly, one important strand of contract theory, which may well be held to be the most important and the most typical, is a highly *individualistic* theory, grounding legitimate political authority on its acceptance by individuals ... [T]he fourth typical feature of social contract theory ... is *rationalism*. If the individual wills are not willful but rational, it is postulated, consensus can be reached.<sup>6</sup>

Lessnoff suggests that social contract accounts of the creation of the polity can be contrasted with two main alternatives, the naturalistic (such as Aristotelian teleological views, or patriarchalist conceptions of the polity as the family writ large) and the supernatural (the polity as incarnating the will of God).<sup>7</sup> From this perspective, we can see the commonalities underlying the otherwise radically variant versions of the contract in Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Kant which legitimize grouping them all under this theoretical umbrella. The contract as a concept represents the triumph of *nomos* over *physis*, of convention over nature.

Hobbes argues for absolutism, a sovereign above the law, unconstrained by the separation of powers we have come to see as distinctive of liberal democracies, as against totalitarian states. Nonetheless, it is still the case that his fearsome LEVIATHAN is brought into existence by the voluntary consensual agreement of individuals rationally convinced that it is better to transfer their rights to such an entity rather than remain in the deadly state of nature. Locke, his successor, is more acceptable to liberalism. The absolutism Locke is primarily targeting in the *Two Treatises* is that of Sir Robert Filmer, Tory author of *Patriarcha*, rather than Hobbes's, but many of his criticisms are nonetheless applicable to Hobbes's version also. Locke's starting-point is not the amoral Hobbesian state of nature, but a moralized state where individuals have equal rights and freedoms. Whether outside of society or within society, then, natural law morally limits what we can do, so that the Lockean polity is a moral polity, where rights and freedoms are guaranteed and protected by the constitutionalist sovereign. Rousseau argues for a radically transformational political order in which, by alienating ourselves fully to the community, we are metamorphosed into political citizens guided by the general will. But again, the repudiation of representative liberal democracy is the decision of freely-consenting individuals, rationally motivated by the goal of avoiding the problems of the corrupt plutocratic state he had described earlier in *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality*. So even if his own political solution is found dubious, and illiberal, the utopian vision of a citizenry prepared to subordinate their self-

<sup>6</sup> Lessnoff, *Social Contract*, pp. 6f.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

ish personal interests to the general republican good can still constitute an attractive liberal ideal. Finally, Kant is emphatic that in the *Rechtsstaat*, realpolitik cannot be allowed to trump morality, and that reasons of state can never override universal reason. The categorical imperative to respect the personhood of others must thus regulate our social interactions, and it constrains the government itself. So though Kant, unlike Locke, did not recognize the right to revolution, both converge on the essential desiderata of the liberal state, one guided by the rule of law in which individuals' basic rights and freedoms are to be protected. John Gray summarizes what he sees as the key elements of liberalism:

Common to all variants of the liberal tradition is a definite conception, distinctively modern in character, of man and society ... It is *individualist*, in that it asserts the moral primacy of the person against the claims of any social collectivity; *egalitarian*, inasmuch as it confers on all men the same moral status and denies the relevance to legal or political order of differences in moral worth among human beings; *universalist*, affirming the moral unity of the human species and according a secondary importance to specific historic associations and cultural forms; and *meliorist* in its affirmation of the corrigibility and improbability of all social institutions and political arrangements. It is this conception of man and society which gives liberalism a definite identity which transcends its vast internal variety and complexity.<sup>8</sup>

We can now appreciate why, though not at all an identity, a close conceptual relationship nonetheless links liberalism and contractarianism. (Just compare the key terms on Lessnoff's and Gray's lists.) Contractarian absolutism exists, non-contractarian (for example, utilitarian) liberalism exists. But there is an affinity between the concept of the contract and liberal ideals and assumptions that makes them natural allies, and with the decline of the influence of utilitarianism in recent decades, and the resurgence of the discourse of natural rights, contractarian liberalism is now the most important kind. So given that liberalism is the globally dominant ideology, having eclipsed its Marxist challenger, this means that contractarian liberalism is central not just to the history of Western political thought but to its present also. It provides us a way of thinking about society and the polity that (supposedly) breaks with conservative pre-modern assumptions of natural or supernatural predestination, expresses a commitment to moral egalitarianism and universalism, denies the legitimacy of government not resting on popular consent, and emphasizes an Enlightenment confidence in the power of reason to shape the socio-political order to meliorist ends. These are the framing assumptions of modernity.

8 John Gray, *Liberalism*, Minneapolis, 1986, p. x.

### Who Contracts?

The crucial question then is obviously: who gets to contract? How should we think of the "men" the equal individuals who, at the birth of modern political theory, are seen as the agents of the contract, those whose wills are supposed to bring society and the polity into existence? Who are the people whose rights are to be respected and protected by the liberal state, whose consent gives legitimacy to government, and whose freedom and equality are to be safeguarded?

In contemporary political theory, it is customary to represent them as abstract, generic adult humans. With the obvious exceptions (the severely 'retarded', the brain-dead), the presumption is that all human beings are full persons, in the sense of having their basic rights and freedoms recognized. The social contract is thus supposed to be a story we can all relate to and identify with. But as feminists have long demonstrated for gender, this presumption is profoundly mistaken. The "men" really are male.<sup>9</sup> What I would claim is that they are also generally white. "Person", I would contend, is a technical term, a term of art, and in the birth of Western liberalism it is usually so constructed as to have racial prerequisites. If feminists have shown that liberalism is patriarchal, we need to recognize that it is also generally racial.

The relation between race, racism, and modernity has of late become increasingly contested. What has for decades been the standard narrative is recounted in George Fredrickson's *Racism: A Short History*.<sup>10</sup> According to this account, racism emerges out of the development of European expansionism and Iberian anti-Semitism in the late medieval/early modern period. Seemingly countervailing evidence from the ancient Greco-Roman world and the early medieval periods, or from non-Western sources, is thus to be categorized otherwise, as instances of ethnocentrism and color prejudice, but not racism. Race and racism are both distinctively modern and distinctively, or at least mainly, Western.

But dissenters from this view have always existed. Some disagree with both claims. Wulf D. Hund, for example, has long argued that characterizations of other peoples in terms of "savagery" and "barbarism" should count as racism, and that such depictions can be found in the ancient non-Western as well as Western worlds.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, Benjamin Isaac's *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, whose thesis is stated in its

<sup>9</sup> Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, Stanford, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History*, Princeton, 2002.

<sup>11</sup> Wulf D. Hund, *Negative Vergesellschaftung: Dimensionen der Rassismus-analyse*, Münster, 2006.

title, agrees that racism is pre-modern, but insists that it is Western, a position reaffirmed by him and his co-editors in their recently published, again self-explanatorily titled, *The Origins of Racism in the West*.<sup>12</sup> There is no time to enter this dispute here; the question is what the implications are if the racism-as-pre-modern analysis is vindicated.

To begin with, obviously, the neatness of the present periodization will have to be given up. Rather than a non-racial, pre-modern epoch (antiquity, feudalism) that then gives way to a sharply demarcated, racial modern epoch, we would have to accept the fact that racism and racial thinking go back thousands of years. So it would mean acknowledging that they are far more deep-rooted in human interactions than previously thought. As a corollary, the case for making race a subject of inquiry across various disciplines would be greatly strengthened, and made more urgent. Finally, it should be noted that even if this revisionist historical analysis is correct, it would not at all be the case that modernity would lose its distinctiveness altogether. Modernity would still be demarcated from the pre-modern epoch of race in a number of ways: by the far greater detail and degree of systematicity of racist thought, by the advent of Western racial domination as a social system that would eventually become global, and relatedly, of course (for those sympathetic to social constructionism), by the emergence of "whites" and "nonwhites" as the two basic racial categories, which would not have existed in antiquity.

We can then parallel the gender analysis of liberalism with a racial one. For second-wave feminist theory, the crucial line of demarcation is the public/private split, which divides the internal "geography" of the polity into the polis proper and the household. Crossing this boundary justifies a transformation in the normative schedule of rights and freedoms, since on the different sides of this line one is dealing with different kinds of beings, those fully capable of functioning in the public sphere (men) and those whose role it is to assist male reproduction by their role in the domestic sphere (women). In the case of race, the "geography" is both external and internal: colonized nations whose economies are necessary appendages for the European metropolis, and subordinated populations within Europe and the Euro-settler states themselves. The color line then demarcates those who become "whites" from those who become "nonwhites", a moral cartography of personhood and sub-personhood. So the mistake is to think that racism is an anomaly, a deviation from principles intended to apply universally to all humans. Though liberalism at its inception is not as con-

12 Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton, 2004; Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler, eds., *The Origins of Racism in the West*, New York, 2009.

sistently racially as sexually exclusionary (since patriarchy already exists as a social formation at the dawn of modernity, whereas white supremacy does not), it gradually develops as a racial liberalism, an imperial liberalism.<sup>13</sup> Liberalism needs to be seen in a global context, as being simultaneously the ideology of the modern European state and the modern Euro-imposed state, the homeland and the empire, the colonizing power and the colonial world. Egalitarianism, universalism, and the presumption of an equal rational capacity to will cannot in general therefore cross racial lines any more than they can cross gender lines, since these lines demarcate different moral statuses. Not everybody is capable of making the contract.

### **Hobbes as Aristotelian Contractarian**

I now want to focus on Thomas Hobbes, whom I will argue well illustrates both this transition to modernity and its incipient racialization. As earlier noted, though Hobbes's contract theory is not ultimately liberal, it clears the path toward liberalism by providing crucial theoretical elements to be used by later contractarians who are. His uncompromising individualism, and famous characterization of the polity as composed of individual men seeking to realize their own subjective interests rather than an objective *summum bonum*, make him our contemporary, and a contributor to foundational liberal ideas, even if his absolutism harkens back to the pre-modern. Thus the voluntarism, consent, individualism, and rationalism identified by Lessnoff as definitive of the contract tradition are all to be found in *Leviathan*, and while his sovereign is absolutist rather than constitutionalist, the egalitarianism, universalism, and meliorism that Gray sees as essential to liberalism are standardly ascribed to Hobbes also. As C. B. Macpherson writes in his introduction to *Leviathan*: "There ought not to be any question as to whether Hobbes was in the main stream of English political thought; it should rather be acknowledged that he dug the channel in which the main stream subsequently flowed".<sup>14</sup>

Accordingly, Aristotle is one of Hobbes's main targets in *Leviathan*, both for his claims about the nature of the polis and his claims about the nature of men. The secondary literature generally characterizes this critique as clearly exemplifying the shift from the pre-modern to the modern. But

13 Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France*, Princeton, 2005. Pitts argues that early liberalism is not consistently racist, and that it is only with the development of "imperial liberalism" in the nineteenth century that racial exclusion becomes the norm.

14 C. B. Macpherson, introduction to Macpherson, ed., *Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan*, New York, 1968, pp. 9-63, here p. 24.

Tom Sorell warns that "[s]ometimes what Hobbes presents as new ... is a reworking of something one can find in Greek philosophy... . Modernity needs to include reworked antiquity".<sup>15</sup> My contention is that this is indeed true, but in an area of Hobbes's thought not at all usually recognized by commentators.

Aristotle had said in the *Politics* that the polis was natural, and that all men were social creatures (*zoa politika*). He had also asserted that some men were inferior beings, natural slaves, though since their innate servility was demarcated by their souls rather than their bodies, it would not always be externally visible. Since the *Politics* is one of his best-known works, this assertion is not at all obscure, but has been famous, or notorious, for thousands of years, widely cited in pre-modern as well as modern times. But it is not normally instanced as an example of racism. For both Hund and Isaac, however, this is because of the tendentious way that "racism" has been defined, making it almost tautological that racism is modern. We should see racism not as necessarily involving distinctions of color, but instead in non-question-begging terms as the regarding of individuals and groups of people as superior or inferior because of "collective traits, physical, mental, and moral, which are constant and unalterable by human will".<sup>16</sup> By this criterion, Aristotle's views would certainly count, and serve as a prototype for modern racism.

Now Hobbes is, of course, supposed to be an anti-Aristotelian. To begin with, he conceives of the polity as artificial: "For by ART is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or STATE ... which is but an Artificiall Man".<sup>17</sup> The natural condition of men is not to be in the polis but in the bestial state of nature, which makes industry, culture, knowledge, and arts impossible, and threatens life itself (ch. 13). Thus the hallmark of the human becomes the ability "artificially" to demarcate oneself from nature, to rise above such conditions, to become civil, as symbolized by one's rational, voluntaristic signing of the contract. As Richard Ashcraft comments: "[M]en are not recognizably different from other animals by virtue of divine creation ... they become different only because they themselves create a political society".<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, Hobbes is also conventionally depicted as a universalist and an egalitarian. Macpherson says that he "asserted the equal natural rights of

15 Tom Sorell, introduction to Sorell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes*, New York, 1996, pp. 1-12, here p. 12.

16 Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, p. 23.

17 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 81.

18 Richard Ashcraft, *Leviathan Triumphant: Thomas Hobbes and the Politics of Wild Men*, in: Edward Dudley and Maximilian E. Novak, ed., *The Wild Man*

man", and Alan Ryan writes of "Hobbes's insistence on the natural equality of mankind", as against Aristotelian natural hierarchy.<sup>19</sup> Though he begins from people's rough physical and mental equality, not their moral equality, this factual equality ultimately grounds their civil equality. So in LEVIATHAN's "laws of nature", the normative rules to which men agree for the regulation of the polity, the ninth law is: "*That every man acknowledge other for his Equall by Nature*". And in this same paragraph, deriding Aristotle, he writes:

The question who is the better man, has no place in the condition of meer Nature; where, (as has been shewn before,) all men are equall. The inequality that now is, has bin introduced by the Lawes civill. I know that *Aristotle* in the first booke of his Politiques, for a foundation of his doctrine, maketh men by Nature, some more worthy to Command, meaning the wiser sort (such as he thought himselfe to be for his Philosophy;) others to Serve, (meaning those that had strong bodies, but were not Philosophers as he;) as if Master and Servant were not introduced by consent of men, but by difference of Wit: which is not only against reason; but also against experience.<sup>20</sup>

What we seem to have, then, is a radical egalitarianism, fittingly modern, for which social distinctions are conventional rather than natural, *nomos* not *physis*, themselves the result of the "artificial" contract, "introduced by consent of men".

And yet the putative egalitarianism and universalism, the equal rational capacity to will oneself out of the state of nature, are not in fact equally bestowed on all, though if one were to rely on summaries of Hobbes in the secondary literature, one would hardly realize this, nor appreciate the political significance of the exclusion. For in the earlier chapter 13 where we find the notorious representation of the state of nature as a state of war – the same chapter to which Hobbes is referring when he says he has "shewn before" that "all men are equall" – Hobbes explicitly denies that Native Americans have displayed the capacity to exit from the state of nature by rationally contracting to create the polity:

It may peradventure be thought, there was never such a time, nor condition of warre as this; and I believe it was never generally so, over all the world: but there are many places, where they live so now. For the savage people in many places of *America*, except the government of small Families, the concord whereof dependeth on naturall lust, have no government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner, as I said before.<sup>21</sup>

Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism, Pittsburgh, 1972, pp. 141-81, here p. 157.

19 Macpherson, introduction, p. 9; Alan Ryan, "Hobbes's Political Philosophy", in Sorell, Cambridge Companion, pp. 208-45, here p. 217.

20 Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 211.

21 Ibid., p. 187.

The "government" of the family is natural, not artificial like LEVIATHAN, requiring only lust, passions shared with non-human animals, as against rational foresight, which is distinctive of humans. Insofar as Native Americans are human, then, they are clearly humans of a radically inferior kind, non-contractors. Moreover, Native Americans are brought up again in chapter 30 of *Leviathan* as a stigmatized comparison group for those inferring from the absence anywhere of Hobbes's recommended absolutist polity to the absence of any rational grounds for it: "Wherein they [the skeptics] argue as ill, as if the Savage people of America, should deny there were any grounds, or Principles of Reason, so to build a house, as to last as long as the materials, because they never yet saw any so well built".<sup>22</sup>

Yet at the beginning of chapter 13, the natural equality of all "men" was seemingly uncompromisingly stated (and later reiterated in the critique of Aristotle, as we just saw): "Nature hath made men so equall, in the faculties of body, and mind ... that [no] man can thereupon claim to himselfe any benefit, to which another may not pretend, as well as he".<sup>23</sup> How then can Hobbes not see that he is contradicting himself? For that matter, how can his contemporary commentators, like Macpherson and Ryan, unqualifiedly endorse his egalitarianism when it is so blatantly qualified?

The answer is, of course, already given in the text, in the form of the category of the "savage". When Hobbes says "all men" he really means "all civilized men". As Macpherson summarizes: "Civilized men would see the need to get out of this condition [the state of nature]. Hobbes knows that they never have been in it: savage peoples he believes are in it".<sup>24</sup> The seeming democracy of condition of the savage state of nature is illusory, since it is only literal for the inherently savage. Civilized men are superior and superior to it. Thus it is civilized men who are equal: equally rational, equally able to will together, equally capable of leaving the state of nature, equally competent to create the "Artificiall Person" who will "Personate", that is, represent, them – the government, LEVIATHAN. In the transition from antiquity to modernity, the Aristotelian "natural" has changed in significance. Aristotle's natural inferiors are still social; Hobbes's natural inferiors are not. The conceptual door has been opened to a new kind of demarcation in the ranks of humanity, in which the mark of the superior has become the innate (natural) capacity to create the civil, to operationalize *nomos* through the contract. The savages cannot do this. They are distinguished as unequal by the naturalness of the state of nature for them (savage: man of *silva*, the wood), by their sub-rational failure to grasp the

22 Ibid., p. 232.

23 Ibid., p. 183.

24 Macpherson, introduction, p. 41.



"Principles of Reason" necessary to create any government other than the lust-based one of the family. Their inequality has not been "introduced by the Lawes civill", unlike the conventional inequality of the civilized; it is an inequality of *physis*.

Though Hobbes does not elaborate on the likely fate of Native Americans, his later category of the irrational, and stipulations of the appropriate rules of governance for them – "Children, Fooles, and Mad-men that have no use of Reason", and so have to be "Personated by Guardians, or Curators; but can be no Authors ... of any action done by them"<sup>25</sup> – would seem to be the only solution short of genocide for a polity incorporating such creatures. It is the natural persons who are able to create and "author" the actions of the unnatural, artificial person of LEVIATHAN. The natural sub-persons have no such agency, no such authorship, no such capacity to rise above *physis*, and must be spoken for by their rational superiors. But whereas Aristotle, the pre-modern, would have unapologetically seen himself, and is universally seen by others, as affirming a natural hierarchy, Hobbes the modern regards himself and is regarded by others (see Macpherson, Ryan) as an egalitarian. The introduction of the "savage" is what makes this reconciliation possible, dividing humanity so that any cognitive dissonance is eliminated, and the seeming conceptual contradiction between Enlightenment natural egalitarianism and Enlightenment natural hierarchy resolved. Hobbes's non-liberal contract puts the old Aristotelian "naturalist" distinction on a new theoretical foundation, and lays the conceptual groundwork for later liberal theorists who, as the discourse of race became more explicit and systematized in subsequent centuries, would be able to paint "civilized" and "savage" in their "natural" colors of white rulers and nonwhite ruled, the subjects and objects of the contract.

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25 Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 219.

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# Proto-Racism

## Carolina in Locke's Mind

Robert Bernasconi

The recognition that racism is better understood as a system and only derivatively as an ideology has not been fully integrated into histories of racisms. They still tend to be written predominantly from the standpoint of the history of ideas and without reference to the formation and persistence of social structures. In this paper I argue for a strong notion of proto-racism that highlights the formation of systems of racial oppression. To illustrate the value of this notion I return to the question of the relation of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* to his role in the formation of New World slavery, especially through his part in writing *The Fundamental Constitutions* of Carolina. I show that an inadequate understanding of the historical context and a narrow conception of racism has led scholars like Naomi Zack and James Farr to mistake Locke's true significance for the history of racisms. He did not share the modern concept of race which was only beginning to be formed, but even if the proposals of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina to keep specifically Negro slaves under a perpetual death sentence was not widely adopted, it was a significant expression of an ordinary racism.

According to Pierre-André Taguieff, the first uses of the adjective "racist" were in the context of the Dreyfus Affair as a positive characterization of French opposition to Jewish internationalism.<sup>1</sup> As late as the early 1930s it was still possible to promote "racialism" and "race prejudice" as something positive.<sup>2</sup> However, by the end of the 1930s the new word "racism", along with "racist" and "racialist", was primarily used to oppose National Socialism and its racial ideology.<sup>3</sup> This early association of the word "racism" with the Nazis has no doubt contributed to the tendency to understand "racism" in terms of racial doctrines and is reflected in the fact that when UNESCO launched its campaign against racism after the Second World War, its focus fell on the science of race. It did not consider how centuries of oppression had institutionalized racial inequalities, even though anti-Black racism had shaped society and its effects would persist long after the theories that had been used to justify it had been abandoned. In the United States today racism still comes to public attention most often when someone makes a racist remark, such as using a racial epithet, rather than

- 1 Cf. Pierre-André Taguieff, *La force du préjugé*, Paris 1987, pp. 126-128; trans. Hassan Melehy, *The Force of Prejudice*, Minneapolis 1987, pp. 85-87.
- 2 Cf. Sir Arthur Keith, *The Place of Prejudice in Modern Civilization*, London 1931, pp. 47-49.
- 3 Cf. Magnus Hirschfeld, *Racism*, London 1938, and Edmond Vermeil, *Le racisme allemande*, Paris 1939.

in an analysis of institutions. Although there are powerful philosophical critiques of racism as a system (Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon), in the public consciousness racism is located in the mind or in the passions rather than in social structures.<sup>4</sup>

Most histories of racism are histories of racial theories and not of racism as a system with the result that they fail to illuminate our current condition and the difficulties we face in living up to the values our society espouses. The fight against racism is misconceived if it shares the fantasy often promoted in the last sixty years that racism is logically dependent on the idea of race, so that we need only abandon a belief in the scientific basis of race and we are free of racism: no racism without races. But there should be no surprise that the use of the notion of culture or ethnicity as a substitute for race has not taken us to the promised land. That is why Étienne Balibar sought to expose forms of racism operating today without specific appeal to the concept of race by coining the phrase "racism without race".<sup>5</sup> To make this claim about contemporary society more plausible Balibar turned to history and appealed to the existence five hundred years ago of an anti-Semitism that did not rely on a pseudo-biology of race.

The notion of proto-racism was coined in order to write the history of racisms before races. For example, Benjamin Isaac describes as proto-racism the prototypes of the theoretically based racism of the Enlightenment period that he detected in classical antiquity. Isaac's argument is that "some essential elements of later racism have their roots in Greek and Roman thinking".<sup>6</sup> By proto-racism as opposed to ethnic prejudice Isaac understands prejudices directed against inherited characteristics.<sup>7</sup> He concedes that he has not found theoretical racism as such in ancient Greece and Rome, but he insists that he can identify already there many of the elements of what has come to be known as "racism". I do not intend to address that particular controversy in this essay. My aim here is to make a case for a different notion of proto-racism as a tool for the history of racism, or, as is more properly said today, the history of racisms, as racism seems to constantly reinvent itself and can even coexist in contradictory forms. (One thinks, for example, of the co-existence in the late nineteenth century of the longstanding hierarchy of skin color, whereby those of lighter skin were valued above those of darker skin within a given race as well as

4 Cf. Robert Bernasconi, *Racism is a System*, in: S. Crowell, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Existentialism*, Cambridge forthcoming.

5 Étienne Balibar, *Race, nation, classe*, Paris 1997, p. 36. See also Wulf D. Hund, *Rassismus*, Bielefeld 2007, p. 13.

6 Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton 2004, p. 5.

7 Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

between races, and what was at that time the relatively new biologically based prejudice against people of mixed race that associated race-mixing with disease, partial sterility, and lack of longevity.)<sup>8</sup> To make my case I will return to the ongoing debate about John Locke's racism arising from his involvement in the Atlantic slave trade and use that context to refine my understanding of the term, but Locke is intended only as an example. There are multiple proto-racisms, including the Purity of Blood Statutes, whereby, beginning in 1449 in Toledo, the descendants of Jews or Muslims who had converted to Christianity were banned from holding certain official positions.<sup>9</sup> And one should not forget that there was already a precedent for racialized slavery in Central and South America.<sup>10</sup> Indeed the Spanish concept of purity of blood was imported into early colonial Mexico and deployed against Africans and native people.<sup>11</sup>

Professional philosophers have for the most part shown a shocking indifference to the facts of Locke's involvement with slavery as they have come to be known. This is nowhere better illustrated than by the fact that Roger Woolhouse in his recent biography of Locke devoted less than one of some 450 pages to this issue, even though Locke wrote one of the last defenses of slavery by a major philosopher, which also happens to be, as I will show, a justification for the harshest form of slavery ever promoted on philosophical grounds.<sup>12</sup> I will not rehearse here all the now familiar details of Locke's early investments in companies involved in the slave trade and his time as a Commissioner of the Board of Trade toward the end of his life. The most damning element is his involvement as Secretary of the Lords Proprietors in the writing of *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, even though we do not know – and in all likelihood will never know – all the details of his role in formulating the article which read "Every Freeman of Carolina shall have absolute Power and Authority over his Negro Slaves of what Opinion or Religion soever".<sup>13</sup> However, *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* were included in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr.*

8 Cf. Robert Bernasconi, *The Policing of Race Mixing*, in: *Bioethical Inquiry* 7, 2010, pp. 205-216, here pp. 210-213.

9 Cf. Richard Popkins, *The Philosophical Bases of Modern Racism*, in: *The High Road to Pyrrhonism*, San Diego 1980.

10 Cf. James Sweet, *The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought*, in: *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, 1997, pp. 143-166, here pp. 157-164.

11 Cf. Maria Elena Martinez, *The Black Blood of New Spain*, in: *William and Mary Quarterly* 61, 2004, pp. 479-520, here pp. 485f.

12 Cf. Roger Woolhouse, *Locke. A Biography*, Cambridge 2007, p. 187.

13 *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina*, Version of 21 July 1669 in: M. E. E. Parker, ed., *South Carolina Charters and Constitutions 1578-1698*, Raleigh 1963, p. 164.

*John Locke* by John Hales in 1720, and in the Introduction he explained that he had printed it from Locke's own copy with several amendments made in his own hand: "He had presented it, as a work of his, to one of his friends, who was pleas'd to communicate it to me".<sup>14</sup> Whatever his role in writing it, he was happy to own it.<sup>15</sup>

The article had two purposes which together opened the door to a reorganization of society according to racial divisions rather than religious differences. First, it addressed the ongoing controversy over whether Negro slaves could gain their freedom by being baptized following the convention that Christians should not enslave their fellow Christians. *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* singled out "Negro slaves" to be the exception to this custom. Secondly, Negro slaves were specifically placed under perpetual death sentence. They could be slaughtered without penalty. Subsequently it was recognized that this was not a good arrangement, not least because so much of Carolina's wealth and above all its capacity to produce wealth was tied up in its slave population. Similar edicts were being introduced elsewhere in North America and the Caribbean, but they were not as severe. A law passed in Virginia in October 1669 which decreed that if any slave having resisted his master or her or his master's representative should die in course of his being corrected, then the slave's death should not be considered a felony "since it cannot be presumed that premeditated malice (which abuse makes murder a felony) should induce any man to destroy his own estate".<sup>16</sup> The Carolina Constitution gave a different and more general justification for killing one's slaves because there was no need for a pretext.

The absence of a concept of race for most of this period – it was only introduced in something like its modern sense by Bernier in 1684<sup>17</sup> – has convinced some scholars that Locke cannot be accused of racism because he could not discriminate against any group on account of their race. For example, in her essay "Slavery without Race" Zack argued that on these grounds it is anachronistic to believe that in the seventeenth century "Af-

14 John Hales, Dedication, to Hugh Wrottesley, in: A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Locke, Never before printed, or not extant in his Works, London 1720, n.p. (p. 9).

15 The fact that *The Constitutions* were not fully implemented is not crucial because they helped to establish an atmosphere. See Vicki Hsueh, Giving Orders: Theory and Practice in the Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina, in: Journal of the History of Ideas 63, 2002, pp. 425-446, here p. 431.

16 William Waller Hening, Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, New York 1823, Vol. II, p. 270.

17 Cf. [François Bernier], Nouvelle division de la Terre, in: Journal des Scavans 12, 24 April 1684, pp. 148-155.

ricans and American Indians were oppressed by whites because they belonged to different races".<sup>18</sup> However, this is tendentious because the term "Negro" is at this time clearly functioning as what we now recognize as a racial classification and because its use in *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* played a significant role in the formation of a form of slavery that, when eventually challenged, would need the invention of a racial ideology to defend it. Slavery in the Americas was not transformed when the theoretically articulated racism that was employed to justify it was introduced, but that was because it was already racialized, which happened when Negro slaves were singled out for special treatment.

The absence of an explicit racial doctrine is also at the heart of James Farr's recent essay "Locke, Natural Law, and New World Slavery", in which he set out to attack Anika Maaza Mann's and my attempt to expose what we understood as Locke's racism.<sup>19</sup> Farr had argued in 1986 that Carolina was out of sight and out of mind when Locke wrote *Two Treatises of Government*, and he reiterated the claim in 2009 in spite of the persuasiveness of the colonial reading proposed by such scholars as Tully and Arneil.<sup>20</sup> Farr acknowledged Locke's informed involvement in New World slavery: "Locke's hands are dirty". But by marshalling arguments that show that Locke's justification of slavery in the *Second Treatise* did not fit the practices of New World slavery Farr maintained that Locke cannot be accused of what he called "philosophical racism".<sup>21</sup> The idea is that when Locke was doing political philosophy, he was so focused on events in England that he forgot about New World slavery. The problem is that Farr is left with the contradictions that arise from Locke's involvement in the slave trade and his apparent rejection of any form of hereditary slavery. Farr's solution, in what must be one of the more bizarre treatments of a major philosopher in recent times, is that Locke had "a kink in his head", a phrase taken from Thomas Jefferson's paraphrase of John Locke's definition of a madman.<sup>22</sup> This replicates the culturally revealing tendency

18 Naomi Zack, *Slavery Without Race*, in: *Bachelors of Science*, Philadelphia 1996, p. 169.

19 Cf. James Farr, *Locke, Natural Law, and New World Slavery*, in: *Political Theory* 16, 2009, pp. 495-522, and Robert Bernasconi and Anika Maaza Mann, *The Contradictions of Racism*, in: Andrew Valls, ed., *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*, Ithaca 2005, pp. 89-107.

20 Cf. Farr, *Locke*, p. 506; James Farr, 'So Vile and Miserable an Estate', in: *Political Theory* 14, 1986, pp. 263-289; Barbara Arneil, *John Locke and America*, Oxford 1996, and James Tully, *Rediscovering America*, in: G. A. J. Rogers, ed., *Locke's Philosophy*, Oxford 1994, pp. 165-196.

21 Farr, *Locke*, pp. 500, 510.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 516.

among some scholars, most evident in their treatment of Kant, to prefer to accuse a major philosopher of poor reasoning rather than of racism. It is a tendency encouraged by the readiness of historians of philosophy and political thought to prefer rewriting what a historical figure wrote than to deal with what they actually said.

At the same time there is a widespread tendency on the part of scholars to assure that supporters of the slave trade could not have been satisfied with arguments that did not cover all the cases. For example, Zack highlighted the fact that Locke has "no foundation or justification for slavery as it was developed during the seventeenth century".<sup>23</sup> Farr and Woolhouse similarly judge that the widespread view that prisoners of war could legitimately be enslaved could not have been used to justify the Atlantic Slave Trade because some of those enslaved did not fit that description.<sup>24</sup> But Mann and I in our essay already showed it was used in that way.<sup>25</sup> It is absurd to try to release Locke from any responsibility simply because his justification did not meet the facts of slavery on the ground, when nobody else did during this whole period.

When Locke was writing almost nobody questioned the institution of slavery in general, the famous first sentence of the *First Treatise* notwithstanding: "Slavery is so vile and miserable an estate of Man, and so directly opposite to the generous temper and courage of our nation that 'tis scarcely to be conceived that an Englishman, let alone a Gentleman, should plead for't".<sup>26</sup> In all likelihood this would have been true even among the African slaves themselves as they came from a continent where slavery was part of the fabric of society, as it was elsewhere. The questions to be asked were: who could legitimately be enslaved? How should they be treated? And under what conditions might they and their families be freed from slavery? We should always remember that even though there was agreement about the legitimacy of slavery, there was no agreement about what that meant in the sense of what power slave owners legitimately possessed over their slaves.

The English context was clearly uppermost in Locke's mind when he was writing *Two Treatises*. He wanted to show against Sir Robert Filmer that there was no basis for understanding the English as slaves by virtue of conquest. Among the arguments Locke used was to deny that the children of prisoners captured in a just war could legitimately be considered slaves: "the Absolute Power of the *Conqueror* reaches no further than the Persons

23 Zack, *Slavery*, p. 175.

24 Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 174; Woolhouse, *Locke*, p. 187.

25 Cf. Bernasconi and Mann, *Contradictions*, pp. 99f.

26 John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Cambridge 1988, p. 141.



of the Men, that were subdued by him, and dies with them; and should he Govern them as Slaves, subjected to his Absolute, Arbitrary Power, he *has no such Right of Dominion over their Children*".<sup>27</sup> But the English context does not explain why Locke radically redefined slavery in the fourth chapter of the *Second Treatise*. First, he narrowed the definition of slavery by refusing to refer to the condition of the children of Israel in the land of Egypt as slavery: it was "drudgery".<sup>28</sup> Secondly, by rejecting slavery by consent or contract, which was central to discussions of slavery in the seventeenth century by Grotius and Pufendorf, he excluded a form of slavery that was used to explain why masters would not abuse their slaves: the idea was that nobody would have agreed to that when they agreed to slavery. Even captives during a war must have made such agreements to persuade their masters to release them from their chains in return for work. Thirdly, and most importantly, Locke's restriction of slavery to captives from a just war enabled him to identify slavery with a master's despotical right over his slaves, and for him, unlike other authors, the right to kill one's enemies was not restricted to the moment of battle but remained in place throughout their captivity.

Although Locke's new narrower definition of slavery in *Two Treatises* does not make sense in terms of the English context of the work, it was consistent with the rubric that masters in Carolina had absolute power and authority over their Negro slaves to the point where one wonders if he was attempting to provide a justification for this uniquely brutal position. That the harsh treatment was restricted to specifically Negro slaves is underlined by a document dated 14 July 1669 and that is reportedly in Locke's handwriting (although we have learned to be suspicious of such claims). It describes two kinds of slaves. One refers to Negro slaves, of whom it is said: "Absolute power over them in master. Not manumitted by church membership. An odd notion to the contrary being held in England at the time".<sup>29</sup> The second are "leet-men", a somewhat mysterious term in origin that nevertheless seems clearly intended to designate a tenant condemned to a kind of perpetual serfdom.<sup>30</sup> A similar distinction between Negro slaves and (presumably White) leet men and women is carried over into *The Fundamental Constitutions*.<sup>31</sup> This underlines the fact that the form of slavery specifically for Negroes deprives them of rights accorded to others,

27 Locke, *Two Treatises*, p. 393.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 285.

29 Anon., *Charters and Constitutions of South Carolina*, in: De Bow's Review, April 1856, p. n. 402.

30 Cf. David Wooton, Introduction, in: John Locke, *Political Writings*, Indianapolis 2003, p. 43.

31 Cf. *South Carolina Charters*, pp. 136f.

thereby confirming the racist character of the system being inaugurated. If we follow Locke's definition of slavery in the *Second Treatise* as "absolute arbitrary Power", in Carolina Negroes alone are slaves in the true sense of the term.

It was thus in the American context that this new harsher conception of slavery was formulated and subsequently incorporated in *Two Treatises*. Locke could not have forgotten about *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* as he was completing *Two Treatises*. Locke made extensive revisions to *The Fundamental Constitutions* early in 1682. It appears to have gone unnoticed that the August 1682 version of the *Constitutions* omitted the article about the power of freemen over their slaves, although it was restored in April 1698. Nevertheless, we know Locke was not responsible for the omission because the copy with his revisions survives in the New York Public Library and this was not one of his proposals. The text also shows that in his copy Locke left intact another change whose source is unclear and could conceivably be a mistake. The article now read "Every Freeman of Carolina shall have absolute Power and Authority over Negro Slaves of what Opinion or Religion soever".<sup>32</sup> The omission of the word "his" radically extends the absolute power of all freemen to encompass all slaves in Carolina.

One need only contrast Locke's account with the comments on slavery to be found in James Tyrrell's *Patriarcha non Monarcha* to see how extreme Locke's position was against Negro slaves. Tyrrell wrote that a slave or servant in the state of nature could quit the service of his or her master, negotiate conditions before submitting to service, and have "as much Right as a son or child of the Family, to defend his life, or what belongs to him, against the unjust violence or rage of his Master".<sup>33</sup> Considering specifically "the worst of slaves", by which he means those taken in war, he insisted that even they had a right to kill their conqueror unless in return for their service they were granted "liberty and enjoyment of the ordinary Comforts of Life". Tyrrell added: "And if he cannot enjoy these, I believe there is no sober Planter in *Barbadoes* (who are most of them Assignees of Slaves taken in War) but will grant such a Slave may lawfully run away if he can".<sup>34</sup> Tyrrell was clearly rejecting what would be Locke's account of the slave which in fact he associates with Hobbes: that "no injury can be done to a slave". And Tyrrell went on to deny the very idea that Locke employed to define slavery: that the Master has the right to put a slave to death

32 Ibid., pp. 204f.; *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* (12 January 1682), New York Public Library, call number \*KC +1682, p. 20.

33 [James Tyrrell], *Patriarcha non monarcha*, London 1681, p. 103.

34 Ibid., p. 105.

without cause. Furthermore, the master cannot assign or sell the slave to another, including his heirs, without the slave's consent.<sup>35</sup> Tyrrell explicitly attacked as contrary to the law of nature the idea that slaves are reckoned among household goods or beasts, just as he criticized the "ill-natured brutish Master" who "takes care of the life of his slave that works in the Mines or Sugar-Works in the Indies, not out of any love to the person of the Slave, but because he cannot subsist without him".<sup>36</sup>

Reference to Tyrrell's *Patriarcha non Monarcha* shows both how extreme Locke's views on slavery were and that slavery in the Americas must have been on Locke's mind as he was writing *Two Treatises*. Tyrrell published *Patriarcha non Monarcha* in June 1681, before Locke had completed the chapter on slavery in the *Two Treatises*. This was when the friendship between the two men was at its height. J. R. Milton has redated the writing of the major part of the *First Treatise* to the spring or summer of 1680 and suggests that the *Second Treatise* may have been begun late in 1680 with much of it complete by the end of June 1681 and the remainder written in 1682. This means that during the period when Locke was most actively writing the *Second Treatise* he made at least six visits to Tyrrell's house, for stays of anything from three days to three weeks.<sup>37</sup> So whether or not Tyrrell and Locke talked about their differences on slavery, before Locke had completed the *Second Treatise* he had access to another work, which, like his own, was against Filmer, but which, unlike his own, used the argument that slaves in the Americas had rights. Locke must have recognized the implications for his own view.

But Locke was not only responding to Tyrrell when in the *Second Treatise* he gave a definition of slavery that was consistent with *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* in giving "Absolute, Arbitrary, Despotical Power" to the master.<sup>38</sup> He was also responding to Pufendorf, who in *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*, which Locke had recently added to his personal library, had written that "humanity bids us never to forget that a slave is in any case a man". Pufendorf concludes from this that slaves cannot be treated like other property that we can "abuse and destroy at our pleasure".<sup>39</sup> Behind this difference between Locke and Pufendorf on slavery was a deeper division. The fundamental principle of Pufendorf's philosophy was socia-

35 Ibid., p. 106.

36 Ibid., pp. 106f. and 130f.

37 Cf. J. R. Milton, Dating Locke's Second Treatise, in: *History of Political Thought* 16, 1995, pp. 356-390, here p. 379.

38 Locke, *Two Treatises*, p. 285.

39 Samuel Pufendorf, *De officio hominis et civis*, Cambridge 1682, p. 114; trans. Michael Silverthorne, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*, Cambridge 1991, p. 130. See Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace*, Oxford 2001, pp. 167-181.

bility, not individualism. One can also contrast the account in the *Second Treatise* with what Locke would have read in Grotius: "No Masters, (if we judge by the Rules of full and complete Justice, or before the Tribunal of Conscience) have the Power of Life and Death over their Slaves". However, Grotius continued: "Nor can one Man have any Right to kill another, unless he has committed some capital crime".<sup>40</sup> It is that qualification that opens the door for Locke's "strange doctrine" that everyone in the state of nature has the executive power of the law of nature: the right, indeed the obligation, to be judge, jury, and executioner to everyone – not just the victim and his or her immediate family – of anyone who breaks that law.<sup>41</sup> Although Farr's main contribution to the debate has been that he insisted on contrasting Locke with his predecessors, his account is misleading. Farr cites a passage in which Grotius describes historical practices that provide Locke with precedents of masters treating their slaves harshly, but fails to spot the passage where Grotius introduces the principle that rejects such behavior.<sup>42</sup> Indeed in 1709 a letter purporting to be from a Jamaican merchant cited Grotius precisely in this point and insisted with reference to prisoners who had been forced into servitude that "all the Civiliz'd World account it barbarous and inhuman" to kill them. Locke's doctrine giving the captors the right to kill their captives is not here referred to as Locke's but as "the Custom of ... barbarous Nations".<sup>43</sup>

According to Locke, everyone in the state of nature was obliged to exercise the executive power of the law of nature not only against those who had offended against them, but against all offenders. This novel argument was at the heart of Locke's justification for slaves who even in captivity remained outside the contract that founded civil society and so remained in a perpetual state of war. The consequence of Locke's conception of slavery did not go unnoticed by Locke's contemporaries. One of the first reviews of Locke's *Two Treatises* appeared in Jean Leclerc's *Bibliothèque Universelle*. The reviewer, perhaps Leclerc himself, who was Locke's friend, offered this comment on the early chapters of the *Second Treatise*: "The commerce which Europeans can have with barbarous peoples, who recognize neither

40 Hugo Grotius, *De jure belli ac pacis*, Leiden 1939, p. 257; trans. *The Rights of War and Peace*, Indianapolis 2005, p. 558.

41 Locke, *Two Treatises*, p. 275. This power would also, looking back to the January 1682 version of *The Fundamental Constitutions*, give absolute power to all freemen in Carolina over all Negro slaves.

42 Farr, Locke, p. 502.

43 Anon., *A Letter from a Merchant at Jamaica*, in: *William and Mary Quarterly* 57, 2000, pp. 799-808, here p. 802.

magistrates, nor laws, still leaves them in a state of nature".<sup>44</sup> The reviewer immediately drew the conclusion that where one finds those who do not follow the laws of nature, such that the innocent perish, one should kill them, just as one kills wolves and lions. Whether Locke's friend had discerned Locke's true purpose or not, a clear inference from Locke's theory had been recognized immediately on publication: the genocides of American Indians and of Africans had been foretold and in such a way that it was presented as a moral obligation.

Nevertheless, there is one overriding problem for attempts to relate the chapter on slavery from the *Second Treatise* to North American slavery: in that work Locke denied hereditary slavery. This is the central plank – perhaps the only surviving plank – of the attempt to distance the *Two Treatises* from New World slavery. What is one to make of Locke's rejection of hereditary slavery in a philosophical work given that it was all around him? Matters would be easy if there was clear evidence that Locke was against hereditary slavery in Carolina, but there is no such evidence. Furthermore he was already Secretary to the Lord Proprietors when *The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* made reference to the slaveholder's "absolute arbitrary Power over the Lives, Liberties and Persons of his Slaves and their Posterities",<sup>45</sup> and so he knew that in Carolina as well as in other places in the Americas slavery was understood as a hereditary condition. If the texts can be reconciled, it would seem to me that we should focus on the place where Locke excludes hereditary slavery: it is in the chapter on Conquest. One could perhaps distinguish the rights that belong to a conqueror with an army invading a nation and the rights of individuals exercising the executive power of the law of nature. However, Locke does not specify that. Locke specifically excluded hereditary slavery because he was well aware that conceding it would have compromised his argument against absolutism in the English context. There is no doubt that that was more important to him than justifying hereditary slavery in the American context, not least because the latter was not under serious challenge.

However, Farr in his argument against seeing Locke's defense of slavery as racist introduces one more twist. He insisted that "[a] racist doctrine or theory, if Locke had articulated or embraced one, would have had to explain, *empirically*, the racial inferiority of Africans or Indians in compari-

44 Anon., Review of An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent and End of Civil Government, in: Jean Leclerc, ed., *Bibliothèque Universelle et Historique*, 19, 1690, p. 577.

45 David Armitage, John Locke, Carolina, and the Two Treatises of Government, in: *Political Theory* 32, 2004, pp. 602-627, here p. 619.

son to other races".<sup>46</sup> Because Farr is focused on what he calls philosophical racism he considers the crucial question to be: "did Locke articulate or embrace a racial *doctrine* or theory that justified new world slavery given the failure of the just-war theory to do so?"<sup>47</sup> What Farr did not acknowledge is, first, that it is anachronistic to expect a racial justification of slavery. It is true that Locke did not refer to polygenesis or the curse of Ham, as some of his contemporaries did, but it should be noted that when they did it was not as part of a full-blown justification of slavery.<sup>48</sup> Secondly, Farr seems to assume that racism must take the form of a doctrine of inferiority, whereas to deny rights to those who are from Africa that are accorded to those who are not surely also qualifies. Furthermore, it is worth noting that slavery in the Americas was never racialized in the sense that being Black was a sufficient condition for being a slave. Nor was it a necessary condition, as the law of hereditary slavery meant that there were slaves who would have been considered White if freed.<sup>49</sup> There were always at the margins incoherences about who was Black, who was White, and so on.

If one privileges theoretical racism, one is likely to see racism as a barely relevant overlay, a mere afterthought used to justify arrangements that were already in place.<sup>50</sup> Slavery in the Americas was already in place when theoretical racism was introduced, and very little was changed by its introduction. It was largely a post-factum justification. But the fact that an element of theoretical racism was needed to justify the system shows that it embodied a certain racism. This is confirmed by the fact that already in Locke's time Negro slaves were forced to submit to more severe conditions than other slaves.

It is the introduction of this system that I call "proto-racism". Something relatively new was taking place, and it was considered legitimate. Whether or not it happened, it was authorized. Proto-racism is not less than racism, which is how the word has tended to be used previously. That conception of proto-racism understands "proto-" as it is understood in "protoporphyrin". Proto-racism would have the least amount of racism. By "proto-racism" I

46 Farr, Locke, p. 510.

47 Ibid.

48 Cf. Morgan Godwyn, *The Negro's and Indian's Advocate*, London 1680, pp. 14-18.

49 Cf. Thomas Jefferson to Francis C. Gray, 1 March 1815, in A. E. Bergh, ed., *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 13, Washington 1907, p. 270. As Annette Gordon-Reed has observed, Sally Hemings' children would have been considered White by the laws of Virginia, and indeed they were in the 1830 census: cf. id., *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: An American Controversy*, Richmond 1997, p. 53.

50 Cf. Zack, *Slavery*, p. 181.

am understanding not merely a first, but also a preeminent racism, a racism that is among the first in rank because it put the racist system in place.

To illustrate this let me address the question of the relation of racism to slavery as understood by Jean-Paul Sartre in an essay published in 1949. Once slavery was institutional, it was too late: "a son of a slaveholder, born amidst a regime based on oppression, not only considers the fact of possessing slaves as *natural* but also as legitimate".<sup>51</sup> Sartre emphasizes that when slavery becomes a matter of law, it takes moral and intellectual courage to go against it. The law confers good conscience.<sup>52</sup> The focus falls therefore on those who made the law and who thereby gave to others permission to exploit one's slaves and to treat them as wolves or lions. Indeed laws of this kind come with the suggestion that one not only can, but should treat one's slaves that way so as to sustain the institution. Sartre fails to conceptualize the difference, but in my terms he has differentiated proto-racism from racism.

Proto-racism happens, for example, in the moment of the institutionalization of racism as when the Proprietors of Carolina introduced the idea that one may legitimately put one's slaves to death without pretext only if they are Negroes. Subsequently Locke in *Two Treatises* produced the theoretical legitimation for treating them in this way by making use of the widespread assumption that Negroes that were enslaved in the Americas were captives from a just war and attaching to that condition unprecedented consequences. Locke had reasons, which are well understood, for rejecting hereditary slavery in *Two Treatises*. The reasons for giving absolute power to slaveowners in the same book seem equally clear, if one is not already predisposed to make excuses for canonical philosophers of a kind that would not be asked for in the case of lesser mortals. And when one sees Locke in this way, the advantage that the category of "proto-racism" brings to the task of distinguishing different kinds of racism should also be clearly apparent.

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# 'Race, Class and Nation'

## Aspects of the Genesis of 'Modern' Racism in Eighteenth-Century France

Werner Goldschmidt

Historians of racism disagree as to from which historical period the term 'racism' should apply. Hence, often a distinction is made between 'modern' and 'pre-modern' racism. This essay analyses a particular discourse that can be interpreted as a transitional phenomenon leading up to the modern racism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as within it the concepts of 'race', 'class' and 'nation' are still fused into a specific ideological amalgam. In the French feudalism-absolutism debate of the early eighteenth century involving Boulainvilliers, Dubos and Montesquieu, it becomes obvious how 'racist' and 'classist' ideological notions are being instrumentalised by the protagonists in the struggle for political power during the period of transition between feudal-absolutist and bourgeois society and political nation.

Most historians of racism seem to agree that 'modern' racism emerged in the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> It is not the aim of this article to doubt this claim, which in any case almost amounts to the tautology that 'modern' racism appeared with the emergence of the cultural and historical period of 'modernity'. Whatever defines 'modern' racism, there obviously existed something like 'pre-modern' racism, and it is to be feared that there is – and will be – also 'post-modern' racism. 'Pre-modern' racism is usually traced back to Greek-Roman antiquity. Some authors refer to it as 'proto-racism'<sup>2</sup> or 'quasi-racism'.<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that in both theory and practice racism is a radically historical phenomenon which, in the course of its history, has taken on a variety of different forms. Therefore, scholars have found it difficult to even agree on a more or less invariant core meaning of the

- 1 George Mosse, *Die Geschichte des Rassismus in Europa*, extended edition, Frankfurt/M. 1994, p. 28. Similarly, Hannah Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*, Munich 1986; Immanuel Geiss, *Geschichte des Rassismus*, Frankfurt/M. 1988; Christian Geulen, *Geschichte des Rassismus*, Munich 2007; Wulf D. Hund, *Rassismus* (b), in: Hans Jörg Sandkühler (ed.), *Enzyklopädie Philosophie*, 3 vol., Hamburg 2010, pp. 2195ff. Some authors also refer to the importance of the Renaissance period (Reconquista, the discovery of America, i.e. the beginning of European colonialism) for the beginning of modern racism (see Geulen, *Geschichte des Rassismus*). Geiss distinguishes between a 'broader' and a 'closer' pre-history of racism.
- 2 Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, Princeton 2004.
- 3 Thus Geiss with reference to the Indian and other Caste systems; Geiss, *Geschichte des Rassismus*, pp. 49ff.

concept,<sup>4</sup> especially as there are numerous social phenomena that are either related to 'racism' or at least similar to it, such as xenophobia, chauvinism, sexism, 'class-racism',<sup>5</sup> discrimination of cultural or sexual minorities or of physically or mentally 'disabled' persons etc.

The complex diversity and mutual entanglement of these phenomena in both past and present becomes obvious when analysing concepts such as 'race', 'class' and 'nation'<sup>6</sup> in their concrete historical interconnectedness. This article aims to illustrate this by taking an example from the formative period of 'modern' racism, in which racism, classism and nationalism were still – at least conceptually – unseparated. We are talking here about the 'feudalism-absolutism-debate', which Hannah Arendt refers to under the title 'The aristocratic race against the bourgeois nation'.<sup>7</sup>

## I

In order to better understand the problem, we will start by briefly discussing the peculiar class structure of French absolutism, which forms the background to the proto- or quasi-racist construction of Boulainvilliers' *'thèse féodale'* (1727; see section II). This structure emerged over a long period as a result of economic, cultural as well as political conflicts. Many historians have assumed that the classical French absolutism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could only establish itself on the basis of a gradually developing – more or less unstable – equilibrium between aristocracy and bourgeoisie.<sup>8</sup> This thesis, which can be traced back to Marx and Engels, and has been qualified and modified in many regards, cannot be discussed in detail in this place. Suffice here to indicate that, with regard to the relatively abstract 'equilibrium' thesis, it is necessary to distinguish between the three above-mentioned dimensions (the economic, the cultural and the political).

Economically, the rise and eventual dominance of the urban bourgeoisie in trade and industry in relation to the landowning nobility since the end of the middle ages (fourteenth / fifteenth centuries) is hard to overlook.

4 On the problem of conceptualisation, see Geiss, *Geschichte des Rassismus*; Hund, *Rassismus* (b); Robert Miles, *Rassismus. Einführung in die Theorie und Geschichte eines Begriffs*, Hamburg 1991.

5 Cf. Etienne Balibar, *Der 'Klassen-Rassismus'*, in: id., Immanuel Wallerstein, *Rasse, Klasse und Nation*, 2nd edition, Hamburg etc. 1992, pp. 247-260.

6 Cf. Balibar, Wallerstein, *Rasse, Klasse und Nation*.

7 Cf. Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge*, pp. 272ff.

8 Cf. Perry Anderson, *Die Entstehung des absolutistischen Staates*, Frankfurt/M. 1979, pp. 17ff.; Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*, 2 Vol., 2 ed., Bern etc. 1969, vol. 2., p. 236.

With the predominance of the money economy in the organisation of the king's political power, i.e. with the emergence of a new form of military-bureaucratic state apparatus, with the introduction of universal taxation (*taille*) and the resulting possibility to maintain a standing army of mercenaries, i.e. with the development of an – initially probably still fragile – state monopoly on taxes and on the use of violence since the fifteenth century, the nobility increasingly lost its political power and influence.

It is necessary to examine the political dimension more closely. Since the early times of the Franks (the Merovingian and Carolingian dynasties), and later under the French (Capetian) monarchy, there existed two formally different categories of nobility: the indigenous 'nobility of the sword' (*noblesse d'épée*) on the one hand, and the 'nobility of the robe' (*noblesse de robe*; counts and other officials of the administration), appointed by the king, on the other. From the beginning, both groups were socially and politically highly differentiated according to power (the number of armed vassals), wealth (size and yield of their estates and territories, number of villeins or taxable peasants), and/or specific privileges, which were either inherited or conferred upon them by royal edict.

In the early Capetian era (tenth and eleventh centuries), the monarchy was relatively weak, and, outside its direct rule over the area around Paris (Francien), consisted predominantly of mere formal suzerainty over a range of counties, some of them larger and richer (Normandy, Burgundy, Anjou, Aquitaine) – the later high nobility (Pairs de France) – and numerous smaller, more or less 'free' lordships (counties, baronies, knight's estates) – the 'lesser' nobility. By way of a clever politics of alliances with rising towns (through the granting of market rights, tax privileges, jurisdiction etc), the Capetians managed, from about the twelfth century, to more or less secure their rule over the lesser nobility, and thereby extend their power base in the subsequent 'elimination contests' (Elias) with the competing high nobility. Its alliance with the Pope in the Crusades and in the conflicts with the German Emperors also increased the power and prestige of the monarchy. The decisive military showdowns between the monarchy and the high nobility followed in several stages which dragged on over several centuries – the 'Hundred Years' War' (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), the 'Religious Wars' (sixteenth century), the 'Fronde' (seventeenth century) – at the end of which the centralist-sovereign absolutism of a Louis XIV had predominated.<sup>9</sup>

It is not necessary in the context of this article to discuss the details of this battle for the monopoly of power,<sup>10</sup> or the role of the towns (bourgeoi-

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Anderson, *Entstehung*, p. 127.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Elias, *Prozess der Zivilisation*, vol. 2, pp. 123ff.

sie), the peasants (and their revolts) or the Church and clergy, which all played an important role in these developments. What is important for us here is the changed position of the nobility in the absolutist feudal society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in comparison to the territorial feudalism of the previous period. We have deliberately spoken of an 'absolutist feudal society', despite the fact that, in a historical perspective, it was a transitional form of society between feudal society and bourgeois society. Even though a mercantile and manufacturing capitalism had developed in the towns and cities, the French economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was still characterised by a rural peasant agriculture. Socially and culturally, nobility and high clergy (most of whom were of noble origin) were still dominant. However, these groups were no longer predominantly the descendents of the old 'nobility of the sword'. Rather, the new so-called 'nobility of the robe' gained increasing importance in the administration of the state (taxation, courts of law), as well as in the standing army (in the lower and middle officer corps). A considerable number of these new nobles, who were appointed by the monarch, derived from the wealthy urban bourgeoisie, which had acquired those offices from the king for sometimes considerable payments (patents of nobility) or other earnings. The interest of the bourgeois strata of society in such offices was also indicative – apart from the financial benefits (freedom from taxation, fees) derived from offices such as tax collector or judge at high courts (parlements) – of the social prestige that was linked to a noble title well into the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

After the defeat of the Fronde of the nobles around the mid-seventeenth century and the factual eclipse of the 'parlements' in the 1660s, Ludwig XIV gathered at his court the politically ambitious members of the high nobility and the high clergy (*Grands*: Princes 'by blood', Dukes, the former Pairs de France). The appointment to Court served as a compensation for the loss of participation in political power, especially as the members were granted numerous privileges as well as financially well-rewarded, albeit politically unimportant offices, in addition to the glamour and exclusivity of courtly life. However, apart from the '*Grands*', those courtly offices were almost exclusively the preserve of members of the middle nobility (Marquis, i.e. Margrave, Count, Baron). Of course, they remained feudal landlords (*seigneurs*), with their own demesne and a territory of an often considerable size that was inhabited and worked by villeins and/or free peasants. The administration of their territories (including jurisdiction) was usually delegated to relatives or administrators of bourgeois background. The landed gentry, or lesser nobility, however, had to stay on their

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 244ff.

smaller estates in the provinces, with small yields that were only added to by smallish dues imposed on the peasants who were already squeezed by the tax collectors of the king.

Generally, members of the bourgeoisie were excluded from the appointment to Court – yet there were a few prominent exceptions. These were decided by the king alone, who occasionally took pleasure in humiliating the members of his estate by appointing members of the bourgeoisie as his personal advisors, ministers or generals – including such important figures as Colbert or Vauban. However, it would be wrong to conclude from this that Ludwig XIV saw himself as standing above the classes; on the contrary, as long as he lived he saw himself as a member of the nobility – albeit elevated by ancestry and divine grace (*'le premier Gentilhomme de France'*). This he let the members of his court know repeatedly, who consequently tended to feel flattered and obligated to loyalty.

When, as a result of military defeats and economic difficulties, at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the star of the 'Sun King' gradually began to descend, the courtly life had already lost much of its former exclusivity. In the meantime, however, its culture had increasingly intruded into the higher echelons of the bourgeoisie and those parts of the nobility that were connected to it through economic activities and shared cultural interests. In salons led by ladies of the nobility, these groups sought to imitate the culture of courtly life. The salons gained popularity not least among bourgeois intellectuals. Indeed, these *hommes de lettre*, which were of both bourgeois and noble origin (Fénelon, the Duke of Saint-Simon), had gained a certain sympathy among the growing group of discontented aristocrats, due to their critical attitude (Bayle and Fontenelle, apart from those already mentioned) towards the military and financial excesses of the absolutist court.

After Ludwig XIV's death in 1715, these 'enlightened' circles initially seemed to get the upper hand. Indeed, at the beginning of his period in office, the regent, who socialised in several Parisian salons, reinstated the Parisian parlement's right to veto against royal edicts, which had been suspended by Ludwig XIV. He also stopped the persecution of religious minorities (Jansenists, Huguenots) and loosened censorship of printed items (books, periodicals, pamphlets), thereby nourishing the widespread hope for an end of the absolutist regime. In this situation of an apparent power vacuum, the diverse factions of the nobility and bourgeoisie hoped to influence the equilibrium of power in their own favour.

## II

Montesquieu was the first to openly proclaim that the debate between Bou-lainvilliers and Dubos in the early eighteenth century was a conflict between the classes of the nobility and the bourgeoisie that were both striving for hegemony. "The count Bou-lainvilliers and the Abbot Dubos both have erected systems, of which one appears to be a conspiracy against the Third Estate, the other a conspiracy against the nobility."<sup>12</sup> Further below it will become clear that, in his 'purely academic' critique of both positions, Montesquieu did not forget the interests of his own estate.

Henri Marquis de Bou-lainvilliers, Comte de Saint-Saire (1658-1722) descended from an old noble family near Paris that could be traced back to the thirteenth century. Excluded from access to the royal court, he embarked on a military career. After the death of his father, he withdrew to his inherited estates near Paris, where he dedicated himself to philosophical and historical studies. Amongst other things, he produced a French translation of Spinoza's 'Ethic' as well as numerous studies of the history of the nobility and of French political institutions. Among his most important works are the three volumes of 'Histoire de l'ancien gouvernement de la France' (1727) and the 'Essay sur la Noblesse de France' (1732). Both texts were only published posthumously in Holland and banned in France under the renewed absolutism of the 1730s – despite the fact that they were already circulating among political friends of the author and originally had even been intended as an instruction, on behalf of the nobility, for the young king Louis XV.

Bou-lainvilliers starts his historical account of French political institutions with the conquests of Gaul by Germanic Franks during the fifth century. Gaul was then a Roman province, which, since the conquest by Caesar was subjugated under the rule of the Roman Emperors, their administrative institutions, their law etc. As the Romans had annihilated the original Gallo-Celtic nobility, they had to rely on plebeian, mostly foreign, mercenary armies for the defence of their provinces. The maintenance of these armies constituted an enormous strain on the Gallic population. In spite of their superior organisation and technical equipment, the mercenaries turned out to be inferior to the Gothic, Burgundian and especially the Frankish conquerors, which, claims Bou-lainvilliers, were led by a military aristocracy. The successful Frankish invasion, according to him, was only a continuation of the foreign rule over Gaul's original inhabitants. As the

12 Montesquieu, *Vom Geist der Gesetze*, XXX, 9 – Vol. 2, p. 382 (German edition by E. Forsthoff, 2. ed., Tübingen 1992) (The Roman numbers refer to the book, the following Arabic numbers refer to the chapter of the respective book).

new landlords, the conquerors seized large parts of the territory of Gaul, which had hitherto been exploited mainly by Roman landowners. However, as warrior lords, they mostly left the administration of these lands to the earlier 'owners' (*coloni*) and their helpers (slaves, serfs). For the ordinary Gaul population, according to Boulainvilliers, Frankish rule even turned out to be more bearable than Roman rule, as the number of Franks the Gauls had to maintain through their labour and dues was relatively low and the requirements of this barbarian-military-aristocratic people were relatively modest in comparison to those of the hedonistic-civilised Romans.

Initially, what changed were the forms of political rule. In the early period of Frankish conquest the political institutions allegedly confirmed to a large extent to a libertarian Germanic tradition, according to which the armed people (the 'leude') assembled as free and equal members of a tribe or people for the purposes of legislation and jurisdiction. Only in case of war did they elect their military leaders (dukes) from among the most respected and courageous (the 'nobles'); the highest military commander received the title of king, who, however, always remained *primus inter pares*. Although these military functions ceased to exist in peace times, the situation fundamentally changed in the case of long-term conquest and occupation of foreign territories. In conquered Gaul war became, in a certain sense, permanent, and the originally temporary military functions were transformed into permanent functions of rule and administration. The old-Germanic constitution of the Franks turned out not to be very suitable for this purpose and hence was gradually Romanised. The previously elected office of 'king', as well as the manorial system of the military sub-commanders (nobles) and the landownership of the ordinary Franks were transformed into lifelong tenures and later become hereditary. The political administration of the – in relation to the small number of conquerors – vast territory of Frankish rule demanded an organisational effort as could only be secured by the Roman system (municipal constitution, monetary economy, taxation) and the experienced, mostly Gallo-Roman magistrates. The Franks confined themselves largely to their military dominance. In the following centuries, the internally divided Merovingian dynasty sought to achieve political and cultural (religious and linguistic) accommodation with Gallo-Roman administrative experts, which included numerous clergy that were well versed in the letters and the law. Thus, the 'church' increasingly gained in political power.

Even though among the Franks themselves, the aristocratic freedoms and laws continued to persist for some time, so that a dual legal system existed – a kind of 'apartheid-regime' in which only the Franks were permitted to carry arms and marriage between the Franks and the Gauls was pro-



hibited.<sup>13</sup> Germanic rights of freedom applied to the Franks or the Frankish 'race', while Roman private and administrative law, i.e. Roman master-serf relations including slavery, applied to the Gauls and Gallo-Romans.<sup>14</sup> But even among the Franks, the original aristocratic-differentiated equality and freedom were gradually lost; Christianisation and Latinisation played their part. Finally, under Charlemagne, who was crowned Emperor by the Roman Bishop, the Roman predominated against the Germanic system; in Boulainvilliers' interpretation, it was a triumph of the 'despotic' against the 'libertarian' system.

This at times contradictory development, according to Boulainvilliers, reached its climax in the despotic absolutism of Louis XIV; during the time of his studies, Boulainvilliers apparently hoped for a change in the direction of a restoration of the 'historic right' of old Frankish freedoms of the nobility.

In the literature on the history of ideas, Boulainvilliers is usually seen as a representative of the aristocratic '*thèse féodale*', in contrast to the '*thèse royale*' of absolutist historians and legal scholars.<sup>15</sup> Of particular historical influence was his proto- or quasi-racist interpretation of the origins of the French aristocracy; even though Boulainvilliers only rarely uses the word *race*, and does so without any precise definition, at least not in the later sense of socio-biologically interpreted and construed 'human races'.<sup>16</sup> Nobility (*noblesse*) and non-nobility (*roture*), according to Boulainvilliers, belong to different peoples (*peuples*) or nations, which differ according to origin, laws, morals and customs, rather than according to 'nature'. He considers all peoples and nations, as well as all individuals, as equal by origin and according to the 'common law' – in this he proves to be a student of Spinoza. Inequality (slavery as well as feudal dependence) between them only emerges as a result of war. But despite its deficient origin, he continues, inequality has already existed long enough to have acquired the force of a 'natural law'.

Thus, Boulainvilliers vindicates a mere historical 'fact'<sup>17</sup> as the foundation of a 'natural' right, the so-called 'right of conquest', which has predominated against the abstract-general human right. War and violence are

13 This, however, is disputed by most of today's historians.

14 "In the Franconian lands, the Salian law applied to the Franks and the Codex Theodosianus to the Romans", remarks Montesquieu, XXVII, 4, Vol. 2, p. 262.

15 Cf., in detail, Michel Foucault, *In Verteidigung der Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt/M. 1999.

16 On the indeterminacy of the contemporary use of the language of race, cf. Hund, *Rassismus* (b), p. 2194.

17 Foucault calls this 'factological' view of history a 'great mythology'. "It is probably possible to prove that everything he said is wrong", Foucault, *Verteidigung*, pp. 195f.

thereby the constituent features of a historical 'right' that is embodied in the system of feudalism appearing, in the eyes of the philosophising aristocratic military officer, as a necessary precondition and political form of true, rather than mere formal freedom. The substantial freedom of the victorious Frankish conquerors presumes the unfreedom of the conquered Gauls and Gallo-Romans; therefore it is neither universal nor has the potential to become universalised. In return it is almost without limits in relation to the conquered. In contrast to the bourgeois notion of freedom, it does not find its limits in the freedom of every conquered 'other', but only in the freedom of the principally equal co-conqueror. Herein lies the basis for the ceaseless feuds among the feudal lords. The military feud among the previous victors, however, only continues the principle of the founding act of their rule, while at the same time their common interest in their continued dominance over the former conquered people persists. In this regard their relation to each other can be compared to one of competing brothers rather than real opponents. Therefore, according to this old-aristocratic view, all members of the nobility are equals among equals, even the king is regarded merely as the first among equals ('*primus inter pares*'); therefore Boulainvilliers considers the absolutism of Louis XIV to be the result of a usurpation, a blatant injury of the historical right of the conquerors. In contrast, the opposition between conquerors and conquered, between free and slave, between nobility and non-nobility (*roturiers*) is fundamental and insurmountable. They are not 'brothers' but 'enemies', not 'equals' but members of the two diametrically opposing groups of 'masters' and 'serfs', two fundamentally different peoples or – as Bouilainvilliers occasionally says, apparently to suggest their essential difference – two different 'races'.

Foucault has analysed Boulainvilliers' attempt to base the legitimisation of old feudal rule upon history, i.e. upon mere 'facts', and to assert this view against the religious-normative legitimisation of absolutism or the juridical-bureaucratic legitimisation through procedures (laws, institutions etc.) of the 'bourgeois' *noblesse de robe*, as a polemic discourse, which only in the subsequent period (during the Revolution and then particularly in the nineteenth century) unfolded its racist character.<sup>18</sup> According to Foucault, Boulainvilliers' thesis of an eternal and inevitable war of 'peoples' or 'races' still has an ambivalent character, as it belongs to the pre-history of the discourse of class struggle as well as to the prehistory of the genuinely racist

18 Foucault does not regard Boulainvilliers' 'race war' discourse as the immediate predecessor of the racist discourse of the nineteenth century; this required a politically motivated reinterpretation and shifting of the problem of domination. Cf. Foucault, *Verteidigung*, pp. 79f. See also section V.

discourse.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, in the specific context of the feudalism-absolutism debate of the early eighteenth century, Boulainvilliers' thesis seems to belong to the 'tragic' rhetoric of a declining aristocratic class, which, without a vision of the future, seeks to defend its right to exist and to rule on a purely reactionary basis, founded upon the myth of a barbarian ruling race with a libertarian constitution that had originated in the jungles of Germania.

Foucault views the 'tactical' ambivalence of this discourse in the fact that together with the perspective of the ruling 'race' it also opens up, at least implicitly, the perspective of the oppressed, disenfranchised and exploited. "What, from the point of view of power, is right, law and duty, the new discourse allows us to see from a different point of view as misuse, violence and unlawful extortion. ... In this regard, the emerging history of race wars is a counter-history."<sup>20</sup> Even though it would be an exaggeration to claim that the 'race war' discourse was an efficient ideological weapon for the lower classes, it cannot be denied that Boulainvilliers develops his thesis if not 'from below' then at least from a defensive position, insofar as his insistence on the 'historical right' of his 'race' is a reaction to the nobility's actual loss of power under absolutism.

This peculiar aspect of Boulainvilliers' 'race war' discourse becomes apparent when confronted with his contemporary opponent who represents the so-called '*thèse royale*', i.e. the defence of absolutism, the opposing consequences of which would, during the Revolution, through the Abbé Sieyès, serve as a legitimisation for the claim to power by the Third Estate (See section IV).

### III

Jean-Baptiste (Abbé) Dubos (1670-1742), son of a bourgeois administration officer in Beauvais, studied theology and law at the Sorbonne, was head of the cabinet under Colbert and proved himself as a successful diplomat into the Régence era. He became famous through his writings on aesthetics, which gained him admission to the Académie Française. As a reward for his diplomatic achievement he was appointed as an Abbot of a monastery near Beauvais, where he devoted himself to historical studies and writing, including the controversial 'Histoire critique de l'établissement de la monarchie française dans les Gaules'.<sup>21</sup> In the context of the debate

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 82ff.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>21</sup> Available as a facsimile on Google-books or at [http://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Histoire\\_critique\\_de\\_l%27%C3%A9tablissement\\_de\\_la\\_monarchie\\_fran%C3%A7oise\\_dans\\_les\\_Gaules](http://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Histoire_critique_de_l%27%C3%A9tablissement_de_la_monarchie_fran%C3%A7oise_dans_les_Gaules)

analysed here he is the most prominent representative of the *'thèse royale'* and thereby an early propagandist of the national unity of France.

Dubos' defence of absolutist monarchy is explicitly directed against Boulainvilliers, whose account he contradicts in every aspect. Thus, Dubos even denies the Frankish conquest of Gaul which Boulainvilliers maintains as a historical fact. According to Dubos, the Romans called the Franks for help, in order to defend the Gaul province against Burgundian and Gothic attacks from the east and southeast of the country. The military leader of the Salian Franks, King Clovis (481-511), converted with his people to Christianity, was appointed honorary consul by the East Roman Emperor Anastasios for his achievements in the defence and unification of Gaul, and thereby in a certain way became a Roman himself. Similar things happened to his successors (the Merovingians) and their people, who – just in the wake of their numerical inferiority in Gaul – assimilated themselves more or less rapidly into the new, in every regard superior Roman influenced culture and society, so that it is impossible to speak of a long-term existence of two different peoples in Gaul. Even the Frankish people's rights that were codified under Clovis were – as the laws of other Germanic tribes – written down in the Latin language as 'lex salica' and, in judicial practice, soon merged with Roman and Church law.

Dubos, comparing the power of the Frankish kings with Roman rule, further reverses Boulainvilliers' argument when claiming that the nobility deliberately weakened the power of French monarchy during the transition from Carolingian to early Capetian dynasty (during the ninth and tenth centuries), by transforming the laws of territorial administration (fief) that had been granted by the central power into autonomous manorial estates, and thereby unlawfully granting fiefs to the vavasours (rear vassals), in order to misuse these as military aides against the central power of the monarchy. Instead of an external invasion by the Franks, the nobility during this period was engaged in an 'internal invasion', establishing a ruling caste between king and people and thereby temporarily turning the French monarchy into a conquered country indeed. Since the eleventh and twelfth centuries, towns, which had managed to preserve for themselves the freedoms of Roman municipalities, united with the king against this usurpatory feudal system, and, in struggles that lasted into the seventeenth century, finally achieved national unity under a unified monarchy.

It becomes clear from Dubos' argumentation that absolute monarchy could no longer be legitimised with recourse to biblical or mythical-religious sources, as the courtly historians<sup>22</sup> of the previous century had done,

22 The court historian Bishop Bossuet (1627-1704), "La Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture Sainte" (published posthumously 1709) had pre-

but that to defend itself it had to draw upon the new, enlightened methods of study of historical sources, which Dubos – in the wake of insufficiently developed criticism of the sources – of course interpreted in his own way.<sup>23</sup> More importantly, Dubos represents French national unity as a result of an alliance between the people, represented by the urban bourgeoisie, and the king against the nobility. However, unlike Sieyès after him, it does not occur to Dubos to altogether exclude the nobility from the French nation. Rather than as a nation or a race, he represents the nobility as an internal usurper or, as Foucault says, as a rogue<sup>24</sup> who has gambled away his assumed privileges. This view would become particularly influential during the early period of the French Revolution (see Section V).

#### IV

Initially, however, it was disputed, above all, by Montesquieu. "Nothing impedes the progress of science more than a bad work by a famous author", he comments about Dubos' main historical work.<sup>25</sup> As much as Montesquieu himself strove for scholarship, in this question his contemporary readers saw him, above all, as 'Monsieur le Président',<sup>26</sup> i.e. as a representative of the 'nobles of the robe'. Indeed, it is in this role that he opposes Boulainvilliers as well as Dubos.<sup>27</sup> Although he indicates his willingness to position himself in the middle ground between both, his critique of Boulainvilliers is rather mild and very brief. Boulainvilliers, writes Montesquieu, has failed to prove the main point of his claim that the Franks had issued a general edict according to which a kind of serfdom was to be imposed upon the Romans. Additionally, Boulainvilliers' work was written without any skill, in the frank language of the old nobility from which he originated. Everyone was able to recognise his accurate remarks as well as his errors. Therefore, he did not want to investigate them in any greater

dominantly relied upon religious legends and 'holy scriptures'.

23 More recent historiography has tended to confirm Dubos' account of the early Frankish constitution, at least as regards the assimilation and ethnic merging of Franks and Gauls or Gallo-Romans. The Frankish conquest of Gallia, however, is no longer disputed. Cf. Franz G. Meier, *Das Frankenreich der Merowinger*, in: id., *Die Verwandlung der Mittelmeerwelt*, Frankfurt 1998, pp. 212ff.

24 Foucault, *Verteidigung*, p. 240.

25 Montesquieu, *Geist der Gesetze*, XXX, 16, vol. 2, pp. 399f.

26 Montesquieu was (Vice)President of the Parlement (the highest court) of the province of Guyenne in Bordeaux; in the salons of Paris he was, half ironically, half appreciative, called 'Monsieur le Président'.

27 Montesquieu deals with this issue extensively in the books XXX and XXXI of his main work, Vol. 2, pp. 373-511.

detail.<sup>28</sup> Montesquieu does not remark upon Boulainvilliers' claim of a continuous existence of two peoples or races (nobility and people), though when dealing with the earlier period of Frankish rule, he talks about the existence of two or even more separate peoples (apart from the Gauls, Romans and Franks, these include Burgundians, Goths and others) on the territory of Gaul.<sup>29</sup>

His critique of Dubos is harsher and more extensive. His own investigations into the development of the feudal law of the Franks and its relationship to the formation of the monarchy (Book XXX) as well its later development (XXXI), he asserts, contradict Dubos' claims in every regard, and therefore "my own work would be wrong, if he had discovered the truth in his".<sup>30</sup> We will not discuss here Montesquieu's objections against Dubos in any detail. His main critique – in which he is probably right – is directed against Dubos' claim that the Franks had not conquered Gaul but had been called for help. "If this point ceases to apply, Abbé Dubos' entire system collapses from top to bottom."<sup>31</sup>

Of interest for us, however, is Montesquieu's attitude towards the question of the origin and legitimacy of the nobility and its privileges, which Dubos had presented as a usurpation. As a member of the 'nobility of the robe', Montesquieu falls into a dilemma here, by on the one hand rejecting Boulainvilliers' claim of a special status of the 'nobility of the sword' which the latter defends with the help of quasi-racist arguments, while on the other hand trying to legitimise the aristocratic system of privileges as such, in which he himself participated. Together with Boulainvilliers, he is convinced that aristocratic and therefore, according to his worldview, moderately governed states are generally superior to despotic or democratic ones.<sup>32</sup> He also shares the conviction that the Frankish conquerors were led by a military nobility, but he does not share Boulainvilliers' admiration of their barbaric virtues. In the 'frank language of the old nobility', Boulainvilliers had used the notion of the 'barbarian' (which later developed into a

28 Montesquieu, *Geist der Gesetze*, XXX, 10, Vol. 2, p. 383.

29 In his historical investigations on the 'right of conquest' (X, 3-17), he calls it as a "necessary, justified, albeit disastrous right, that always leaves behind immense guilt". (X, 4). He does not refer to Boulainvilliers in this context.

30 Montesquieu, *Geist der Gesetze*, XXX, 23, Vol. 2, p. 425.

31 *Ibid.*, XXX, 24, Vol.2, p. 427.

32 He presents the reasons for this in detail; only one of them is the size of a territory. According to Montesquieu, despotic rule is a characteristic feature of large empires of an oriental type, whereas the democratic form of rule is appropriate for city states such as those of Greek Antiquity and at the most for contemporary republics such as Geneva.

denigrating racist stereotype)<sup>33</sup> in the positive sense of 'barbarian heroes'. The 'civilised' Montesquieu, in contrast, accuses the Frankish barbarians – and not only the ordinary people but also explicitly their 'noble' leaders up to the king – of being unscrupulous murderers, who not only mindlessly slaughtered their enemies but who also – as was proved by the history of the Merovingians since Clovis – did not even shy away from murdering their fathers or brothers.<sup>34</sup> Only Christianity, mediated through the Roman Catholic clergy, and the superiority of Roman legal culture in the administration of Gaul gradually managed to civilise the Frankish barbarians and finally transform the Frankish Empire into a civilised state.<sup>35</sup>

Here Montesquieu praises the civilised 'nobles of the robe' in opposition to the barbarian, or at least not very civilised 'nobles of the sword', without simply turning Boulainvilliers' 'racist' connotations into their opposite, for according to Montesquieu the Franks were the ones who finally assimilated themselves. Montesquieu here draws upon a 'functionalist' argument. The importance and legitimacy of the 'nobles of the robe' is determined by their function as guarantors of order and freedom in a civilised state through good administration and jurisdiction. The original barbarian freedom of the Franco-Germanic people, which in a larger territory such as Gaul necessarily tended towards violence and anarchy, was gradually transformed into the increasingly civilised freedom of the Merovingian, Carolingian and later French monarchy, through the moderating mediation of the Roman educated 'nobles of the robe' and of the Church.

Strikingly Montesquieu avoids any open attack against the 'nobles of the sword'; apparently he regards Dubos' egalitarian levelling of the differences between the estates as the true danger for the privileges of the 'nobles of the robe'. On the one hand, Montesquieu's thesis of assimilation is implicitly directed against the claim of a persistent existence of two peoples or races, on the other, however, he nowhere supports the opposing thesis of a historically grown unity of the French people. It was these specific differences that, even at the beginning of the Revolution, disqualified

33 Cf. Wulf D. Hund, *Rassismus* (a), Bielefeld 2007, pp. 36ff.

34 It is a remarkable phenomenon that the 'nobles' or 'genteel' secretly know that their nobility or gentility is, at its base, barbarian. As Nietzsche writes: "The gentle caste was in the beginning always a caste of barbarians, whose predominance was not initially rooted in their physical but in their mental power – they were the more wholesome humans (which, at every stage, also means 'the more wholesome beasts')". Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Gesammelte Werke*, Vol.8, Munich, n. d., p. 148.

35 Montesquieu refers in particular to Gregory of Tours. Cf. XXXI, 2, Vol. 2.

Montesquieu in the eyes of many revolutionaries,<sup>36</sup> whose initial aim was the constitution of a unified nation that would be based upon the equality of the citizens.

## V

The most famous propagandist of this national unity on the basis of the freedom and equality of the citizen is Abbé Sieyès (1748-1836), whose pamphlet "Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-État?" from January 1789 became a signal for the outbreak of the Revolution. Sieyès' writing is regarded as the most radical manifesto of the Third Estate. His question is: "What is the Third Estate?" The answer: "Everybody". "What has it been hitherto in the political order? – Nothing." His demand, meanwhile, sounds rather moderate: "What does it desire to be? Something".<sup>37</sup>

In fact, Sieyès' pamphlet is not free of contradictions. To begin with, he shows that the 'Third Estate' includes everyone who belongs to the nation, for a nation is a "body of associates, living under a common law, and represented by the same legislature".<sup>38</sup> This definition explicitly excludes from the nation the privileged strata of society, i.e. the 'nobility of the sword', the 'nobility of the robe' as well as the high clergy. These privileged classes are of no use to the nation; indeed, they are actually harmful. Sieyès accuses the non-working 'nobles of the sword' of 'laziness', and calls the allegedly special capability of the 'nobles of the robe' for public offices in civil administration and the military a 'chimera': therefore all privileged strata of society, without exception, form a distinct class that is opposed to the Third Estate; hence they are no part of the nation.<sup>39</sup> "Why not send all those families who maintain the presumption to be descended from the race of the conquerors back to the woods of the old Franconia?"<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, Sièyes does not challenge in principle the legitimacy of the three-class Estates-General that was convened by the king in 1788; instead he merely asks, as can be conjectured from his initial demand, that the Third Estate be granted the same number of representatives as the priv-

36 Cf. Bernard Manin, Montesquieu, in: Francois Furet, Mona Ozuf (eds.), *Kritisches Wörterbuch der französischen Revolution*, Frankfurt/M. 1996, Vol. 2, p. 1199.

37 Emmanuel Joseph Sièyes, *Was ist der Dritte Stand?*, ed. Otto Dann, Essen 1988, p. 29.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 34. Excerpts in English can be found here: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sieyes.html>.

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*, p. 35. In fact a considerable number of French aristocrats fled to Germany during the revolutionary events.



ileged Estates (clergy and nobility) and that the vote be counted "according to heads rather than according to estates".<sup>41</sup>

After the representatives of the clergy and the nobility had boycotted the meetings of the Estate-General, in June 1789 the representatives of the Third Estate pronounced themselves to be the national assembly, on the grounds of representing "at least nineteenth six hundredth" of the nation. They declared it to be their task "to establish the constitution of the monarchy" and vowed "not to disband until this constitution has been created and put on a firm base". On 11 August, this constituent assembly decided to abolish feudalism,<sup>42</sup> and less than a year later it resolved to abolish the nobility and all noble titles altogether.<sup>43</sup>

All this is explicitly confirmed once again in the constitution of 1791 in the introductory 'Declaration of the Rights of Men and Citizens'.

Neither nobility, nor peerage, nor hereditary distinctions, nor distinctions of orders, nor feudal regime, nor patrimonial courts, nor any titles, denominations, or prerogatives derived therefrom, nor any order of knighthood, nor any corporations or decorations requiring proofs of nobility or implying distinctions of birth, nor any superiority other than that of public functionaries in the performance of their duties any longer exists. Neither venality nor inheritance of any public office any longer exists. Neither privilege nor exception to the law common to all Frenchmen any longer exists for any part of the nation or for any individual.<sup>44</sup>

Declarations on the equal rights of the Jews and on the "abolition of Negro-slavery in the colonies"<sup>45</sup> follow the same logic of national equality.

## VI

The nation, as it emerges from the revolution as 'united and undividable', does not recognise any privileges of birth, declaring all differences based on estate, religion or race null and void. Revolutionary nationalism is not only anti-discriminatory, but tends towards universalism. The declaration of citizens' and human rights is addressed not only to the French nation but to all individuals and peoples/nations of the world. The French nation solemnly renounces wars of conquest, declares its recognition of the rights of all peoples and vows to never use its forces against the freedom of any people.

41 Ibid., pp. 41ff., 54.

42 Cf. Walter Grab (ed), *Die Französische Revolution in Dokumenten*, Munich 1973, pp. 24ff, 30, 44.

43 Ibid., p. 44.

44 Ibid., p. 60. The English version is taken from: <http://sourcebook.fsc.edu/history/constitutionof1791.html>.

45 Ibid., pp. 93f.

This is the ideal of early revolutionary nationalism, which was free from any aggressive chauvinism. Reality was, and (above all) would be in the following years, different.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, even from the very beginning it was already compromised by not politically acknowledging a vast part of the people: women, who now started to speak out themselves for the first time.<sup>47</sup> They were soon followed by the lower classes, peasants and urban poor who were noisy and effective – the 'Fourth Estate'.

In fact, the 'bourgeois society'<sup>48</sup> that was born out of the Revolution had abolished political and legal but not social inequalities; indeed, it had even confirmed (and explicitly recognised) the latter, insofar as these were a result of – and justified by – actual achievements for the nation (in public service) or for the needs of society (through economic activity in the market place). This paved the way for the emergence of a new society that was no longer founded upon legal-political power, but upon the "dull compulsion of economic relations" (Marx) of capitalist class society.

These, in every regard transformative, events would shape the following two centuries, demanded a declaration or legitimisation of the 'new' inequalities, in the course of which the 'idea' – i.e. the theoretical (re-) construction – of 'race', was invested with a new social dimension. For a considerable period of time, the notion of an aristocratic noble race of Germanic origin, which had been ridiculed by Sieyès, survived among the émigré – and later remigrated – French nobility, as well as, eventually, among large parts of the European nobility. In the modern industrialising societies, however, this purely reactionary world view had no real future. Only when, after 1848 and 1871, it started to become integrated into the new constellation of the class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat, did the pre-history of 'modern' racism end.

Arthur Comte de Gobineau's "Essai sur l'inegalité des races humaines", first published in the 1850s and comprising several volumes, counts as one of the founding texts of modern racism.<sup>49</sup> Of particular interest in the

46 After the 'ending' of the Revolution by Napoleon, the French army conquered large parts of Europe within a few years. German nationalism originated in the anti-Napoleonic liberation struggles and was directed explicitly against the French 'hereditary enemy', as it was later called.

47 Cf. Susanne Petersen, *Marktweiber und Amazonen. Frauen in der Französischen Revolution*, Cologne 1987.

48 Cf. Irmgard A. Hartig (ed.), *Geburt der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft: 1789*, Frankfurt/M. 1979.

49 Gobineau (1816-1882) probably gained his noble title by means of fraud. Titles were legalised again under Napoléon III. See Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge*, p. 287; see also Mosse, *Geschichte des Rassismus*, p. 76. On Gobineau's philosophy, see Ernst Cassirer, *Der Mythos des Staates*, Frankfurt/M. 1985, pp. 289ff.

context of this essay is his – in contrast to Boulainvilliers – almost schematic identification and evaluation of the alleged racial characteristics of the three classes that he distinguishes in the new bourgeois society. According to him, the nobility, on the grounds of the purity of its 'white' race, represents all positive features of humanity and higher civilisation. The bourgeoisie is a mixed race and the lower classes unite all the negative features of miscegenation between 'white', 'black' and 'yellow' races. The Revolution, the rise of industry, urbanisation and democracy, however, make the miscegenation of the races, and thereby the degeneration of civilisation inevitable, at the end of which stands the downfall not only of the West but of humankind altogether.

Published before Darwin's "Origin of the Species" (1859), and in particular long before the later Social Darwinism, Gobineau's 'Essai' at most contains only traces of a biological interpretation of racism. It also lacks the Antisemitism that was so typical of later European and German racism, as well as lacking other features of twentieth century imperialist and fascist racisms.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, it would probably be more accurate to consider Gobineau's anti-national 'class-racism' as a transitional phenomenon between the proto- or quasi-racism of the eighteenth and the fully developed modern imperialist racism and its political programme since the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>51</sup>

*Translation by Dagmar Engelken, Colchester*

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 —, *Essai sur la Noblesse de France* (orig. 1732). Cf. <http://books.google.com>
- 50 Historians do not agree on Gobineau's Antisemitism or lack thereof. While according to Mosse, Gobineau was not an Antisemite (Mosse, *Geschichte des Rassismus*, p. 79), Geiss argues that he at least helped to prepare the ground for it. (Geiss, *Geschichte des Rassismus*, p. 168).
- 51 Cassirer claims that the later political-activist racism of people such as Houston St. Chamberlain ('Foundations of the Nineteenth Century') was (fundamentally) different in nature to that of the fatalist 'philosopher' Gobineau. Cassirer, *Mythos*, p. 291.

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# Natural Equality and Racial Systematics

## Selected Aspects of Blumenbach's Anthropology

Sabine Ritter\*

Although Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a prominent German anthropologist of the late Enlightenment, promoted the idea of a natural equality of all men and opposed slavery, he developed a powerful hierarchical taxonomy that classified humankind and that has continued to affect public and scholarly debate on the subject up to the present. The following essay shows that the link between these two apparently contradictory concepts in Blumenbach's thought is to be found within an aesthetic perspective that was not the precursor but already a result of racist discourses of the period.

Thinking about 'racism and modernity' inevitably leads into the realm of physical anthropology as the subject which has been concerned with humankind in its diversity since the Modern era. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, professor of medicine in Göttingen, was one of its prominent exponents during the second half of the eighteenth century. His position as a person who both declared the natural equality of men and yet in his academic work produced a classification of mankind basically amalgamates two faces of the same coin – the Enlightenment.

Some scholars merely focus on portraying Blumenbach as the inventor of the 'Caucasian race' and thus a precursor of nineteenth century's European scientific racism. Tim Fulford promotes this position most drastically denominating Blumenbach as one of the "chief headhunters ... in the name of science".<sup>1</sup> Others have on the contrary stressed the egalitarian angle in Blumenbach's work, and represented him as a scholar who has been as

<sup>1</sup> Tim Fulford, *Theorizing Golgotha: Coleridge, Race Theory, and the Skull Beneath the Skin*, in: Nicholas Roe, ed., *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Sciences of Life*, Oxford 2001, pp. 117-133, here p. 119. See e.g. also Stephen Jay Gould, *The Geometer of Race*, in: *Discover*, 15, 1994, 11, pp. 65-69; Claude Blanckaert, *Les conditions d'émergence de la science des races au début du XIXe siècle*, in: Sarga Moussa, ed., *L'Idée de 'race' dans les sciences humaines et la littérature (XVIIIe et XIXe siècles)*, Paris 2003, pp. 133-149; Robert Bernasconi, *Kant and Blumenbach's Polyps: A Neglected Chapter in the History of the Concept of Race*, in: Sara Eigen, Mark Larrimore, eds., *The German Invention of Race*, Albany 2006, pp. 73-90, here p. 73; Bronwen Douglas, *Climate to Crania: Science and the Racialization of Human Differ-*

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much a naturalist as a humanist, arguing against slavery and for human emancipation. From this perspective the effects of his race concept appear as an accidental slip, an unfortunate lapse of the (scientific) Enlightenment.<sup>2</sup> In the following I will demonstrate that one key to the understanding of the dialectics of Blumenbach's view of the variety of mankind<sup>3</sup> is to be found within an aesthetic attitude that was saturated with stereotypes and idiosyncrasies and that became increasingly prominent in the Enlightenment discourses. To come to this conclusion I shall first give a short review of his racial systematics and secondly exemplify the ambivalences between natural equality and essential diversity, between universalistic claim and particularistic impact of Blumenbach's idea of man.

### Blumenbach's Racial Systematics

In 1775 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach defended his thesis *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa (On the Natural Variety of Mankind)*. This text was first published in 1776, and since then he has been referred to as the father of physical anthropology in Germany.<sup>4</sup> Blumenbach was a theorist as well as an empiricist. He collected a huge arsenal of tools for his production of scientific knowledge: books, prints, graphics and drawings, ar-

- ence, in: id., Chris Ballard, eds., *Foreign Bodies. Oceania and the Science of Race 1750-1940*, Canberra 2008, pp. 33-96, here pp. 37-39.
- 2 Cf. Georgette Legée, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach. La naissance de l'anthropologie à l'époque de la Révolution française, in: *Scientifiques et Société pendant la Révolution et l'Empire. Actes du 114e Congrès national des Sociétés savantes*, Paris 1990, pp. 395-420, here pp. 409f.; Frank W. P. Dougherty, Christoph Meiners und Johann Friedrich Blumenbach im Streit um den Begriff der Menschenrasse, in: Gunter Mann, Franz Dumont, eds., *Die Natur des Menschen. Probleme der Physischen Anthropologie und Rassenkunde (1750-1850)*, Stuttgart etc. 1990, pp. 89-111; Hannah Franziska Augstein, *From the Land of the Bible to the Caucasus and Beyond. The Shifting Ideas of the Geographical Origin of Humankind*, in: Waltraud Ernst, Bernard Harris, eds., *Race, Science, and Medicine, 1700-1960*, London 1999, pp. 58-79; Norbert Klatt, Klytia und die 'schöne Georgianerin' – Eine Anmerkung zu Blumenbachs Rassentypologie, in: id., *Kleine Beiträge zur Blumenbach-Forschung*, Göttingen 2008, pp. 70-101, here p. 76.
  - 3 Cf. the well-balanced comment on Blumenbach by Wulf D. Hund, *Die Körper der Bilder der Rassen. Wissenschaftliche Leichenschändung und rassistische Entfremdung*, in: id., ed., *Entfremdete Körper. Rassismus als Leichenschändung*, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 13-79, here p. 32.
  - 4 Cf. e.g. Stefano Fabbri Bertolotti, *The Anthropological Theory of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, in: Stefano Poggi, Maurizio Bossi, eds., *Romanticism in Science: Science in Europe, 1790-1840*, Dordrecht 1994, pp. 103-125, here p. 103. See also the comment in brackets in the following footnote.

tefacts, bones and, especially, skulls. Most of his academic life he spent in the German city of Göttingen which was one of the major centres of the *res publica literaria* at the time attracting a wide circle of progressive scholars and explorers. Amongst his colleagues and friends were prominent scholars such as Carl Friedrich Gauß and Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, Georg Forster and Samuel Thomas Soemmerring; amongst his students were Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt and Adelbert von Chamisso. Blumenbach was also a great international networker: he corresponded with distinguished intellectuals including Joseph Banks, Georges Cuvier, Pieter Camper and Charles Bonnet; and with Immanuel Kant as well as with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He was a pivotal character of the natural scientific Enlightenment in Germany and Europe.<sup>5</sup>

As a result of the so-called scientific revolution from the turn of the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, 'nature' had become a key concept contrasting any transcendental explanation of the world. It termed a realm that was no longer seen as secular, hence imperfect, but as orderly, and following recognisable laws. Such new ways of thinking had an immediate impact on the scientific idea of man, and vice versa. Man's disentanglement from metaphysical or theological considerations opened the perspective for a new world interpretation that regarded mankind as profane, as the creator of its own world and, due to its reasonable disposition, as fit for freedom. At the same time, Western explorers and travellers encountered the alleged species 'man' in extraordinary diversity around the globe. As a result scholars and scientists enquired its genesis, development and differentiation and attempted to answer these questions by a coherent systematisation of the human kind. Their acknowledgement of human diversity led to its classification.<sup>6</sup> During the late Enlightenment Blumenbach created

- 5 Cf. Frank W. P. Dougherty, *Commercium Epistolicum J. F. Blumenbachii. Aus einem Briefwechsel des klassischen Zeitalters der Naturgeschichte*, Göttingen 1984; Luigi Marino, *Praeceptores Germaniae, Göttingen 1770-1820*, Göttingen 1985, pp. 70-89 (furthermore Marino notes some scholars who termed Blumenbach "the German Buffon" and "the father of anthropology in a modern sense", especially August Wilhelm Schlegel is said to have called him "Nestor de nos naturalistes" in 1833). See also the informative website [www.blumenbach.info/\\_/Introduction.html](http://www.blumenbach.info/_/Introduction.html) and [www.johann-friedrich-blumenbach-online.de/](http://www.johann-friedrich-blumenbach-online.de/) (German) and the edition of Blumenbach's correspondence that was started by Frank W. P. Dougherty and is now continued (and published up to the letters of the year 1790) by Norbert Klatt ([www.uni-erfurt.de/forschungszentrum-gotha/projekt/blumenbach-edition/](http://www.uni-erfurt.de/forschungszentrum-gotha/projekt/blumenbach-edition/)).
- 6 Cf. Wolf Lepenies, *Das Ende der Naturgeschichte. Wandel kultureller Selbstverständlichkeiten in den Wissenschaften des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, Frankfurt 1978, pp. 16-18; Rolf Peter Sieferle, *Die Krise der menschlichen Natur. Zur Geschichte eines Konzepts*, Frankfurt 1989, p. 50; Thomas Nutz,

the most influential classification system of human diversity, which is still effective. Most prominently it signifies 'white Europeans' as 'Caucasians' in English-speaking countries such as Great Britain or the United States.

In his 1775 dissertation, the first version of his work on the variety of mankind, Blumenbach named four varieties (the term 'Rasse', race, was to occur later and only in his German texts).<sup>7</sup> Already in the second edition, published in 1781 and several years after Captain Cook's second journey to the South Pacific, Blumenbach added a fifth – Malayan – variety to the existing four Linnaean human varieties. In 1795, in the last and most influential edition of *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa*, he eventually defined five generic varieties: the Caucasian, the Mongolian, the Ethiopian, the American, and the Malayan. Lacking the "necessary evidence", as he admitted, Blumenbach had hitherto based his division predominantly on geographical parameters. Additionally, he relied on travelogues and existing classifications of nature such as Linnaeus' "systema naturae", the starting point of zoological nomenclature. By 1795, however, he distinguished human varieties based on anatomical properties. His enormous collection of bones supplied an empirical foundation for this ambitious classification project beyond travelogues and superficial phenomena such as skin colour. Now human skulls became the main criteria. Their condition, Blumenbach was convinced, provided a basis for the systematisation.<sup>8</sup> Out of his collection he selected five "very choice examples of the principal varieties of mankind"<sup>9</sup> and chose that of a Georgian woman as the prototypical sample skull for the Caucasian race. In 1802 a copper engraving of that skull appeared in Blumenbach's *Abbildungen naturhistorischer Gegenstände* (Illustrations of Subjects of Natural History). Far away from being factual, he entitled the etching "ravishingly beautiful skull of a Georgian woman".<sup>10</sup> We will meet this crucial item again.

'Varietäten des Menschengeschlechts'. Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen in der Zeit der Aufklärung, Köln etc. 2009, pp. 8-10.

7 Cf. also Norbert Klatt, Zum Rassenbegriff bei Immanuel Kant und Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, in: id., Kleine Beiträge zur Blumenbach-Forschung, Göttingen 2010, pp. 9-55, here p. 17.

8 Cf. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa ... Editio Tertia*, Goettingae 1795, p. XXXVII.

9 Blumenbach, *De Generis ... Editio Tertia*, p. XXIII ("Quina exemplaria selectissima varietatum principalium generis humani"); trans. id., *On the Natural Variety of Mankind, Third Edition, 1795*, in: Thomas Bendyshe, ed., *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, London 1865, pp. 145-276, here p. 155.

10 "Bildschöner Schedel einer Georgianerin", in: Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *Abbildungen naturhistorischer Gegenstände*. 6tes Heft. Göttingen 1802, Tab. 51.



Blumenbach's main objective was not to classify but to clearly distinguish between animals and mankind, the latter of which he strictly considered to be one (monogenetic) species. The third edition of his dissertation starts with a letter to Joseph Banks in which Blumenbach specified ten natural orders of mammalia, "Bimanus (Homo)" and "Quadrumana (Simia, Papio, Cercopithecus, Lemur)" being the first two of them. He came to the conclusion that humans were the only bimanous animals whose "freest use of two most perfect hands"<sup>11</sup> enabled upright walking and thus clearly distinguished them from all other animals. With regard to the "Five Principal Varieties of Mankind, one Species" Blumenbach in the fourth section of the book decisively stated that in fact "[i]nnumerable varieties of mankind run into one another by insensible degrees".<sup>12</sup>

Accordingly, he asserted that his genuine human varieties were not clearly delimitable units and that his categories were abstractions rather than specifiable entities. There was "not a single one of the bodily differences in any one variety of man", he insisted, "which does not run into some of the others by such endless shades of all sorts, that the naturalist or physiologist has yet to be born, who can with any grounds of certainty attempt to lay down any fixed bounds between these shades, and consequently between their two extremes".<sup>13</sup> Correspondingly, it remained highly important to Blumenbach to point out that his principal human varieties and their respective sample skulls were ideal constructions.

- 11 Blumenbach, *De Generis ... Editio Tertia*, p. 21 ("liberrimus ... usus binarum perfectissimarum manuum"); id., *Natural Variety of Mankind 1795*, p. 171; for the following cf. p. 152.
- 12 Id., *Natural Variety of Mankind 1795*, p. 264; originally Blumenbach stressed the unity of mankind even more, entitling the section "species vero unica", cf. Blumenbach, *De Generis ... Editio Tertia*, p. 284.
- 13 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *Contributions to Natural History, Part 1*, in: Thomas Bendyshe, ed., *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, London 1865, pp. 277-324, here p. 297; originally published in Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte, Erster Theil, zweyte Ausgabe*, Göttingen 1806, p. 52 (first published in 1790) ("dass auch nicht eine einzige der körperlichen Verschiedenheiten bey irgend einer Menschenvarietät sey, die nicht durch so unendliche Nüancen allmählich in der andern ihre überfließt, dass derjenige Naturforscher oder Physiologe wohl noch geboren werden soll, der es mit Grund der Wahrheit wagen dürfte eine bestimmte Grenze zwischen diesen Nüancen und folglich selbst zwischen ihren Extremen festzusetzen"). Cf. also Bruce Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race. A Political History of Racial Identity*, New York etc. 2006, pp. 73-76.

### The Ambivalence of Blumenbach's Idea of Man

The frequency and resoluteness with which Blumenbach defended monogenism throughout decades might lead to the perception that he sensed the hazardous potential of physical anthropology and race studies. In his *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte (Contributions to Natural History)* he issued three instructions to inform reliable investigations on the varieties of humankind. Firstly, the investigator should always pay attention to the physiology of *all* the organized bodies in order to realise that the variations in mankind were as exiguous as in many other species. Secondly, the investigation may not concentrate on the "races of man which stand strikingly in opposition to each other" as the bounds between them were arbitrary and merged seamlessly.<sup>14</sup> Thirdly, Blumenbach considered it necessary to intensively collect reliable sources "out of nature itself".

The monogenetic foundation of Blumenbach's thought – the conviction that there is *one* human species in *one* physiological configuration – had a political dimension. Contrary to most of his contemporaries, for example Immanuel Kant or Samuel Thomas Soemmerring, he advocated that Africans were not at all less talented than Europeans. Highly interested in contemporary Black intellectuals and writers such as Anton Wilhelm Amo, Ignatius Sancho, Elisa Capitein, and Phillis Wheatley Blumenbach collected, studied and commented on their work.<sup>15</sup> With his friend and colleague Soemmerring he debated the "difference between the moor and the European" and tried to convince him in a letter from 16 January 1785 "that their intellect is as cultivable as that of any Europeans". He also argued with the Göttingen historian Christoph Meiners, whose *Grundrisse der Geschichte der Menschheit (Outline of the History of Mankind)*, an opus filled with racialising statements on the diversity of humans) he sharply criticised.<sup>16</sup>

14 Cf., also for the following, Blumenbach, *Beyträge* (1806), pp. 51-54 ("Man darf nie bloß ein paar auffallend gegen einander abstechende Menschenrassen ausheben, und diese nun ... allein gegeneinander aufstellen"), trans. id., *Contributions* Part 1, p. 297; in the 1790 edition as well as in the later edition Blumenbach used the terminus 'Racen' resp. 'Rassen'.

15 Cf. Blumenbach, *Beyträge* (1806), pp. 73-97 ("Ueber die Negern insbesondere"); cf. also Wulf D. Hund, *Rassismus*, in: Hans Jörg Sandkühler, ed., *Enzyklopädie Philosophie*, 2nd ed., Hamburg 2010, pp. 2191-2200, here p. 2197.

16 Blumenbach's letter concerning Soemmerring's "Über die körperliche Verschiedenheit des Mohren vom Europäer" is published in Frank W. P. Dougherty, ed., *The Correspondence of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, Vol. 1: 1773-1782, Göttingen 2006, pp. 237f.; cf. also Tanja van Hoorn, *Dem Leibe abgelesen. Georg Forster im Kontext der physischen Anthropologie des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Tübingen 2004, pp. 148-150, esp. footnote 265; cf. Dougherty, *Christoph Meiners und Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*.

Unlike Meiners, Blumenbach explicitly and repeatedly positioned himself against slavery. He corresponded with the Abbé Grégoire who was a prominent member of the abolitionist Amis des Noirs and fought for the emancipation of Jews and Blacks during the French Revolution. Henri Grégoire based his own convictions on Blumenbach's monogenetic theories ascertaining that Black people must have the same rights and the same duties as White.<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding this humanist stance, Blumenbach construed the 'Caucasian race'<sup>18</sup> as *prima inter pares*, as the first human variety or race. Assuming that the colour of skin rather changed from light to dark than the other way round, he esteemed the white to be the primeval race that "diverges in both directions into two" other varieties. Furthermore, Caucasians were distinguished by an "in European concepts of beauty, exemplary ... shape of skull and face".<sup>19</sup>

The corresponding illustration published in the third edition of *De Generis Humani Varietate Nativa* presents the Caucasian skull as centric, albeit on the same level as the others (see fig. 1).<sup>20</sup> From this 'Femina Georgiana' the very left and the very right skull each deviate in an antipodal manner. To Blumenbach, the right skull represented one extreme, the Ethiopian variety, while the left represented the other, the Mongolian. Between the mid-

17 Cf. Henri Grégoire, *Ueber die Literatur der Neger, oder: Untersuchungen über ihre Geistesfähigkeiten ...*, Tübingen 1809, p. 32 ("daß demnach die schwarzen Menschen ... wie die Weissen ... beyde gleiche Rechte und gleiche Pflichten haben"); Hans-Konrad Schmutz, Friedrich Tiedemann (1781-1861) und Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) – Anthropologie und Sklavenfrage, in: Gunter Mann, Franz Dumont, eds., *Die Natur des Menschen. Probleme der Physischen Anthropologie und Rassenkunde (1750-1850)*, Stuttgart 1990, pp. 353-364, here p. 357; Barbara Gribnitz, *Schwarzes Mädchen, weißer Fremder: Studien zur Konstruktion von 'Rasse' und Geschlecht ...*, Würzburg 2002, pp. 24-65.

18 He chose this expression for reasons that are too complex and speculative to be discussed here, but cf. for a notional comment Augstein, *Land of the Bible*, pp. 64-69, esp. p. 68: "the name had many cultural connotations [e.g. from Noah's Ark to the legend of Prometheus, S.R.], yet it bore no strong relations to any of the great families of nations which were included in Blumenbach's theory ... The Caucasus was the neverland of myth-making". Blumenbach mentioned aesthetic as well as physiological arguments for using the term, cf. id., *De Generis ... Editio Tertia*, pp. 303f.

19 Cf. Blumenbach, *De Generis ... Editio Tertia*, p. 286 ("Haec utrinque in bina ab invicem remotissima et diversissima extrema abiit"); id., *Natural Variety of Mankind*, 1795, p. 264; Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *Handbuch der Naturgeschichte*, 5th ed., Göttingen 1797, p. 61 ("nach den Europäischen Begriffen von Schönheit musterhaften Schedel- und Gesichtsform"); cf. id., *De Generis ... Editio Tertia*, p. 303, and Klatt, *Klytia*, pp. 78f.

20 Fig. 1 published in Blumenbach, *De Generis ... Editio Tertia*, Tab. II.

dle skull and its most extreme deviations one finds the intermediate forms: on the right the Malayan, on the left the American variety.

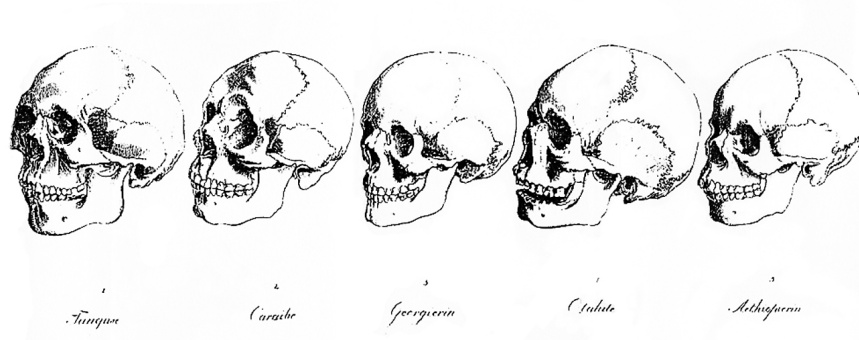


Figure 1: Blumenbach's Five Principal Human Varieties

This order of skulls, that is of human varieties, implies a hierarchic judgment by its constructor. The Caucasian was the primeval variety, the point of origin from which all others had degenerated. It was in this way that mankind, though perceived as born equal, was brought into a hierarchical order during the late Enlightenment, long before the emergence of nineteenth century scientific racism.

### The Aesthetic Ideal as a Categorical Groundwork

As early as in 1779 Blumenbach characterised the peoples belonging to the first (later: Caucasian) variety as in the majority white and, according to his own measures, most beautiful. In 1802 he portrayed the aforementioned sample skull of a Georgian woman as amazing, elsewhere as "maxime symmetricum et venustissimum".<sup>21</sup> Eventually, in the third edition of his thesis Blumenbach praised the harmonious, gently curved form of the Caucasian skull, cherishing its "parts moderately defined, forehead smooth". In contrast to this admiration, he commented on the bones and properties of the degenerated varieties with considerably less enthusiasm. He for instance elaborated on the skull of the "Rehnhier-Tungusen", representing the Mongolian variety, as having a "head almost square ...; face broad, at the same time flat and depressed, the parts therefore less distinct", and the

<sup>21</sup> Blumenbach, *De Generis ... Editio Tertia*, p. 205; id., *Handbuch der Naturgeschichte*. 2 Theile. Göttingen 1779/80, p. 63 ("Alle diese Völker sind mehrtheils von weisser Farbe, und nach unsern Begriffen von Schönheit die best gebildeten Menschen").

"Aethiopissae Guineensis" skull seemed to Blumenbach "compressed at the sides ... forehead knotty, uneven; Malar bones protruding outwards ... alveolar edge narrow, elongated in front".<sup>22</sup>

Aesthetic discussions were becoming an increasingly prominent subject in intellectual circles in Blumenbach's times. It was commonly agreed that a beautiful appearance correlated with virtue, while ugliness was associated with decadence. Hence it is not surprising that Blumenbach was mired in these discourses, even if he claimed his work to be founded in exact and objective sciences.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, aesthetic arguments in an anthropological context provided the foundation for calamitous race sciences. They need to be examined carefully,<sup>24</sup> the more so as even within Blumenbach's lifetime his ostensibly 'flat hierarchy' of races was turned into a veritable top-down-model.

This was most aptly illustrated on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Blumenbach's doctorate, when he was presented with a medal in honour of his work. Predominantly students of his, among them the two Humboldt brothers, struck the medal with a revealing and powerful imagery (see fig. 2).<sup>25</sup>

One side shows Blumenbach's portrait, and the other displays the skulls of three of his five principal races. Here the 'Caucasian' is in fact at the top of a pyramid, shown frontally so that a high forehead is accentuated. Below it on the right the prognathic profile of a skull represents 'the Ethiopian', all but quoting Camper's 'facial angle'. Next to it on the left, 'the Mongolian'

- 22 Cf. Blumenbach, *De Generis ... Editio Tertia*, p. 289 ("partibus eius modice distinctis, fronte planiore"), p. 324 ("Rehnhier-Tungusen"), p. 291 ("capite quasi quadrato ... facie lata, simulque plana et depressa, partibus ideo minus distinctis sed quasi confluentibus"), p. 326 ("Aethiopissae Guineensis"), p. 293 ("capite angusto, a lateribus compresso ... fronte gibba, fornicata. Ossibus jugalibus antrorsum prominentibus ... limbo alveolari angustiore, antrorsum elongato"); id., *Natural Variety of Mankind*, 1795, pp. 265f.
- 23 Cf. Andrea Maihofer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, in: *Zeitschrift für Menschenrechte - Journal for Human Rights*, 1, 2009, pp. 20-36, here p. 32; Hartmut Böhme, *Einführung*, in: Hans-Jürgen Schings, ed., *Der ganze Mensch. Anthropologie und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 139-144, here p. 140.
- 24 A few scholars already engaged with this topic, see especially Klatt, *Klytia*; Peter Martin, *Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren. Afrikaner in Geschichte und Bewußtsein der Deutschen*, 2nd ed., Hamburg 2001, pp. 241-244, 264f.; David Bindman, *Ape to Apollo. Aesthetics and the Idea of Race in the 18th Century*, London 2002, pp. 190-201.
- 25 An image of this medal is printed on the title page of Karl F. H. Marx, *Zum Andenken an Johann Friedrich Blumenbach. Eine Gedächtniss-Rede ...*, Göttingen 1840 and reprinted in id., *Life of Blumenbach*, in: Bendyshe, *The Anthropological Treatises*, pp. 1-45, here p. 1.



Figure 2: A Medal for Blumenbach's Doctorate Anniversary

skull is illustrated in semi-profile, highlighting its alleged flat and broad face.<sup>26</sup> As it appears Blumenbach raised no objections to such visualisation of his human taxonomy as an overtly vertically ranking concept. The medallic imprint corresponded, and here we come full circle, substantially with his own aesthetic sentiment, that as we have seen appears occasionally in his academic writings. However, the dialectics of monogenesis and taxonomy, the ambivalence of Blumenbach's idea of man, is not only an unconscious lapse of a humanistic scientist. The magnitude of Blumenbach's idiosyncrasies and stereotypes impacting on his scientific reasoning shall be demonstrated in a last example.

Blumenbach's *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* contain an essay critically targeting Meiners' work and an article about the efforts of Black men in the literary and scientific realm. The latter contains a contribution to the scholarly discussion of skin colours, concluding that there exist people with black skin who are not "Negroes". Both texts indicate Blumenbach's egalitarian attitude. A third treatise on the "Division of Mankind into Five Principal Races" depicts each human variety with a representative vignette (see fig. 3 for three of the five varieties)<sup>27</sup> fabricated by Daniel Chodowiecki, a famous engraver from Berlin and one of Blumenbach's contemporaries. As Chodowiecki manufactured them at the author's eager request and according to his accurate specifications, there can be no doubt that the illustrations complied with Blumenbach's instructions and racial visions. Two letters to Chodowiecki substantiate this assertion.

26 Cf. Nell Irvin Painter, Why White People Are Called 'Caucasian'? Paper presented ... at Yale University, 7-8 November 2003, [www.yale.edu/glc/events/race/Painter.pdf](http://www.yale.edu/glc/events/race/Painter.pdf), pp. 13f.

27 Cf. Blumenbach, *Beyträge* (1806), pp. 62-78 (Meiners), pp. 84-118 ("Ueber die Neger insbesondere"), esp. pp. 85f. (skin), pp. 79-83 ("Eintheilung des Menschengeschlechts in fünf Spielarten"). The said vignettes are reprinted in Dougherty, *Commercium*, pp. 158-162; Bindman, *Ape to Apollo*, pp. 198f.



Figure 3: Blumenbach's First, Second and Third Variety

In the first letter, dated 17 December 1781, Blumenbach gave proper instructions for the composition of the vignettes. He ordered the first variety of mankind, later called the 'Caucasian race', to be composed as an "oriental scenery" within a room and specified as "most noble form! Svelte figure ... the whole setting exuding as much finest lust as possible". For the second variety he demanded a setting outdoors in a paddy field depicting the "Chinese with their round heads, slit eyes, little stiff hair at the cowlick and a beard". Finally, the third variety, "Negroes", were to be located in a fishing boat; in the background Blumenbach wished huts to be drawn. The description of this variety reads as follows: "[W]ith protruding bulging lips, flat nose, frizzy wool hair. Women with long hanging breasts that they throw over their shoulders to feed their children on their backs. Naked. Maybe except for a small rush mat in front of their private parts".<sup>28</sup>

Exceeding even the evident Eurocentric culturalism that stands out in these vignettes,<sup>29</sup> the letter clearly reveals Blumenbach's bias against the physiognomy of non-European varieties. Especially the alleged appearance of the "Negroes" is based on stereotypical images of African women that had been circulating throughout Europe for more than a century. The 'savage with the hanging breast' described by Blumenbach was a pejora-

28 Blumenbach, Letter to Daniel Chodowiecki, 17 December 1781, in: Dougherty, *Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 289f. ("Die Titel-Vignette. Mit der Unterschrift: 1te Menschen-Varietaet. Eine Morgenländische Scene: eine Gesellschaft im Zimmer. edelste Bildung! schlanker Wuchs. Die Frauenzimmer mit langen Haarzöpfen. Das ganze so viel [wie] möglich feinste Wollust athmend ... 2te Menschen-Varietaet. Chinesen mit ihren runden Köpfen, geschlitzten Augen, wenigen steifen Haarn auf dem Wirbel und ein Bart. Ihr Feldbau. Reisfelder durch Büffelochsen gepflügt. In der Ferne ihre bizarren Lusthäusern ... Eine Schluß-Vignette. Mit der Unterschrift: 3te Menschen-Varietaet. Negeren. Mit vorstehenden wulstigen Lippen, Stumpfnase, krausem Wollhaar. Die Weibsen mit langhängenden Brüsten die sie ihrem Kinde auf dem Rücken, über die Schulter zu reichen. Nackt. Ausser etwa eine kleine Schilfmatte vor den Schaamtheilen. Ihre Fischerey ... ihrer Hütten die in der Ferne zu sehen seyn müßten").

29 Cf. Bindman, *Ape to Apollo*, pp. 197-201 for a thoughtful analysis.

tive chimaera that absorbed the imagination of travel writers, scientists, anatomists, and satirists like Jonathan Swift (who in 'Gulliver's Travels' based the 'Yahoos' on this illusion). It served as a marker for savageness by contrasting the European ideal of small, tiny breasts.<sup>30</sup>

Blumenbach did not reflect upon his own racialising prejudices against the alleged otherness of Black women at all. His conception of human varieties was embedded in common "patterns of contempt" which themselves were parts of the discursive structure at the time when "race was turned into a scientifically accepted term".<sup>31</sup> Moreover, privately he felt no qualms about judging the supposed typical bodies of the women of the third variety. After Chodowiecki sent him sketches for the vignettes drawn according to Blumenbach's instructions, Blumenbach wrote a second letter commenting on them and requesting some rearrangements. Amongst other alterations he wanted the "savage with the pendulous breast" to be deleted from the vignette. Indeed, Blumenbach stated, it is a common way of breastfeeding to let the children suckle over the shoulder "but we don't want to express this disgusting, horrid sight".<sup>32</sup>

In conclusion, neither in his short essays nor in the large monographs about the varieties of mankind did Johann Friedrich Blumenbach declare anything but the natural equality of man. To choose the 'Caucasian' variety for aesthetic reasons as the first and generic human race seems, at first sight, to be an innocent and un-reflected act – with unfortunate, nonetheless unpredictable consequences. On the one hand Blumenbach constructed his human typology in order to defend the unity of mankind along the demarcation of man from the animal and against offences by the polygenists of his time. On the other hand, as I have demonstrated by example of the arrangements of skulls in the third edition of his dissertation, the honorary medal and especially his private letters to Chodowiecki, he built it hierarchically on the basis of old, long established stereotypical, racist and sexist images of the (at least in its female version) ugly savage. These images professed a 'natural' distinction between the varieties in mankind that

30 Cf. Sabine Ritter, *Facetten der Sarah Baartman. Repräsentationen und Rekonstruktionen der 'Hottentottenvenus'*, Berlin etc. 2010, pp. 47f.

31 Wulf D. Hund, *Negative Societalisation. Racism and the Constitution of Race*, in: id., Jeremy Krikler, David Roediger, eds., *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, Berlin etc. 2010, pp. 57-96, here p. 59.

32 Blumenbach, Letter to Daniel Chodowiecki, 12 January 1782, in: Dougherty, *Correspondence*, Vol. 1, p. 308 ("3. Die Negreße könnte etwa das Kind in einem Tuche auf dem Rücken tragen. Sie stillen auch ihre Kinder so, daß sie ihnen die sehr lange schlappe Brust rückwärts über die Schulter geschlagen, zureichen! Aber diesen widerlichen ekelhaften Anblick wollen wir doch nicht ausdrücken").



helped to legitimate the unequal treatment of what should be called races later on – and they were consciously used by Blumenbach.

Hence, the anthropological classification of mankind has been shaped from the very beginning by arguments that aimed at an overt depreciation of others than the 'Caucasian' varieties. The epistemological foundation of Blumenbach's taxonomy, actually starting from the humanist notion of monogenism, was saturated a priori with aesthetic racism.

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# Removing Indians, Managing Slaves, and Justifying Slavery

## The Case for Intersectionality

David R. Roediger

Management in the antebellum U. S. South has been seen as focused on the production of staple crops and slave discipline. If the management of land as well as of labor comes in for consideration and if the immense gains realized by planters through the reproductive labor of slave women are assayed, a far broader set of relationships between whiteness and management emerges. Only through multiracial history moving beyond black and white, and multidisciplinary study bringing race and gender studies together does the rich story of slave management told in publications oriented to Old South planters more fully emerge.

In an introductory chapter on "The Planter" under slavery that framed his matchless *Black Reconstruction in America* W. E. B. Du Bois made the lies and truths masters told to each other and the world about their knowledge of managing Africans the key to their wealth, power and limitations. While planters necessarily "insisted on the efficiency of Negro labor for ordinary toil" and on its "essential equality of physical condition with the labor of Europe", the South's "pedantic periodicals" screamed that "higher intelligence" was impossible for "Negro labor". Such a stance justified, and bespoke, the managerial authority masters studiously assumed. Grand claims of racial knowledge born of management ramified tragically. What began in the South and in "industry" proved "singularly disastrous for modern civilization in science and religion, in art and government". To the "watching world" a racism designed to supervise what Du Bois called "slave industry" seemed "the carefully thought-out result of experience and reason", even as planters contradictorily obsessed over facing "sullen labor" determined to do as little work as possible.<sup>1</sup>

The proslavery Georgia-born historian U. B. Phillips wrongly thought otherwise. In his epic 1918 study *American Negro Slavery* Phillips began a chapter titled "Plantation Management" with: "Typical planters though facile in conversation seldom resorted to their pens. Few of them put their standards into writing except in the form of instructions to their stewards and overseers". He implied the near-uselessness of such sources to historians by adding that these writings amounted to little more than "coun-

<sup>1</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880*, New York 1998, orig. 1935, pp. 38-41.

sels of perfection, drafted in widely separated periods [and] localities, and varying much in detail".<sup>2</sup> In recently attempting to open up consideration of the subject of race and the management of labor in U.S. history, Elizabeth Esch and I have surveyed a literature on slave management in which masters spoke to each other and the world regarding fostering the industry of slaves. The literature is so massive that as to leave little doubt that developing a managerial ideology was a central concern of planters. In the 69 annual volumes of *Farmer's Register*, *Southern Planter*, *Southern Cultivator*, *American Cotton Planter*, and *De Bow's Review* researched for this volume, "management of slaves" came up for substantial discussion 65 times and "management of negroes" 90 times.<sup>3</sup> Of course very often related issues were discussed in less direct language as plantation management was debated. Indeed these journals ought to be considered the first major management publications in the United States.

Research in these journals has led to an extended account of how slave labor was chosen and bossed racially in the production of staple crops. For present purposes I want to discuss instead two further dimensions of the research, ones which help to account for why Du Bois's observation regarding the centrality of management to the image and the self-image of masters. The first concerns how the management of slaves was embedded in discourses concerning the management of land so that even as North and South increasingly parted company on the justifiability of slavery, planters benefitted from a broad acceptance of settler colonialism nationally. Their claims to know how to manage "negroes" better than Africans could manage themselves were part and parcel of claims to be able to manage lands better than the removed Indians who had held title to those lands. Secondly, the literature on the management of slaves also foregrounded managing the reproductive labor of slaves, on which claims of great success could be made, alongside claims of managing production, where claims had to be more modest. While broaching slave breeding opened masters to abolitionist argument, managing to tremendously increase slave population and value justified slavery as somehow good for Africans and underlined the economic viability of the system. Thus the defense of slavery in the eyes of masters themselves and from the charges of critics was deeply "inter-

2 Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime*, New York 1918, p. 261.

3 My student Zachary Sell did most of the digital searching here. The volumes included were *Farmer's Register*, 1833-1843; *Southern Planter*, 1841-1866; *De Bow's Review*, 1850-1864; *Southern Cultivator*, 1843-1866; and *American Cotton Planter*, 1853, 1854, 1855 and 1857.

sectional", as Black feminist theorists put matters.<sup>4</sup> Never simply a matter of managing slave labor in commodity production on class (or even race/class) lines, the defense of slavery turned as well on the intersectionality of slavery, settler colonialism, and women's reproductive labor.

### **Dispossessing Indians, Husbanding Land, and Managing Negroes**

While holding Africans as slaves most spectacularly informed whiteness-as-management as a set of ideas and practices, "management" had many antebellum Southern meanings, some of them intricately linking land use to settler colonial dispossessions of Indians. In 1840, *Farmer's Register* approvingly reprinted the 1818 edition of *Arator*, John Taylor of Caroline's series of agricultural essays, as a contribution to discussions of plantation management. Introducing management of Africans after a long analysis of "managing" fertilizers, and under the heading of "Labor", Taylor apologized, "[p]erhaps this subject ought to have preceded that of manuring, as it is idle even to think of a good system of agriculture in any point of view, if the labor on which it depends is convulsed by infusions the most inimical to its utility; and if those who direct it, are to live in a constant dread of its loss, and a doubt of their own safety". Within a few lines, the subject was military management – the Haitian Revolution, and preventing its reenactment on U.S. soil. Soon Indian corn, cider and sheep were the objects whose management interested Taylor and the *Register*. Weymouth Jordan's study of the *American Cotton Planter* finds a similar panoply of concerns running through that publication: "It crusaded for railroads, manufacturing, direct trade with Europe, diversification of crops, horizontal plowing, crop rotation, use of fertilizers [and] Negro management".<sup>5</sup>

By 1840, the subject of managing black labor had begun to force its way into the central concerns of *Farmer's Register*, with characteristic and fruitful complications. After hundreds of references over previous years referring to "management" as the efficient care of bees, cows, soil, silkworms, hay and other things non-human, Ruffin reprinted an article from the *Carolina Planter*, by Dr. R. W. Gibbes, who gingerly backed into the subject of the managing labor as one: "too much neglected, but one of infinite magnitude, and pregnant with evil; so much so, that inadequate as

4 On intersectionality, see esp. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*, New York 2000.

5 John Taylor of Caroline, *Labor*, as reprinted in: *Farmers' Register* [hereafter, *FR*] 13, 1840, esp. p. 728 and p. 730; Weymouth T. Jordan, Noah B. Cloud and the *American Cotton Planter*, in: *Agricultural History* 31, 1957, p. 45.

I may feel myself to be I have no doubt but that I may cause the guilty to blush – I mean a proper regard to, and management of slaves".<sup>6</sup>

Such strains in early writing on slave management raise a series of useful complications to our claim that antebellum Southern thought embodied the origins of modern management, and of race management, in the U.S. "Management" clearly meant many different things in the proliferation of Southern writings using the term. Through the 1830s, the term was decidedly more likely to apply to managing land and crops than to labor, and this tendency did not disappear at the height over managerial writings in the 1840s and 1850s. Jack Temple Kirby's important recent collection of Ruffin's writings, wonderfully titled *Nature's Management*, usefully argues that agricultural writings by Ruffin were relatively poorly received until joined to a defense of Southern rights and slavery, but management of nature remained one of Ruffin's most important passions.<sup>7</sup> In describing his own system of management and what he did for slaves, one planter-expert wrote of acting on the conviction "that man is as much duty bound to improve and cultivate his fellow-men as ... to cultivate and improve the ground".<sup>8</sup> Given such realities and the overwhelming importance of the slave as an asset, when management of labor was broached, it tended to discuss Black workers in close proximity to managing and improving land and the plantation's animals.

However, within the longer view of U.S. history, such placing of alleged white managerial genius *vis a vis* slaves alongside a general ability to husband and develop nature, makes the connections to race more profound, putting proslavery emphases on such managerial genius in the context of settler colonialism's dispossession of indigenous people. The antebellum South, and especially the Southwest, was after all not only the site of slavery but also of the most spectacular, brutal and controversial of the nation's dispossessions, dislocations, and decimations of indigenous peoples. Some of the same political forces later calling for abolition of slavery also vigorously protested against the removal of Southern Cherokees, Creeks and Choctaws to trans-Mississippi territories in the 1830s.<sup>9</sup>

6 H.C., On the Management of Negroes, in: FR 1, 1834, pp. 564f.; Dr. R.W. Gibbes, Proper Regard to, and Management of, Slaves, in: FR 13, 1840, pp. 426f.; Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, The Slave Labor Problem in the Charleston District, in: *Political Science Quarterly* 22, 1907, p. 422.

7 Cf. Edmund Ruffin, *Nature's Management: Writings on Landscape and Reform, 1822-1859*, ed., Jack Temple Kirby, Athens, GA 2000, pp. xvii f.

8 Unsigned, Laborers for the South, in: *Southern Cultivator* [hereafter SC] 16, 1858, p. 235.

9 Cf. Alisse Portnoy, *Their Right to Speak: Women's Activism in the Indian and Slave Debates*, Cambridge 2005.

Thus the same ideological necessity to defend Southern slavery applied also to defending Indian removal. Justifications of dispossession connected expansion to the ability of white settlers to manage nature's gifts, including slaves. In the Hon. C. C. Clay 1853 homage to Alabama in the *American Cotton Planter* frontier and plantation were joined:

Alabama ... may truly triumph over her compeers as most worthy to bear the banner of Agriculture. ... she is a child in years, but yesterday reclaimed from the Indian, whose footprints are still visible in her virgin forests, how marvelous her past progress! How incalculable her future attainments! And yet, the plenitude of her riches, the magnitude of her power, and the brightness of her glory, are attributable to a single production of her soil – the cotton plant!<sup>10</sup>

The Indians, the theorist of planter paternalism George Fitzhugh argued in a proslavery tract, were "*feroe naturæ*" as "wild as those who met Columbus on the beach"; in a riposte to anti-removal forces, he added that the Indian "is doomed to extermination, and those who most sympathize with his fate would be the first to shoot him if they lived on the frontier". In a particularly fractured account, William S. Price wrote in 1853 "the Indians have had ample opportunity for improvement in the ... moral government of civilization; the protection of our government is and has been thrown around them ... sums of money have been appropriated to their use..., without any valuable consideration (so far as they are concerned) from them in return". Aid to Indians, Price significantly added, came out of "the properly directed labour of the African heathen", but "the result of all these efforts is, that they [Indians] are Indians yet, and are likely to continue such".<sup>11</sup>

If, as Alexander Saxton has posited, "white racism is essentially a theory of history" the offerings of proslavery theorists, often in plantation management journals, continually found ways to bring African and Indian histories together, and keep them apart, in mega-histories naturalizing and aggrandizing supposed white abilities to manage. Fitzhugh began with the Bible to ground Indian "extermination" and African slavery. The former group would vanish "like the races of Canaan", but Africans might survive since "God did not direct his chosen people to exterminate all races; such as were fit for slaves they were ordered to make slaves of". Fitzhugh brought history's long arc to the present: "Despite the mawkish sensibility of the age, practical men are ... pursuing the same course; they slay the Indians hip and thigh, as in the days of Moses and Joshua, and enslave the

10 Address of the Hon. C. C. Clay, in: *American Cotton Planter* [hereafter ACP] 3, 1855, p. 195.

11 *Ibid.*



negroes".<sup>12</sup> Price joined proslavery and the use of white abilities to husband nature and to civilize strikingly. "Now if it is the ... desire and ambition of civilized man to bring the things of the earth to a state of usefulness", he held, "how much more is it his duty to bring persons bearing his own physical (and probably mental) image purported to have descended from the same common stock, who are by millions roaming the earth's surface, as wild as beasts of the forest, without any ... usefulness, a terror to civilized men". Enslaving Africans was on this view the nurturant flip side of the white managerial genius that decimated Indians.<sup>13</sup>

### **Managing Reproduction: Claiming Paternalism and Success**

Managerial literature frequently regarded the slave as a product as well as a producer. Noteworthy for its innovations enabling subscribers to systematically study individual labor in cotton picking, *Affleck's Southern Rural Almanac and Plantation and Garden Calendar for 1854* nonetheless held "[a]s the business of cotton growing is now conducted, a planter's almost sole wealth consists in negroes". Historians of accountancy credit Thomas Affleck, the almanac's editor, with pioneering "depreciation techniques for human property".<sup>14</sup> Affleck insisted that "*a fine crop* consists first in an increase in the number, and a marked improvement in the condition and value of the negroes".<sup>15</sup> In 1855 the Louisiana overseer S. B. Raby took solace that "any deficiencies in the cane crop" would be more than compensated by births that increased "our crop of negroes" exemplifying, what the historian of sugar Richard Follett nicely calls the "coldly rational ethos of demographic management". South Carolina's Plowden C. J. Weston emphasized to overseers that they would be judged "[f]irst – by the general

12 Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America*, New York 2003, p. 390; Wm. S. Price, *Commercial Benefits of Slavery*, in: *ACP* 1, 1853, p. 355; George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society*, Richmond 1854, pp. 286f.

13 Price, *Commercial Benefits of Slavery*, 1853, p. 355; cf. David A. Chang, *The Color of the Land: Race, Nation, and the Politics of Landownership in Oklahoma, 1832-1929*, Chapel Hill, NC 2010, p. 23.

14 *Affleck's Southern Rural Almanac and Plantation and Garden Calendar for 1854*, Washington, MS n.d. 1854?, in the section for December at p. 51; Richard Fleischman and Thomas Tyson, *Accounting in Service to Racism: Monetizing Slave Property in the Antebellum South*, in: *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* 15, 2004.

15 William Kauffman Scarborough, *The Overseer: Plantation Management in the Old South*, Baton Rouge 1966, p. 70 quoting Affleck, cf. Phillips, *American*, pp. 261f.

well-being of the negroes ... the small amount of punishment; the excess of births over deaths; the small number of persons in hospitals, and the health of children".<sup>16</sup> The Carolina physician W. Fletcher Homes reasoned that since for upcountry planters "the principal value of the negro ... is his increase", medicine had a particular role to play in the accumulation of wealth. As the historian of medicine Sharla Fett argues, such a view made slave "soundness" a prized and priced "racialized commodity".<sup>17</sup>

Such concern for slave health, reproduction, and value caused many articles on the "management of negroes" to begin with an emphasis on adequate provisioning that imparts a paternalist and even munificent tone. Indeed if we understand paternalism in Walter Johnson's terms, as a regime of modern exploitation, the word perfectly fits both the munificence and the brutality of the advice literature. On the one hand the "first obligation" was to provide "suitable food and clothing". Presupposing hard work and the need for the young to grow strong, expert masters urged ample meal and meat and sometimes advised readers to provide "nutritious" (and cheap) vegetables such as "cabbage, kale, or mustard for greens ... squashes, Irish potatoes [and] in fall and winter sweet potatoes, turnips, pumpkins, and peas". Others warned that vegetables ought not be the excuse for "stinting" on other dietary staples. The importance of a good breakfast, in order to have the slave "remain diligently at work", struck a distinctly modern note. James Towns told *Southern Cultivator* readers that the "management of negroes" had to be done "with an eye to their health, their comfort, and their happiness [in] the master's interest".<sup>18</sup>

Often masters cast the tensions that led to high turnover among overseers in terms of the supposed inability of the latter group to take seriously the need to cultivate a "crop of negroes" as well as the crops in the ground. "Overseers are not interested in raising children, or meat [or] in improving land" ran a much-echoed lament in the *American Cotton Planter*. Despite the fact that overseers's pay did not involve a share of the agricultural com-

16 Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860*, Baton Rouge 2005, p. 69. The Weston text is included in John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseer, As Revealed in His Letters*, Northampton 1925, p. 31 and discussed in Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community*, Urbana, IL 1984, p. 51.

17 Sharla M. Fett, *Working Cures: Healing, Health, and Power on Southern Slave Plantations*, Chapel Hill, NC 2002, pp. 15, 27 (Homes), 18 ("racialized commodity").

18 Agricola, "Management of Slaves", *SC*, 13, June, 1855, p. 171; N. D. Guerry, *Management of Negroes – Duties of Masters*, in: *SC*, 28, 1860, p. 176; Robert Collins, *Essay on the Management of Slaves*, in: *De Bow's Review* [hereafter DR] 7, 1862, p. 155; James M. Towns, *Management of Negroes*, in: *SC* 9, 1851, p. 87.

modities produced, they continued to be accused of one-sidedly pursuing maximizing such production. Advice literature, overwhelmingly written by masters, provided constant reminders to overseers not to punish "negroes" in anger or with passion. The *American Cotton Planter's* discussion of the "duties of overseers", for example, reminded, "[n]ever display yourself before [slaves] in a passion; and even if inflicting the severest punishment, do so in a mild, cool manner", using the whip "slowly and deliberately". Indeed so persistent are these tropes and so slight was the material basis for overseers to behave in such counter-(re)productive ways, that it seems possible that hired managers picked up on that fact that planters themselves, whatever their protestations, would fire overseers more quickly when the crop suffered than when the slaves did and perhaps projected their own lack of control in inflicting punishment onto those below.<sup>19</sup>

Expert paternalist management further insisted on connecting slaves and animals. In an important 1855 contribution to *De Bow's Review* on the "Management of Slaves", John A. Calhoun argued that if "it is a matter which pertains to the interest of northern agricultural societies to attend well to the improvement of their lands, and the improvement and comfort of their stock ... how much more important it is for us to turn our attention to the best means of governing our slaves".<sup>20</sup> Even as the master-manager's self-interested paternalism has a distinctly modern and therapeutic tone, it consistently and logically cohabited with the most pernicious aspects of proslavery ideology and practice. The soft discourse of concern, sincerely delivered and materially (if shallowly) rooted, blunted abolitionist critiques. However, concern with improving the value of "the negro" connected as well to the harshest incarnations of white supremacy, grounded in comparisons of slaves to livestock, made to be raised, improved and bred. Care by the master was necessary, Fitzhugh wrote, because "not a single negro was ever reclaimed from his savage state till he was caught, tied, tamed and domesticated like the wild ox or the wild horse".<sup>21</sup>

19 Cf. MWP to American Cotton Planter: Plantation Economy, in: ACP 1, 1853, p. 377; A Subscriber, Overseers, in: ACP 2, 1854, p. 150; Jacob Metzger, Rational Management, Modern Business Practices, and the Economies of Scale in Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations, in: *Explorations in Economic History* 12, 1975, pp. 125-127; Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, New York 1974, pp. 13f.; Unsigned, The Duties of an Overseer, in: ACP, 1854, p. 355.

20 John A. Calhoun and others, Management of Slaves, in: DR 18, 1855, p. 713. Cf. Unsigned, Management of Slaves and & c., in: FR 5, 1838, pp. 32f. [Note that De Bow's Review slightly changed titles over the years but I cite all as DR below.]

21 Fitzhugh, *Sociology*, p. 287.

J.W. Pitts more strikingly put a softer paternalism and the animality of slaves side-by-side. "The surest and best method of managing negroes", he held, "is to love them". His reasoning continued, "[w]e know, from a thousand experiments, that if we love our horse ... he will become gentle, docile and obedient". The "same effect" worked the same magic "upon sheep, cattle, dogs, the lion, the elephant, bird, fish [!]" and servants. James Towns described the payoff of his managerial liberality as follows: "a negro shows when he is well-fed as readily as a horse; and mine look slick and greasy, and they work lively and are cheerful and happy".<sup>22</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted learned of the practice under which a planter sent "rascally" slaves "South for the alleviation of their complaint" as, it was said, one would with "a horse" seen as troublesome. We are tempted to read this as mere brutality but in doing so it is necessary to underline that it is a brutality that was fully congruent with paternalism's use of sale as its moment of force and the animal world as the place it put the slave. When managers discoursed on "negroes" and "hogs" together, they did not necessarily abjure paternalism.<sup>23</sup>

Of course paternalism was not the only stop of such animalizing comparisons. Thus the *Southern Cultivator* praised the new owner of a failing plantation for one day shooting many sickly livestock in order to demonstrate his ruthlessness to workers, while promising to kill 150 underperforming slaves the next day. The master then staged a contrived consultation with an overseer who "persuaded" him to spare the slaves, agreeing to let them live for an eighteen-month probationary period, allegedly producing great reforms. But even this drama was not seen by the author of the account as incompatible with informed, modern management. He assured readers that such a feigned stay of execution to produce "a new spirit of industry" among the slaves did not constitute effective brutality since "the Creator seems to have planted in the negro an innate principle of protection against the abuse of arbitrary power".<sup>24</sup>

Paternalist management intersected most tragically with the animalizing of slaves in the realm of reproduction. The *American Cotton Planter* featured an ad appealing to the desire of masters for the slave woman who could "breed like a cat". Although advertisements for slaves frequently re-

22 Jno. W. Pitts, Best Method of Managing Negroes, in: SC 18, 1860, p. 325; Towns, Management, p. 87.

23 Cf. Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveler's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States, 1853-1861*, New York 1996, orig. 1861, p. 248; Ulrich Bonnell Phillips and James David Glunt, eds., *Florida Plantation Records from the Papers of George Noble Jones*, St. Louis 1927, pp. 154f.

24 Unsigned, Revolutionizing a Plantation, in: SC 16, 1858, p. 346.

ferred to reproduction, propriety and politics kept direct consideration of methods of breeding confined to private writings of planters. What was broadcast, as U. B. Phillips unapologetically chronicled, was that masters particularly extended their paternalistic "care of negroes" to "breeding wenches". Glorifying in the special adaptability of "Guinea's" inhabitants for labor in the South specifically referred to reproductive labor as well as agricultural production; African women were said to be "naturally fit" for both.<sup>25</sup>

Attempts to balance reproductive and agricultural labor captured how partial and sanctimonious paternalism could be. Planters sometimes – ex-slaves also recorded the barbaric punishments of pregnant and nursing slaves – granted new mothers a short respite from field work, allowed them to work in more nearby parts of the fields, avoided their exposure to "low damp tide lands", or placed them together with pre-partum women in a special "sucklers' gang". If, as Richard Follett argues, "slave women faced a master class who attempted to manipulate their sexual lives to optimize reproduction", such manipulation was often wrapped up with paternalism. Pregnancy could be encouraged and coerced, since promiscuity and infecundity were seen as connected, through the policing of slave women's sex lives. The rules on P. C. Weston's rice estate in 1856 granted all of every Saturday off for any slave woman "with six children alive at any *one* time". While this rule bordered on raising the question of breeding, it also potentially addressed the work on social reproduction done by slave mothers long after birth. Slave memories could be much more stark, as in one case in which emancipation was promised after a dozen live births, but the woman approaching that reward died while pregnant with her twelfth child. Conversely, as Marie Jenkins Schwartz shows, barren women faced requirements for more labor, sometimes being held to the standard of men on the plantation. The threat of sale faced childless women with special force.<sup>26</sup>

25 Phillips, *American*, pp. 261f.; Stephanie M.H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, Chapel Hill, NC 2004, p. 63; Pamela D. Bridgewater, *Ain't I a Slave: Slavery, Reproductive Abuse and Reparations*, in: *UCLA Women's Law Journal* 14, 2005, p. 122, n. 166 ("cat") and pp. 89-162. On advertisements as a public discourse in which capacity for reproduction was prominently mentioned, see Gerald Norde, *From Genesis to Phoenix: The Breeding of Slaves During the Domestic Slave Era, 1837-1863, and Its Consequences*, Unpublished PhD diss. University of Delaware 1985, esp. p. 109.

26 Cf. Joyner, *Down*, p. 45; Scarborough, *Overseer*, p. 70; Fett, *Working*, p. 176; John Hebron Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom in the Old Southwest, Mississippi, 1770-1860*, Baton Rouge 1988, p. 84; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old*

Masters acted with sound, if awful, managerial logic. When Lincoln told an 1860 audience that value of U.S. slaves was two billion dollars he may have underestimated a billion dollars or more in a year when the value of the cotton crop was just over \$200 million. Indeed from 1810 forward women's reproductive labor probably produced more value than was realized through production, though their value of course ultimately depended on profitable production.<sup>27</sup> The "increase" continually increased making what Adrienne Davis has called the "sexual economy of American slavery" the greatest success story in plantation management, until emancipation happily undermined that story and the wealth of planters.<sup>28</sup>

Indeed the total failure of the slave system, which died amidst what Du Bois called a "general strike" of the slaves, has made it difficult to appreciate the powerful intersectional appeals of a proslavery white managerial ideology that embedded the management of field labor within discourse on the fostering of reproduction and the husbanding of land recently held by Indians. Walter Johnson's important work on the ways in which the paternalism of the master class reflected the logic of society based on the slave market – and the need to produce more and more slaves, bearing less marks of violence responses to slave resistance for that market – is helpful here.<sup>29</sup>

Such paternalism, however much its close association to the trade in bodies and breeding of babies left it open to abolitionist attack, was mod-

South, Chapel Hill, NC 1988, pp. 187-190; on sucklers' gangs, see Phillips, *American*, p. 264; Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 189-191, 224f. and esp. pp. 17-20 establishes how mixed the record of making post-natal concessions regarding labor could be as does Angela Davis, *Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves*, in: Joy James, ed., *The Angela Davis Reader*, Malden, MA 1998, p. 117; John R. Commons and others, *A Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, 10 v. New York, 1958, orig. 1909, p. 1:122 [emphasis original]; Bridgewater, *Ain't I a Slave*, p. 122, n. 168 ["dozen"].

27 Cf. James L. Huston, *Calculating the Value of the Union: Slavery, Property Rights, and the Economic Origins of the Civil War*, Chapel Hill, NC 2003, esp. p. 116 (Lincoln), pp. 28-32 and p. 292, n. 7; Douglass C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1961, p. 233; Roger L. Ransom, *The Economics of the Civil War*, *EH.Net Encyclopedia*, Robert Whaples, ed., 2001.

28 Cf. Adrienne Davis, 'Don't Let Nobody Bother Yo' Principle': The Sexual Economy of American Slavery, in: Sharon Harley and the Black Women and Work Collective, eds., *Sister Circle: Black Women and Work*, New Brunswick, NJ 2002, pp. 103-127. See also Zillah Eisenstein, *Against Empire: Feminisms, Racism, and the West*, London 2004, pp. 85-91.

29 Cf. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction*, p. 55; Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life in the Antebellum Slave Market*, Cambridge 1999, pp. 142-162 and *passim*.

ern, market-driven and heartfelt enough to convince planters and Northern allies that slavery was not so different and deadly a system after all and that it paid off spectacularly. Belief in white settler colonialism's role in maximizing the profits drawn from land was shared with the North and also gave the defense of slavery purpose and plausibility for a time. Indeed these two intersecting advantages of the slave South ideologically arguably worked too well. Even absent an Atlantic slave trade rates of reproduction were sufficiently great that a slave system pre-empting much of the free (that is, Indian) land in the West became enough of a possibility that neither an argument for the miracles of efficiently managed slave reproduction, nor the prepossessing ability of plantation agriculture to husband the land held much appeal for Northern farmers and industrialists coveting that same region.

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## **A 'Race' in the Making**

### **Robert Knox and the Racialisation of the Irish in Nineteenth-Century British Anthropology**

Iris Wigger

Recent scholarly debates about anti-Irish discrimination demonstrate the ideological complexity and vacillating character of British perceptions of Irish people in the nineteenth century. Reinforcing a long tradition of Irish stereotypes in British colonial history and conveying these to modern society, Victorian anthropologists and other scientists made considerable efforts to update and revive older stereotypes of the 'wild Irish' by embedding them in newly developed hierarchical systems of racial classification. The Irish were racialised as a distinct 'race' in scientific discourses on human difference, and deemed inferior to the alleged virtues of a superior Anglo-Saxon 'race'. British intellectuals speculated about the uncivilised character of the Irish, labelled them as savages, and openly doubted their fitness for self-government. At the same time political conflict, the crisis of British rule in Ireland, and the immigration of Irish people to Britain led to them being denounced as a dangerous, contaminating underclass. This chapter reflects on the important contribution of the Victorian anatomist and notorious race theorist Robert Knox to this debate. Discussing Knox's ideas in wider social and historical context, I argue that his representation of the Irish Celt as a degenerated 'race' that was destined to die out, and had to be 'forced from the soil', resonates discursively with wider convictions in British Anthropological circles and hierarchical theories of racial difference and racial degeneration in the European Enlightenment. At the same time Knox's perception of the Irish needs to be interpreted within the context of Anglo-Irish political history and conflict. It was embedded in wider attempts to ideologically integrate a society, deeply divided by social inequalities, through the construction, discrimination and exclusion of 'Others'.

## **A 'Race' in the Making**

Stereotypical representations of the Irish have a complex and long history in British society, and have been the subject of intensive academic discussion for decades. The nineteenth century is of particular interest for the analysis of these representations, as a period in which the Irish and Irishness became a frequent subject of political and scholarly controversy in Britain as well as a popular butt of comic discourse. Ireland's political struggle against British rule and Anglo-Irish relations were "[v]iewed through the cloudy lense of age-old stereotyping of the wild Irish".<sup>1</sup> Older stereotypes ascribing a culturally primitive and uncivilised character to the Irish were embedded and modernised in Victorian debates on Irishness,

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings. Discourse on the Extinction of Primitive Races, 1800-1930*, Ithaca etc. 2003, p. 100.

and formed a constitutive element in the social construction of an "Irish race" in scholarly discourses of this period.

Michael de Nie has shown how race in the nineteenth century became "a metalanguage in Anglo-Saxonist discourse, a vehicle for expressing multiple anxieties and preconceptions" and how in the course of this, "racialized conceptions of the Irish"<sup>2</sup> spread in British society. With the rise of Enlightenment discourses on human diversity and a new scientific racism in nineteenth century Europe, long established debates about Ireland and the "Irish Question" in British politics and public discourse became gradually accompanied by scholarly enquiries into "the Irish character". In this process existing representations of the Irish in British society were embedded in academic debates to be modernised, reinforced and re-interpreted by different scholars, who argued that Irishness was – not least – a question of "race" and racial difference.

Focusing on the pivotal role of anthropological discussions in this process, this chapter explores through historical cultural analysis Victorian scholarly attempts to create and establish the idea of an "Irish race" essentially different from that of the Anglo-Saxon English, and shows how in this process markers of difference based on perceptions of race, nation, culture, religion and class were combined and, in concert, acted to reinforce one another. I will also consider in what ways this discourse on Irishness was influenced by Anglo-Irish political history, Irish immigration to England, and wider scholarly debates on human difference and "race" in the European Enlightenment.

Academic attempts to examine Irish discrimination in British history give an insight into the multi-faceted character of British attitudes towards the Irish. British society in the nineteenth century widely referred to them as savages, and stigmatised them as an intellectually inferior "primitive type" or "race". The Irish were represented not only as a "wild and barbaric" people, but also – in the context of the crisis of British rule in Ireland and mass migration – as a dangerous and contaminating class. Previous extensive research into the subject points towards the ideological complexity of representations of the Irish in England public discourse.<sup>3</sup> Some

2 Michael De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy. Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882*, Madison 2004, pp. 5f.

3 Main studies on the subject include Lewis Perry Curtis Jr., *Apes And Angels. The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, 2nd ed., Washington etc. 1997; Richard Ned Lebow, *White Britain and Black Ireland. The Influence of Stereotypes on Colonial Policy*, Philadelphia 1976; Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race. Vol. 1 (Racial Oppression and Social Control)*, London etc. 1994; Michael De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*; Roy F. Foster, *Paddy & Mr Punch. Connections in Irish and English History*, London 1995; Noel Ignatiev, *How The*

scholars, most prominently Roy Foster, rightly emphasise the importance of political history, religion and class for British perceptions of the Irish.<sup>4</sup> Others raise considerations about the Irish becoming subjected to a process of "racialised 'othering'" in the Victorian era.<sup>5</sup> While several studies focus on different spheres of British public and political discourse, such as the media and press, political debates and colonial policy, representations of Irishness in British academic discussions do widely remain a subject in need of further in-depth study.

**"[T]he source of all evil lies in the race, the Celtic race of Ireland" – Robert Knox and the Racialisation of the Irish in British Anthropology**

With the intention of reducing this gap in research, my chapter investigates to which extent perceptions of the Irish in Victorian Britain were subjected to the "all encompassing categorisation project" of the Enlightenment.<sup>6</sup> Academic interest in Ireland and Irishness then spread across different scientific disciplines, including economy, history, anatomy, and political sciences. They also became a prominent subject in the newly developing scientific field of anthropology. It gained increasing prominence as a "specialized intellectual enterprise" in nineteenth century Britain and wider Europe. Part of a newly emerging class of intellectuals, British anthropologists – often considering themselves "men of affairs", promoted the "practical value" of their research as a reform-oriented science, and contributed to wider political and social debates of their time.<sup>7</sup> The Anthropological Society of London, for example, had the reputation to "consciously mix science and politics".<sup>8</sup>

- Irish Became White, New York etc. 1995 and Edward G. Lengel, *The Irish Through British Eyes. Perceptions of Ireland in the Famine Era*, Westport 2002.
- 4 Foster, Paddy & Mr Punch, p. 192; see also Sheridan Gilley, *English Attitudes to the Irish in England 1780-1900*, in: Colin Holmes, ed., *Immigrants and Minorities in British Society*, London 1978, pp. 81-110.
  - 5 Michael Pickering, *Stereotyping. The Politics of Representation*, Basingstoke 2001, p. 137. For a similar argument see e.g. Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black. Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*, New Haven etc. 2001; Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*; De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*.
  - 6 Steve Garner, *Racism in the Irish Experience*, London 2004, p. 9.
  - 7 Henrika Kuklick, *The Savage Within. The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 5 (enterprise), (men of affairs), 7 (practical value).
  - 8 Ronald Rainger, *Race, Politics, and Science: The Anthropological Society of London in the 1860s*, in: *Victorian Studies* 22, 1, 1978, pp. 51-70, here p. 51.

Different Victorian anthropologists showed a keen interest in and curiosity about the Irish which closely corresponded with their discipline's considerable conceptual efforts to promote an increasingly racialised idea of the Anglo-Saxons. George W. Stocking has discussed how "[b]y the early nineteenth century, Anglo-Saxonism had begun to take on a more distinctly racial meaning, with the emphasis ... on the common Teutonic origin that separated all Englishmen from their Celtic neighbors". Emphasising the crucial role of anthropology and ethnology in developing a concept of Anglo-Saxon identity defined "in explicitly 'racial' terms", he has shown how by the mid-nineteenth century the concept of an "Anglo-Saxon 'race'" had turned into "an intellectual commonplace".<sup>9</sup> Many educated Victorians were familiar with the "'racial' history of the British nation", believed to be of Anglo-Saxon descent, and different historians promoted the view that the history of England could be read as "a triumph of Saxon values, a victory of superior racial character". The notion of an Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic ancestry of the English enabled them to "deny links with the Celtic peoples"<sup>10</sup> and the "belief in Anglo-Saxon racial superiority" became "a vital ingredient in English and American thought" in this period.<sup>11</sup>

In the course of the nineteenth century traditional Irish stereotypes in British society became increasingly grounded in "racial and evolutionary criteria".<sup>12</sup> Growing anthropological interest in the Irish and "[t]he Race Question in Ireland"<sup>13</sup> is documented not only in contemporary publications in the field of physical and racial anthropology by established

- 9 George W. Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology*, New York 1991, p. 62.
- 10 James Urry, *Englishmen, Celts, and Iberians. The Ethnographic Survey of the United Kingdom, 1892-1899*, in: George W. Stocking, Jr., *Functionalism Historicized. Essays on British Anthropology. History of Anthropology Vol. 2*, Madison 1984, pp. 83-105, here pp. 83 (racial character), 84 (Celtic peoples); cf. Asa Briggs, *Saxons, Normans and Victorians*. Bexhill-on-Sea 1966.
- 11 Reginald Horsman, *Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism in Great Britain Before 1850*, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37, 3, 1976, pp. 387-410, here p. 387. On British Racism in the context of Anglo-Irish Racism, see also Seamus P. Metress, *British Racism and Its Impact on Anglo-Irish Relations*, in: Larry T. Reynolds and Leonard Lieberman, eds., *Race and Other Misadventures: Essays in Honor of Ashley Montagu in His Ninetieth Year*, New York 1996, pp. 50-63; on Anglo-Irish relations and anti-Irish stereotyping see also John Solomos, *Race and Racism in Britain*, 3rd ed., Houndmills 2003, pp. 36-40.
- 12 Urry, *Englishmen*, p. 84. Urry is referring to Lewis P. Curtis, Jr., *Apes and Angels*, Washington 1997. On the perceptions of the Irish and Irishness in race theories of the period, see also Peter J. Bowler, *Race Theory and the Irish*, in: Séamas Ó Síocháin, ed., *Social Thought on Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*, Dublin 2009, pp. 135-146.
- 13 J. W. Jackson, *The Race Question in Ireland*, in: *Anthropological Review* 7, 24, 1869, pp. 54-76, here p. 54.

scholars,<sup>14</sup> but also in a large number of journal articles, different topical debates and research papers published by the two leading British academic societies in the field: the Anthropological Society of London (founded in 1863) and the older Ethnological Society of London (founded in 1843), both merging into the Anthropological Institute in 1871. The societies' journals reflect anthropologically designed enquiries into the status and characteristics of the Celtic and the Saxon races and "the Race Elements of the Irish People".<sup>15</sup> Prominent members presented research papers on the "ethnographical position and elements of the Irish people"<sup>16</sup> and speculated about the "Keltic race" as an "amalgamation of races differing physiologically but dominated by a common moral and intellectual character"<sup>17</sup> or assumed with reference to the "Irishman" "a lengthened residence of the progenitors of the race in Northern Africa".<sup>18</sup>

Despite some critical voices in their own ranks, considering "arguments about the difference between Anglo-Saxons and Celts ... a mere sham and delusion", prominent scholars such as John Beddoe "maintain[ed] that the Irish, as a race, differ from the English", or perceived "racial elements" to distinguish different types of the "Keltic race".<sup>19</sup>

I will in this chapter focus on the contributions of a distinct and highly influential Victorian scholar to this debate: Robert Knox, who has been described as a "key figure in the general Western movement towards a dog-

14 Cf. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, Chapter 6.

15 Anonymous, Knox on the Celtic Race, in: *Anthropological Review* 6, 21, 1868, pp. 175-191 and Anonymous, Knox on the Saxon Race, in: *Anthropological Review* 6, 22, 1868, pp. 257-279; George H. Kinahan, On the Race Elements of the Irish People. Abstract, in: *Journal of the Anthropological Society* 8, 1870-1871, pp. clxxxi f., here p. clxxxii.

16 John Beddoe, The Kelts of Ireland, in: *Journal of Anthropology* 2, 1870, pp. 116-129, here p. 117; this article was based on a research paper Beddoe read before the Anthropological Society of London on 14 June 1870.

17 Archibald H. Sayce, Address to the Anthropological Section of the British Association of Manchester, in: *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 17, 1888, pp. 166-181, here p. 176. Sayce was a leading anthropologist of the period, president of this section, and took up a Chair in Assyriology at the University of Oxford in 1891.

18 A. L. Lewis, The Peoples Inhabiting the British Isles (Research Paper), *Journal of the Anthropological Society* 8, 1870-1871, pp. xxxiv-xi, here p. xxxiv.

19 Anonymous, Professor Huxley on Political Ethnology, in: *Anthropological Review* 8, 1870, pp. 197-204, here p. 203 (shame and delusion); John Beddoe, Anthropology And Politics: Kelts and Saxons. To the Editor of the Standard, in: *Anthropological Review* 8, 1870, pp. 211-213, here p. 213 (race); Sayce, Anthropological Section, p. 176 (racial elements).

matic pseudo-scientific racism".<sup>20</sup> I will investigate his construction of the "Irish Celt" as a "race apart" from the English Saxon, reflect on its reception in British Anthropological circles and discuss Knox's racialised ideas in wider social and historical contexts.<sup>21</sup>

Robert Knox, infamous anatomist and race thinker of the Victorian period, was, as many of his contemporaries, convinced that cultural attributes and differences between people were determined by biological or racial factors. Developing his key ideas on race in the 1840s, he can be seen as one of the "pioneers of racist theory".<sup>22</sup> Together with others in the field of physical anthropology, Knox promoted the study of "racial differences in a ... strictly physical way", while advocating a hierarchical and polygenist concept of race. He is known as a scholar "arguing hereditarian racial doctrine to the extreme"<sup>23</sup> and was acclaimed "a leading scientific anatomist" and "finest British anatomy teacher of his generation"<sup>24</sup> by some of his peers. He was also a highly controversial figure, who was forced to leave his native city of Edinburgh over his radical viewpoints and public anger concerning his connection with the notorious bodysnatchers William Burke and William Hare, from whom Knox bought a larger number of dead bodies to be used as anatomical specimen.<sup>25</sup> After failing to acquire an academic chair in Edinburgh, he made a living mainly from public lecturing, writings for different academic journals and also became involved in setting up "popular ethnological shows" displaying "human zoos" of exotic peoples.<sup>26</sup>

Knox, a member of the Ethnological Society of London since 1843, was sure that in human history "race, or hereditary descent, is everything" and

20 Alan W. Bates, *The Anatomy Of Robert Knox. Murder, Mad Science and Medical Regulation in Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh*, Eastbourne 2010, p. 125 (citing Philip Curtin, *The Image of Africa*, London 1964, p. 377).

21 These findings are part of my wider research project on stereotypical representations of the Irish and anti-Irish racism in Nineteenth Century British academia.

22 Michael D. Biddiss, *The Politics of Anatomy: Dr Robert Knox and Victorian Racism* (Research Paper 5. November 1975), in: *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 69, April 1976, pp. 245-250, here p. 247. Biddiss offers a good introduction to and critical reflection of Knox's life and race theory.

23 Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, pp. 64f.

24 Bates, *Robert Knox*, p. 2.

25 Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, p. 64, see also Bates, *Robert Knox*, Chapter 7, and Wulf D. Hund, *Die Körper der Bilder der Rassen. Wissenschaftliche Leichenschändung und rassistische Entfremdung*, in: id., ed., *Entfremdete Körper. Rassismus als Leichenschändung*, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 13-79, here pp. 44-46; Hund, *Rassismus*, pp. 74.

26 Bates, *Robert Knox*, p. 122.

"stamps the man".<sup>27</sup> He promoted this racially deterministic perspective famously in his highly influential book *The Races of Men* (first published in 1850), a publication based on a series of public lectures he gave in England. His book, in his own words an attempt to examine man's "Zoological History",<sup>28</sup> demonstrates that for him race influenced not just "skin colour, skull shape, or other anatomical characteristics" but also determined "human behaviour, history and politics".<sup>29</sup> Knox traced "human character, individual, social, national, to the all-pervading, unalterable, physical character of race"<sup>30</sup> and saw history as a "race-war" between progressive and stagnated races. As many of his contemporaries, he insisted that the former were "light" and the latter "dark".<sup>31</sup> Making out considerable differences between the European races, Knox developed a "Saxon race myth" in a comparative account of the "Scandinavian or Saxon race" and the "Celtic race".<sup>32</sup> To him the Saxon was simply "the dominant race on the earth", endowed with a wide-range of "moral and physical characteristics" that seek to "distinguish him from all other races of men".<sup>33</sup>

Insignia of this proposed Saxon racial superiority included a broad range of qualities, that made the Saxon race stand out from all others. Knox represented the Saxon as a man of enterprise, industry and labour, destined and well equipped to represent the modern capitalist world and the liberal values of modern society. Praising his "concept for art, his abhorrence for theory" and "acquisitive and applicative genius", his "inordinate self-esteem" and "love of independence", Knox concluded that the Saxon was "the only race which truly comprehends the meaning of the word lib-

27 Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment*. [With Supplementary Chapters.], 2nd ed., London 1862. On Knox's membership see Bates, Robert Knox, p. 114.

28 Knox, *Races*, p. 1.

29 Bates, Robert Knox, p. 124. Bates' discussion of the *Races of Men* remains widely uncritical, and assumes that Knox's writings did not promote a vision of "Saxon supremacy" (*ibid.*, p. 129). An earlier biography of Knox by Isobel Rae is similarly uncritical of the underlying racist implications of Knox's work, cf. Isobel Rae, *Knox the Anatomist*, Edinburgh 1964. For a more critical discussion of Knox and the *Races of Men*, see for example Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, pp. 62-65; Horsman, *Racial Anglo-Saxonism*, pp. 405-407; Hund, *Bilder der Rassen*, pp. 44-46; Biddiss, *Politics of Anatomy*, p. 246; Bowler, *Race Theory*, pp. 138f.

30 Knox, *Races*, p. 21.

31 Hund, *Bilder der Rassen*, p. 45. This translation and any other translations are my own.

32 Alan T. Davies, *Infected Christianity: A History of Modern Racism*, Montreal 1988, cited in Bates, Robert Knox, p. 128.

33 Knox, *Races*, pp. 9f.



erty". Their inherent "hatred for dynasties and governments" supposedly rendered them "democrats by their nature".<sup>34</sup>

Saxon racial supremacy was a complex construct. It was built on the idea, in Knox's words, that the Saxon was "[t]houghtful, plodding, industrious beyond all other races, a lover of labour for labour's sake". Thereby Knox represented him as a motor for and master of enterprise and productive labour, stressing the Saxon's keenness to do work profitably, and making him physically "large handed, mechanical" and mentally "a lover of order, of punctuality in business, of neatness and cleanliness". Conceding that he might lack other talents like taste in art and music, what counted was that in "these qualities no race approaches him".<sup>35</sup>

Such allegedly exquisite Saxon mental qualities were supposed to be grounded in the physical character of the race. Saxons therefore had to be "under all circumstances, ... a tall, powerful, athletic race of men; the strongest, as a race, on the face of the earth". And even though they did not really seem "a well made or proportioned race", Knox had no doubt that they were of supreme racial stock, situated at the top of the racial hierarchy. In accordance with the coeval nomenclature and discriminatory tool kit of modern race classification and its colour-coding, he constructed the Saxons accordingly as a race of "fair hair, with blue eyes, and so fine a complexion, that they may almost be considered the only absolutely fair race on the face of the globe".<sup>36</sup> Such categorisation resonates with broader academic and popular efforts in the development of modern race-thinking in the eighteen and nineteen hundreds to make Whiteness a core signifier of racial superiority and prerequisite of modern civilisation, while degrading, discriminating against, and systematically excluding non-white people as "sub-humans" from full personhood, civility and progress in modern society.<sup>37</sup>

Knox's radical polygenist thought proposed that human races would not change in character, but were essentially permanent types, some of them even representing different species. His proposition that characteristics of human groups including their religion, civilisation, and culture were "tracing all to the eternal, unalterable qualities of race" was shared by many of

34 Ibid., p. 46.

35 Ibid., pp. 53f.

36 Ibid., pp. 50f.

37 Cf. Wulf D. Hund, *Die weiße Norm: Grundlagen des Farbrassismus*, in: Max S. Hering Torres, ed., *Cuerpos Anómalos*, Bogotá 2008, pp. 171-203; see also id., *Rassismus*, pp. 68-74, 99-109; and for an in-depth analysis of 'Whiteness' and Racism id., Jeremy Krikler, David Roediger, eds., *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, Berlin etc. 2010.

his fellow scientists, and became an increasingly popular, and from the mid of the nineteenth century dominant view in Western academia.<sup>38</sup>

While some scholars were optimistic about the chances to convert and civilise so-called low races, investigating the influence of the environment (for example the climate) on racial development and transformation, Knox considered the "possible conversion of one race into another ... a statement contradicted by all history". Race was to him a primeval category. Therefore the Saxon always remained a Saxon, regardless where he lived, just as "the Celt will prove a Celt, wherever he is born, wherever he is found". Such beliefs were ideologically grounded in the conviction that through the course of human history "the races of men have been absolutely the same".<sup>39</sup>

This racial dogma also applied to what Knox considered "two races of men in Britain and in Ireland". He composed the "Saxon-English" and the "Irish Celt" as opposing forces and distinct races, that despite their intertwined history would not mix, but maintain their racial difference. Ireland, in Knox's view, was a place where "700 years of absolute possession has not advanced by a single step the amalgamation of the Irish Celt with the Saxon-English". The "Irish Celt" was supposed "as distinct from the Saxon" as centuries ago.<sup>40</sup>

Knox was accused of having created an "overdrawn and exaggerated" image of the Irish, but insisted he had "the highest regard and esteem" for them. His "facts" about the Irish Celts, however, diminished them as a backward and degenerated race without any potential for modern progress or development – a race predestined for extinction. Having set up the Saxon-English race as civilised, cultivated, prospering and continuously advancing industry, he insisted that the Irish Celt lacked any of those qualities essential for life in the modern world: Showing no potential for development whatsoever, "the Celtic race in Ireland" appeared racially in decline, in a state of "quiet and gradual extinction".<sup>41</sup> Such speculations were ideologically fuelled by the rise of a Western discourse on eugenics in the late nineteenth century. It was linked to the development of Social Darwinism in the late 1850s and eugenics as a new scientific discipline in the 1880s, becoming increasingly popular in academia, politics and among societal

38 Knox, *Races*, p. 10; Audrey Smedley provides an impressive and insightful analysis of this shift from monogenist to polygenist race theories in nineteenth-century Western thought, cf. Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America. Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 2nd ed., Boulder 1999, Chapter 10.

39 Knox, *Races*, pp. 20 (conversion, Celt), 36 (races of men).

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 21 (two races), 18 (Saxon-English, Irish Celt, 700 years), 69 (Irish Celt, Saxon).

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 25 (overdrawn, regard, facts), 27 (Celtic race, gradual extinction).

elites. Eugenic discussions considered questions of "Racial Hygiene", condemned racial mixture between white and non-white races as leading to the racial degeneration of the former, and were applied in Western colonial and domestic policy. A core idea of this eugenicist discourse was that allegedly primitive races were unfit for civilisation and thus destined to die out / soon become extinct – just as the Irish Celts according to Knox.<sup>42</sup> Echoing such wider concerns over racial mixture and degeneration, he attributed a lack of racial purity to the Celt in general, claiming that he would readily mix and intermarry with non-white people, lacking "that antipathy to the dark races which so peculiarly characterise[s] the Saxon".<sup>43</sup>

Knox thereby linked the anticipated racial extinction of the Irish Celt closely to alleged racial qualities of the inferior Celt in general. With "a look at Ireland", and particularly pessimistic about the state of its inhabitants, he constructed the "dark side" of the "Celtic character" made up by "[f]urious fanaticism; a love of war and disorder; a hatred for order and patient industry; no accumulative habits; restless, treacherous, uncertain". Such lack of civilised and industrious qualities and order clearly seemed to manifest themselves in "[t]he horrible degeneration of the Celtic population of Ireland".<sup>44</sup>

Knox considered the Celt as such not only "in stature and weight, as a race, inferior to the Saxon", but also suggested a Celtic lack of industrial spirit, productivity, order and neatness, all of which he associated with the latter. With view to France, he acknowledged his imagination and inventive qualities, recognising that some Celts developed an acquired taste of the arts. However, when it came to "the ordinary affairs of life" Knox accused the Celtic race of "despis[ing] order, economy, cleanliness" and thus unfit for "productive labour", which it was known to oppose with "absolute horror and contempt".<sup>45</sup>

Just as other allegedly inferior races the Celtic race was moreover charged with a lack of any original culture, civilisation and rational self-

42 For an in-depth discussion of the discourse on the extinction of 'primitive races', see Brantlinger, *Dark Vanishings*; for the genesis of Social Darwinism/eugenics see Michael Banton, *Racial Theories*, 2nd ed., Cambridge 1998, Chapter 4; Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, Oxford etc. 2010, especially Chapters 1 and 2; Thomas McCarthy, *Race, Empire, and the Idea of Human Development*, Cambridge 2009, Chapter 3; for a discussion of racism and eugenics see also Steve Garner, *Racism*, p. 13; John Solomos and Les Back, *Racism and Society*, Houndmills 1996, pp. 42-45; Smedley, *Race*, pp. 267, 285-287.

43 Knox, *Races*, pp. 74f.

44 *Ibid.*, pp. 26 (look), (dark, Celtic, furious fanaticism), 328 (degeneration).

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 319f.

discipline. Knox attributed different racialised markers of cultural primitivity to it in order to establish that the peoples/races living in "Celtic Wales, Ireland, and Scotland" remained "profoundly ignorant". He insisted that "[a]s a race, the Celt has no literature, nor any printed books in his original language" and argued "[t]here never was any Celtic literature, nor science, nor arts". Even the more civilised modern French Celt had merely "borrowed" their cultural achievements "from the Roman and Greek".<sup>46</sup> Additionally, his seemingly strong emotions and lack of control over them, rendered the Celt unfit for the requirements of modern society, threatening its social nexus. Classified as "[i]rascible, warmhearted, full of deep sympathies" Celts to Knox were essentially "uncertain", "treacherous" "dreamers on the past", "not more courageous than other races, but ... more warlike".<sup>47</sup>

Thus Knox's discussion associated the Celtic race with several vicious, primitive, and dangerous qualities, in opposition to, and threatening the virtues and prosperity of, civilised Saxon England. The Saxon meant to represent "order, wealth, comfort", the Celt "disorder, riot, destruction, waste", as he was "[a] despiser of the peaceful arts, of labour, of order, and of the law". In the light of such representation, existing Anglo-Irish political conflicts and Irish protests against British colonial rule in Ireland could be de-contextualised and re-interpreted in racialised terms, as an expression of the alleged vices and violent character of the Celtic race. Unsurprisingly, Knox regarded the Celt in urgent need of direction and control through Saxon rule. The "Celtic race cannot too soon escape from under Saxon rule". Hence a "bayonet government" seemed "the only suitable for the Celtic man". Ireland for him was "not a colony, but merely a country held by force of arms, like India; a country inhabited by another race".<sup>48</sup>

Making this racial antagonism between the Celts and Saxons the urgent core of contemporary British political affairs, Knox promoted the idea that "the real momentous question for England, as a *nation*" was "the presence of three sections of the Celtic race ... on her soil ... and how to dispose of them". Among these, "the Irish Celt" was "the most to be dreaded", and it seemed clear that "the source of all evil lies in *the race*, the Celtic race of Ireland". Therefore, he proposed that the "race must be forced from the soil".<sup>49</sup>

46 Ibid., pp. 324f.

47 Ibid., pp. 320f.

48 Ibid., pp. 324 (order, reign), 322 (despiser), 327 (celtic race, bayonet, Celtic man), 375 (colony).

49 Ibid., pp. 378f. Italicisation in original.

### **Racism in social and historical context – Knox, Racialised Irish and 'the Other'**

The racial classification of the Celt and the Saxon in Knox's work influenced coeval scholarly discussions on the subject, and was reviewed in depth in the *Anthropological Review*, the organ of the Anthropological Society of London in 1868. The Society was founded by Richard F. Burton and James Hunt, a former student of Knox, with a group of "Knox supporters"<sup>50</sup> and promoted a polygenist racial anthropology. Its review of Knox's ideas on the Celtic race and the Saxon race concluded "that his views are, on the whole sound" and that Knox in his honesty had "set a good example for scientific man". The article *Knox on the Celtic Race* agreed with him that "obvious racial distinctions between the Irish and the English" existed, and represented the Celt in his support as "entirely wanting in those qualities of enterprise and self-reliance which make the Saxon *par excellence* the colonizer of the globe".<sup>51</sup>

Knox as one of the most notorious figures in the development of modern European racism had insisted that such racial distinctions were permanent and unalterable. When arguing so, he was part of a wider scientific community, concerned about a "threatening attitude of the Celtic races".<sup>52</sup> It made race an explanation for supposed Irish inferiority and upheaval, and reasoned that at least parts of the Celtic race had "relapsed into the state of barbarism".<sup>53</sup> While disputing his somewhat radical conviction that it had to be "forced from the soil",<sup>54</sup> the *Anthropological Review* still believed in "the truth of Knox's statements, that race never changes, and that race is everything in human affairs". It called for the Irish Question to be seen as based on "racial distinctions" which could no longer be ignored by the British government.

Another prominent voice within this anthropological discussion was John Beddoe, an influential and reclaimed Victorian anthropologist, fellow of the Royal Society and later president of the Anthropological Institute of London. As Knox, Beddoe was convinced that considerable racial differences existed between the Irish Celt and English-Saxon. In his main

50 De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, p. 8.

51 Anonymous, *Knox on the Celtic Race*, in: *Anthropological Review* 6, 21, 1868, pp. 175-191, here pp. 175 (views, example), 188 (racial distinctions), 177 (wanting). Italicisation in original.

52 *Ibid.*, p. 175.

53 Knox, *Races*, p. 375.

54 Cf. Anonymous, *Celtic Race*, pp. 175, 187. The following two quotations can be found *ibid.*, pp. 189f.

study *The Races of Britain* he associated "an Irish type" with the "race of Cro-Magnon"<sup>55</sup> whom he considered of "Afrocanoid" origin. Undertaking "[o]ne of the most systematic attempts to quantify racial differences between the Irish and English"<sup>56</sup> Beddoe was convinced that the "Irish was closer to Africans than Saxons",<sup>57</sup> and positioned him accordingly on his "Index of Nigrescence", a scale displaying alleged "race-differences".<sup>58</sup> Numerous attempts to place the Irish Celt close to the "Negroes" staged at the bottom of many racial classification systems of this period promoted the assumption that "wherever the Irishman differs, whether mentally or physically ... it is in an African direction".<sup>59</sup>

Efforts by anthropologists of the calibre of Knox and Beddoe to categorise the Irish as a "race apart" of and inferior to the English-Saxon became increasingly popular in Victorian England. As shown, they were ideologically embedded in wider academic discourses of the Enlightenment, aiming at defining and categorising human groups in racial terms. It is important to understand them at the same time as closely linked to Anglo-Irish political history and social conflicts, associated with British colonial rule over Ireland and Irish immigration to Britain. Catherine Hall has argued convincingly that the presence of a considerable number of Irish immigrants in Victorian England and Scotland was an important factor contributing "to the rethinking of 'race' and nation in the middle of the nineteenth century". Growing efforts to define the Irish as "'a race apart'" and make them a representative of a primitive, uncivilised other obviously helped to define "the Victorian Self", and were as such "central to the debate as to what Englishness/Britishness was" and "who ... its 'others'" were.<sup>60</sup>

The image of the Irish as the other and its increasingly racialised reading in Victorian British society was the product of academic and popular social construction, no doubt. However, it also mirrored concrete political events and antagonisms in Anglo-Irish relations, when for example gaining popularity in relation to the rise of Fenianism and related political con-

55 John Beddoe, *The Races of Britain. A Contribution to the Anthropology of Western Europe*, London 1971 [1885], p. 10.

56 De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, p. 10.

57 Metress, *British Racism*, p. 56.

58 Beddoe, *Races*, p. 297.

59 Lewis, *Peoples*, p. xxxvi.

60 Catherine Hall, *The Nation within and without*, in: id., Keith McClelland, Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: Class, Race, Gender and the British Reform Act of 1867*, Cambridge etc. 2000, pp. 179-233, here p. 204; similarly De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, pp. 22-24. Hall offers a complex and insightful account of Anglo-Irish relations, politics and perceptions of Britishness and Irishness in the period, cf. Hall, *Nation*.

flict. Representations of the Irish and their racialisation in British society were throughout the nineteenth century associated with both – "timeworn stereotypes and contemporary crises and concerns".<sup>61</sup> They were echoing, legitimising and reinforcing British colonial policy. As De Nie and others have suggested, they were popularised in the context of Irish immigration to Britain, major political and social conflict and of crises such as the Great Famine (1845-1852), the advent of Fenianism (1867-1870) and the Irish Land War (1879-1882).<sup>62</sup> With the Act of Union in 1800, Ireland became a part of the United Kingdom. However in many ways it seemed to remain a colony and was ruled as a place outside – with the Irish subordinated and potentially threatening British rule as a "Catholic population fiercely hostile to English occupation, English control of land, English Protestantism and English brutality".<sup>63</sup> The important role religion played in the representation of the Irish as opposed and alien to Victorian protestant England has been discussed in different studies.<sup>64</sup>

Scholarly discussions surrounding the Irish as the "racial other" were also associated with rising class conflict and poverty in Victorian Britain, an along class-lines deeply divided society. The poor living conditions, striking poverty, unemployment and social struggle of British and Irish workers alike, who had migrated to London, Manchester and other major cities, formed a crucial part of "The Irish Question" in British politics. Catherine Hall has shown how in the 1830s and 1840s "the language of class provided a frame with which to make sense of the divisions *within*, the divisions associated with poverty, disease and unemployment" and how it "provided one way of articulating the changes in social relations associated with the development of industrial capitalism".<sup>65</sup>

Irish immigrants in Britain were in this context represented as "the enemy within". Knox and others saw them as "the source of all evil", accused the Irish labourer of contaminating the British lower classes, and of being the root of rising class conflict and social disorder. Discriminations based on class and race were closely intertwined in the social construction of the Irish as both, a primitive or savage racial other and a dangerous class, blamed "for the fatal contagion which was poisoning the nation and producing a debilitated race of workers, ... who might become an infinitely more

61 De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, p. 5.

62 Cf. *ibid.*; see also, among others, Hazel Waters, *The Great Famine and the Rise of Anti-Irish Racism*, in: *Race & Class* 37, 1, 1995, pp. 95-108; Panikos Panayi, *Immigration, Ethnicity and Racism in Britain 1815-1945*, Manchester etc. 1994.

63 Hall, *Nation*, p. 208.

64 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 210f.; De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, in particular pp. 13-17; Foster, *Paddy & Mr Punch*, p. 193.

65 Hall, *Nation*, pp. 205f. (*italics in original*).

threatening 'race apart'". To save British society and cure it from its deterioration and inner social struggles it was considered necessary to remove the "Irish element" within the British working classes.<sup>66</sup>

In the minds of many social reformers and critics of the period the life of the working classes in the slums of major British cities was a pressing problem and antagonism to the "amenities and the morality of civilized life". It became increasingly common to use "racial analogies" to describe the English working classes. Friedrich Engels, for example, considered them "a race apart" that was "physically degenerate, robbed of all humanity, reduced morally and intellectually to near bestial condition, not only by economic exploitation, but by competition and association with the coarse, volatile, dissolute, drunken, improvident Irish, who slept with their pigs in the stinking slums of Manchester".<sup>67</sup> Stocking clarifies in this context how for the English "domestic class and overseas colonial society were linked by the 'internal colonialism' of the Celtic fringe" and how the case of Ireland had for centuries been considered a "mediating exemplar for both attitude and policy in relations with 'savages' overseas".<sup>68</sup>

Wulf D. Hund has in his impressive body of work concerned with racism analysis argued that racism can be interpreted as a modus of *Negative Societalisation* that enables the social inclusion of socially fragmented, hierarchically structured societies through the social exclusion, distinction, degradation, inferiorisation and desocialisation of peoples categorised as others. Hund explains the term as relating to "the formation, association, and integration of social groups by means of the exclusion of others".<sup>69</sup> His work is part of a wider canon of analytically innovative and historically reflexive studies in the field that show us how racism has developed in multiple forms and variations as an integral part of modernity, clarify its discursive complexities, and analyse it in its different forms and social and historical contexts. Racist discrimination is a continuous social problem and a central element in the genesis of modern society. It flexibly combines social categories of distinction associated with race, class, nation, culture, and gender to ideologically facilitate social inclusion through exclusion in societies that are structured by an unequal distribution of social wealth and ruptured by social inequalities and social conflict of various kinds.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>67</sup> Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, p. 213.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 234.

<sup>69</sup> Wulf D. Hund, *Negative Societalisation. Racism and the Constitution of Race*, in: id., Jeremy Krikler, David Roediger, eds., *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, Berlin etc. 2010, pp. 57-96, here p. 60. The chapter provides a clear conceptual outline and in-depth discussion of this analytical paradigm, see esp. pp. 84-88.



The case of the racialisation of Irish people in nineteenth-century Britain makes clear how social categories and associated labels such as "the Irish", the "British Labourer", "the Catholic", "the woman", the "non-white people" could be combined and equated in the context of a Negative Societalisation to construct, degrade and socially exclude these groups as manifestations of the other. The racialised stereotype of the uncivilised, threatening Irish Celt was one of many on an extensive list of social categories in Victorian Britain that were linked; as Stocking has reasoned "if not directly, then through their mutual likeness to savages, or departure from the civilized norm, or sharing of some 'primitive' attribute". It included "criminals, women and children", as well as "peasants, rustics, laborers, beggars, paupers, madmen" and "Irishmen". Allegedly lacking the superior civilised, rational qualities of the Western white male of the dominating classes, both – non-white people in the European colonies and derived groups within British society – could be de-socialised as subhuman others.<sup>70</sup>

The socially constructed dichotomy of the self and the other underlies the relation of racism and modernity, and feeds Western Society's *Racial Contract*. Modern racism has a long tradition of segregating others. Their exclusion ideologically facilitates the identification and integration of its members, despite their highly unequal material and cultural statuses. As a modus of Negative Societalisation racism ideologically legitimises social immerization embedded in modern society, while stabilising and reinforcing its existing social structures of power, domination and exploitation.<sup>71</sup> In this light, the lives of different inferiorised groups in nineteenth-century British society and beyond were marked by domination and exploitation associated with multi-layered, and often intertwined social divisions based on different categories of social inclusion and exclusion. However, even though the others were often discriminated along different lines, they all were degraded by and depended on the economically, politically and culturally dominant groups in society. The Irish were only one of many groups deprived of a full integration into the social nexus of modern society.<sup>72</sup>

70 They were supposed to be essentially creatures ruled by instinct, and fixed on the bottom of the hierarchical scale of human development, as to "varying degrees unable to subordinate instinctual need to human rational control" Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, p. 229.

71 Cf. Hund, *Rassismus*, Chapter 5.

72 Stocking suggests in this context that these groups were "kept in a status of dependency or tutelage and denied the rights of full participation in the political processes of modern civilization". Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, pp. 229f.

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# The Origin and History of the Idea of Race

Audrey Smedley

Historical evidence shows that race as it originated and evolved in the American experience was not a mere objective sorting of human physical diversity into convenient categories, nor was it a scientific term invented and given substantive meaning by scholars. Race was a folk concept that was elevated to the ranks of scholarly discourse when scientists began developing rationalizations and justifications for existing social realities. Race reflected a set of attitudes toward human differences generated out of the special circumstances of the modern rise of some Western European states to world commercial and political dominance and their exploitation of indigenous peoples. Beliefs and values about human inequality were concretized into law and confirmed and justified by science. It was only accidental, perhaps incidental, that the conquered and enslaved peoples were physically distinct, for this permitted social status to be linked with biophysical differences. At bottom, race was a social mechanism for concretizing and rigidifying a universal ranking system that gave some western Europeans what they thought was to be perpetual dominance over the indigenous peoples of the New World, Africa, and Asia.

One of the most powerful ideas dominating the Western World over the past three hundreds years or so has been the idea of "race". Indeed we can say that race is a distinctive aspect of the modern Western industrial world that entailed extensive interaction among the world's peoples. During this time, most people in the West assumed that the physical variations found among the world's peoples represented "racial" differences, although the precise clustering of populations into racial groups and the numbers of such races have always been in question. Because physical traits are so visible and undeniable, races appeared to be natural categories.

However, toward the end of the twentieth century, a major transformation in thought about "race" and the ideology of race emerged in the United States. Scholars in many disciplines began to agree that race, as we understand and experience it, is not about biological differences among humans; race is a cultural invention that evolved into a worldview, a way of looking at and interpreting the world. Scholars are attempting to examine and analyze race as a socio-cultural reality that exists in a realm independent of actual biological or genetic variations among human groups. They have come to realize that no amount of research into the physical or genetic features of individuals or groups will explain the social phenomenon of race in North America and the beliefs that buttress it.

## The Significance of History

All socio-cultural phenomena have a history; that is, they have some point of origin and sequences of development over time. Race can best be understood as part of the historical development of the American social system. In the last decades of the twentieth century, a number of historians re-examined the evidence relating to the establishment of the American colonies the processes by which North American settlers invented the concept of race.<sup>1</sup> What these scholars discovered was to transform the writing of American history. They found that race originated as a folk idea, a set of popular attitudes and beliefs about human differences, and they have documented how this ideology came into our culture and consciousness.

The roots of the ideology of race rest to a great extent in English culture and history. A brief review is necessary. In 1066, the Norman kings began their conquest of the English, but the leaders of the Anglo-Norman civilization were not content with their initial success. They began to expand onto the lands of the Gaelic peoples of Ireland. The Anglo-Norman civilization was an agrarian and commercial success, based in the production of grains. Farmers constantly desired more land. The large landowners and sons of the aristocracy pushed westward into Ireland with the goal of confiscating the lands of the native peoples, establishing large plantations, and imposing forced labor on the Irish.

The often brutal conflicts that ensued continued intermittently for several hundred years. The Irish lived in scattered clans, had no central government, and constantly resisted efforts to submit to the control of the English. As a pastoral people, they were highly mobile, pursuing a lifestyle based on cattle-keeping and some trade. Above all, they valued their freedom and independence, refusing to settle down and become sedentary farmers or slaves of the English.

From the beginning, the English showed hatred and contempt for the Irish people and their culture. As early as 1187, Giraldus Cambrensis wrote, "[t]hey [the Irish] are a wild and inhospitable people. They live on beasts only, and live like beasts. ... This people despises agriculture, has little use for the money-making of towns".<sup>2</sup> Frequently called the "wild Irish" throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English writers

1 Cf. Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, Vol. 1, London 1994, Vol. 2, London 1997; George M. Fredrickson, *Racism: A Short History*, Princeton 2002; Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West*, Washington D.C. 1996; Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 3rd ed., Boulder, CO, 2007.

2 Quoted in James P. Myers, *Elizabethan Ireland*, Hamden, Conn. 1983, p. 15.

claimed the Irish were cannibals with lewd marriage customs and they knew neither God nor good manners. Some thought the habits and customs of the Irish resembled the descriptions of primitive peoples found in the recently recovered literature of the Greeks and Romans. Moreover, the Portuguese and Spanish conquests in the New World against peoples similarly described as "barbarous, nomadic, lacking in self-control and social order, filthy, wicked, godless and immoral"<sup>3</sup> led the English to see their problems in Ireland as similar to those of the Spanish. Queen Elizabeth I (1559-1603), in whose reign major battles took place against the Irish, came to believe that the Irish were incapable of civilization. The English soon turned to the practices of killing off the conquered people, and/or enslaving the recalcitrant survivors.

After major battles throughout the early and especially the mid-seventeenth century English decided to transfer Irish captives to work as slaves on the New World English plantations in the Caribbean, especially Barbados and Jamaica. Under Oliver Cromwell, particularly during the wars of 1649-55, the most widespread devastation of Irish lands took place. Tens of thousands of men, women and children were killed and upwards of 50,000 people were shipped to the Caribbean Islands and some to the mainland.<sup>4</sup> The English view of the Irish as savages, uncontrollable, and prone to rebellions caused plantation owners to call for more Africans.<sup>5</sup> It was this well-developed view of "savagery" that the English brought with them to the New World and soon imposed this cultural image on the Indians and later Africans. Some of the same military men who took part in the colonization of Virginia and Massachusetts were also those who had experience "pacifying" the Irish.

3 Cf. Audrey Smedley, *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview*, 2nd ed., Boulder, CO, 1999, pp. 56-62.

4 The first recorded transfer of Irish captives to the Caribbean occurred in 1612. No one knows how many such forced exiles took place; some historians suggest upwards of 300,000. (For references, cf. [www.giftofireland.com/IrishSlaves.htm](http://www.giftofireland.com/IrishSlaves.htm)).

5 Forced to work in a tropical environment to which they were not acclimated, many of the Irish died or ran away to the Spanish. Some intermarried or mated with Africans creating a population, as on Montserrat, of mixed people who spoke Irish and had many Irish customs. Most Americans have not been taught about the presence of Irish slaves in the early colonies. This was a part of American history that was ignored and literally rendered invisible until the latter decades of the twentieth century. One reason is that once slavery was institutionalized for people of African ancestry only, in the eighteenth century, it became an embarrassment and an anomaly to most historians to mention white slaves.

The establishment of Jamestown in Virginia by English colonists began in 1607. From the beginning, Jamestown was a crude, rough, and turbulent community of mostly young Englishmen who came to seek their fortunes and return home. They planned to emulate the Spanish; to obtain wealth by conquering and enslaving the native peoples, and forcing them to produce gold and silver. However, the Indians did not take well to slavery; many died of European diseases and others escaped to unknown territories. Also there was no gold and silver immediately available. But settlers soon discovered a crop, tobacco, whose trade would bring them wealth.

The growing and processing of tobacco required very hard work. The greatest problem the colonists constantly faced was lack of labor; many settlers would not or could not do such intensive work. Within a decade, the colony began to import indentured servants, mostly from England, and it was this pattern of servitude that provided a model for the slavery that was to come later. Servants were bought and sold, ill-fed, ill-clothed, and poorly-housed. They were punished cruelly for petty crimes. Mortality was high, but the surplus poor emigrating from England in the early seventeenth century had few choices. If they survived the period of debenture, usually four to seven years in the New World, they could be set free, allowed to acquire land tools and servants, and to make a living on their own. Most did not survive.

In 1619, the first Africans arrived in Virginia. There has been some debate about who they were, but we know that they had Spanish or Portuguese names and were already familiar with European culture. In the US it is widely and popularly believed that the colonists brought Africans to the New World as slaves from the beginning and that Europeans were "naturally" prejudiced toward Africans because of their dark skins. Contradicting this older scenario, historians now hold that true slavery did not exist in the early decades of the English North American colonies.<sup>6</sup> Englishmen were unfamiliar with the institution. They saw their society as a free one, based on free labor, and they believed that English laws had terminated all forms of slavery centuries before their arrival in the Americas. But they were familiar with many forms of bond servitude which they saw as unfree labor, and some men who purchased head-rights to laborers treated them as if they were slaves for life. Masters were often brutal; they flogged servants for disobedience, or cut off their ears, or put skewers through their

6 Cf. Allen, *Invention*, Vol. 2; Fredrickson, *Racism*; Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, New York 1975; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the 18th Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry*, Chapel Hill 1998; Anthony S. Parent Jr., *Foul Means: The Formation of Slave Society in Virginia, 1660-1740*, Chapel Hill 2003, among others.

tongues. But the settlers were also callous and cruel toward one another.<sup>7</sup> Often servants were called slaves, and a distinction between servitude and slavery was not at all clear.

Consequently, the first Africans who arrived in Jamestown were not initially or uniformly perceived as slaves.<sup>8</sup> They were assimilated into the colony as laborers under varying contracts like those of Europeans. Some Africans worked off their debts and became freedmen. A few ambitious men obtained land and livestock, built substantial houses, married, and established themselves as well-to-do planters. Some became entrepreneurs and engaged in trading and other commercial activities and had business dealings on an equal footing with Europeans. One famous black family, that of Anthony Johnson and his two sons, owned more than 440 acres of land; they also had head-rights for, (that is, "owned") three Africans, three Europeans and two Indians as servants. They exercised the same rights as propertied Europeans. They participated in the assembly, the governing body of the colony, voted, served on juries, and socialized with white planters. Like their European counterparts, free black property owners were often contemptuous of government, arrogant and insulting toward those considered their social inferiors, assertive of their rights, and prone to fighting. In fact, numerous court records provide clear evidence that these seventeenth century Africans did not act differently from whites of the same social class. Historian Edmund Morgan wrote:

There is more than a little evidence that Virginians during these years were ready to think of Negroes as members or potential members of the community on the same terms as other men and to demand of them the same standards of behavior. Black men and white serving the same master worked, ate, and slept together, and together shared in escapades, escapes, and punishments ... It was common for servants and slaves to run away together, steal hogs together, get drunk together. It was not uncommon for them to make love together.<sup>9</sup>

No stigma was associated with what we today call intermarriages. Black men servants often married white women servants. Records from one county revealed that one fourth of the children born to European servant girls were mulatto.<sup>10</sup> Historian Anthony Parent notes that five out of ten black men on the Eastern Shore were married to white women.<sup>11</sup> One servant girl declared to her master that she would rather marry a Negro slave

7 Cf. Morgan, *American Slavery*, pp. 123-130, and Chapters 7 and 8.

8 Cf. Parent, *Foul Means*, p. 106; Smedley, *Race*, 3rd ed., Chapter 5.

9 Morgan, *American Slavery*, p. 327.

10 Cf. Thomas K. Breen, Keith Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*, Oxford 1980, p. 8.

11 Cf. Parent, *Foul Means*, p. 116.



on a neighboring plantation than him with all of his property, and she did.<sup>12</sup> Given the demographics, servant girls had their choice of men. One white widow of a black farmer had no problem with remarrying, this time to a white man. She later sued this second husband, accusing him of squandering the property she had accumulated with her first husband.<sup>13</sup> In another case, a black woman servant sued successfully for her freedom and then married the white lawyer who represented her in court.<sup>14</sup>

By mid-century, the colony was in a crisis. A few men from among the earliest settlers had taken over most of the fertile land; they had established large plantations and made huge fortunes growing tobacco. Poor servants who achieved their freedom found it difficult to acquire land. The freed poor and servants, which now included Europeans, Africans, mulattoes, and a few Indians, became unhappy with their lot and especially the corruption and abuse of power on the part of wealthy men who ruled the colony. They threatened rebellions, plundered their neighbors, showed contempt for colony leaders, and generated unrest throughout the settlement.

In 1676, the most famous rebellion took place. Led by Nathaniel Bacon, this uprising of thousands of poor workers was the first major threat to social stability. The rebellion dissipated after the death of Bacon, but British royal commissioners sent out to suppress the uprising realized that the population at large had supported the rebellion and were "sullen and obstinate". On one occasion the commissioners faced a dissatisfied "rabble" of "400 African and 600 or 700 European bond laborers, chiefly Irish".<sup>15</sup> They soon recognized the need for a strategy to prevent such occurrences in the future and ensure that a sufficient number of easily controlled laborers were made available to plantation owners.

### **Establishing Racial Slavery**

The decisions that the rulers of the colony made during the last decades of the seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth century resulted in the establishment of racial slavery. These leaders began to pass a series of laws separating out Africans and their descendants, restricting their rights and mobility, and imposing a condition of permanent slavery on them. Africans were now being brought directly from Africa. They were different from earlier Africans in that they were "heathens", that is, not Christians, and were unfamiliar with European languages, customs, and

12 Cf. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, pp. 10f.

13 Cf. *id.*, *American Slavery*, p. 334.

14 Cf. *id.*, *Slave Counterpoint*, p. 11.

15 Allen, *Invention*, p. 218.

traditions. They were vulnerable to any restrictions placed on them. Some colony leaders began to argue that Africans had no rights under British laws and therefore could be subject to forced and permanent slavery with impunity.

There were critical reasons for the preference for Africans. As early as the 1630s, planters had expressed a desire for African laborers ("If only we had some Africans!"). Records of plantation owners in the Caribbean and in the colonies of Virginia and Maryland reveal the fact that Africans were initially considered a civilized and docile people who had knowledge of, and experience with, tropical cultivation. They were accustomed to discipline, one of the hallmarks of civilized behavior, as well as working cooperatively in groups. They knew how to grow corn, tobacco, sugar cane, rice, and cotton in their native lands; these crops were unknown in Europe. And many Africans had knowledge of metal work, carpentry, cattle-keeping, brick-making, weaving, rope-making, leather tanning, and many other skills. Colonists soon realized that without Africans, their enterprises would fail. They often wrote, "We cannot survive without Africans!"<sup>16</sup>

A good example is the history of the colony of Georgia in the mid-eighteenth century. This colony was founded (1732) by followers of John Wesley (founder of Methodism) with the objective of settling here poor people from Europe. The founders and organizers had an anti-slavery philosophy, and Georgia became the first non-slaveholding colony. But the experiment failed; the settlers endured hunger, disease, poverty, and many deaths. They soon petitioned the trustees to alter the policy and to allow slaves. They argued that they could not thrive or survive without African slaves. Nearly twenty years after the founding, the act prohibiting slavery was repealed and Georgia began to prosper.<sup>17</sup>

Although for a while there were more Irish slaves in the Caribbean Isles than Africans, those peoples captured in wars with the English, knew nothing about tropical agriculture and were perceived to be of a "dangerous nature".<sup>18</sup> They often ran away to join their co-religionists, the catholic Spanish, and had the support of the Pope. In general, the Irish were considered a "rebellious lot". Historian Leonard Liggio, quoted from one letter sent to traders by a planter, "Don't send us any more Irish; send us some Africans, for the Africans are civilized and the Irish are not".<sup>19</sup>

16 Parent, *Foul Means*, pp. 60-74.

17 Cf. Smedley, *Race*, 3rd ed., p. 224.

18 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 55-62, 224.

19 Leonard P. Liggio, *English Origins of Early American Racism*, in: *Radical History Review* 3, 1976, 1, pp. 1-36, here: p. 8.

In contrast to Indians, Africans also had natural immunities to Old World diseases. European colonists recognized that Africans lived longer and were able to produce more than Europeans who had a high mortality rate. Moreover, Africans were in a strange land with no powerful allies and, unlike the Indians, could not escape to familiar territories. They were the most vulnerable of all the peoples of the Americas.

Sources of English servants began to decline in the latter part of the seventeenth century, as jobs became available at home. The slave trade with Africa increased as internal warfare in Africa made more and more people available for the trade. Leaders of the colonies, all large planters, had two objectives: to impose effective social controls over the population and provide themselves with cheap and easily controlled workers. They readily perceived that, using the differing physical characteristics of the working population, they could divide them and demarcate some for permanent slavery. Anthony Parent argues that a powerful planter class, acting to further its own economic interests, deliberately brought a new form of servitude, racial slavery, to Virginia over the period 1690-1725.<sup>20</sup> In this period, dozens of laws were passed restricting the rights of Africans and their descendents. By 1725, even free Negroes were prohibited from voting.

Colonial leaders were simultaneously doing something else; they were laying the basis for the invention of the idea of "race" and racial identities. They began to homogenize all Europeans, regardless of ethnicity, status, or social class, into a new category. The first time the term "White", rather than "Christian" or their ethnic names (English, Irish, Scots, Portuguese, German, Spanish, Swede) appeared in the public record was in a law passed in 1691 that prohibited the marriages of Europeans (Whites) with Negroes, Indians, and mulattoes.<sup>21</sup> A clearly separated category of Negroes as slaves allowed newly freed European servants opportunities to realize their ambitions and to identify common interests with the wealthy and powerful. Laws were passed offering material advantages and social privileges to poor whites. In this way, colony leaders consciously contrived a social control mechanism to prevent the unification of the working poor.<sup>22</sup> Physical features became markers of racial (social) status; as Virginia's governor William Gooch asserted, the assembly sought to "fix a perpetual Brand upon Free Negroes and Mulattos".<sup>23</sup>

20 Cf. Parent, *Foul Means*, esp. Chapter 4.

21 Cf. Smedley, *Race*, 3rd ed., p. 118.

22 Cf. Allen, *Invention*, Vol. 2, Chapter 13.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 242.

### **Rationalizing Slavery**

The earliest rationale for racial slavery was not posed in terms of differences in physical features, but the identification of Africans as uncivilized heathens. The first "savages" that the English had created in their minds were the "wild Irish" as we have seen. In the late sixteenth century, after centuries of conflict and brutal warfare with the Irish, Queen Elizabeth declared that the Irish were natural "savages" incapable of civilization. Such attitudes stereotyped and generated extreme hatred of the Irish that has continued, in many ways, into the twentyfirst century. In fact, the Elizabethans came very near to racializing the Irish. Indeed, in the eighteenth century the term "race" and the ideology of race was imposed on them by some historical writers.

Native Americans were initially seen as hospitable and generous when they fed the colonists for several years. But in English minds, they became "savages" when they resisted English appropriation of their lands. Hundreds of attacks against "wild" Indians led, as is well known, to the takeover of Indian lands and the forced removal of these peoples to reservations. The negative image of Native Americans began to change in the late eighteenth century to that of a more benign "noble savage". By then most of the Indians were dying out, lived in squalor on the edges of towns, or had been forcibly driven on to reservations. Now, after removing Indians who could no longer be a threat, reducing Africans to permanent slavery, prohibiting owners from freeing slaves, and preventing their education and training, the English essentially created a new "savage", who could be the new object of their enmity.

From the early eighteenth century on, negative characterizations of Africans formed part of a new rationalization for enslavement. Newspapers and popular magazines designed for public consumption began producing caricatures of Negroes, showing ape-like features with distorted skulls, elongated arms and ape-shaped bodies. Others exaggerated their facial features, such as broad flat noses and thick everted lips. Everywhere the Negro was portrayed as stupid, irrational, emotional, immoral, lazy, superstitious, and gullible. These became the stereotypes of the black race that were clearly designed to elicit hatred and contempt for them. They formed the substance of the ideology of race and race differences that we inherited in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What colony leaders were doing was establishing separate and unequal groups and imposing different social meanings on them. As they were creating the institutional and behavioral aspects of slavery, the colonists were simultaneously structuring the ideological components of race. Pro-slavery writers consciously

exaggerated human differences and even invented some that could not be sustained empirically, such as the belief that Negroes had black brains and blood or that they were not susceptible to feeling pain as did whites.

### **The Coming of Science**

By the end of the eighteenth century, during the Revolutionary era, a great debate over the nature of "the Negro" emerged especially among the educated elite. Thomas Jefferson, America's third president and a large slave-owner, was the first to suggest that we should leave the question of the Negro's status in nature to science which was just beginning to emerge as a separate and distinct institution in Western culture. When he called on science, he may well have surmised that science would respond with a powerful affirmation of the southern pro-slavery position. Anti-slavery proponents, particularly in Europe, had castigated the leaders of the American Revolution for advocating freedom while holding more than two million people enslaved. In response, the defenders of slavery developed an ideology about human group differences that dehumanized "the Negro" and demoted him in popular eyes to a status closer to the apes, placing the onus of slavery on its victims. Learned men in Europe and America debated vigorously the status of "the Negro", repeatedly raising questions about his humanity. From the last decade of the eighteenth century on, the writings of many educated men appeared to proclaim the natural inferiority of blacks and their suitability for slavery, thus contradicting earlier images.

In the meantime, scholarly writings in Europe on the newly discovered cultures and peoples of the world began to appear on a regular basis. Naturalists, many attached to newly formed universities in Europe, began systems of comparisons and classifications of animal and human forms that became the basis of the modern biological sciences. The major naturalists, such as Carolus Linnaeus, Comte de Buffon, and Johann Blumenbach in the eighteenth century, developed taxonomic schemes that included mankind with other hominids based on similarities in their physical structures. They identified "varieties" of human kind in relation to the major continents. Most saw the variations among human beings as products of their differing climates and other aspects of their environments. Most also accepted the idea that all human beings were of a single species, that is they followed the theory of monogeny, or belief in the single creation of all humans. A few Europeans, such as the philosopher Voltaire, held to the view that these varieties of humans were distinct species, products of separate creations (polygeny). But many of these writers, like Voltaire, had investments in the slave trade.

It was the American scientists of the nineteenth century, men such as Dr. Josiah Nott and Louis Agassiz, who made the strongest argument that Negroes were created as a separate species from whites. They accepted the taxonomic categories established by Linnaeus and Blumenbach as the source and terms for racial groups, but saw their differences as tantamount to separate species. But American scientists ignored Blumenbach's caution that no precise boundaries separated the races; indeed, he claimed that they blended insensibly into one another. Two powerful features pervaded the American ideology of race, without which there would have been no need for such an ideology. The first was the belief in natural inequality, and the second was the notion of permanent, hereditary differences. The Enlightenment belief in the potential equality of all humans was an appealing doctrine, but it was clearly overshadowed by extensive class inequalities in English society, even before they established English colonies overseas.

Social inequality in England dated back over a thousand years. It was exacerbated by the Enclosure Movement and the introduction of private property. The belief in the importance of private property became deeply entrenched in English and American culture. Eventually, the idea of the rights to property superceded all other rights. This was particularly true of the era of slavery where the "right" to own slave property came to be seen as inalienable. In a famous supreme court decision of 1857 (The Dred Scott Decision), Chief Justice Roger B. Taney asserted that Africans were only seen as property. He followed with the conclusion that, "Negroes (Blacks) have no rights that a white man is bound to respect".<sup>24</sup>

The laws and court decisions of this period provide clear indication of how thoroughly Blacks and their descendants had been reduced in the white mind to non-human status. The goal of science was to provide the "objective" data to validate the beliefs in the inferiority of blacks and the superiority of whites. Throughout the nineteenth century scientists measured the heads and body parts of different races. In the twentieth century, they continued with measurements, but turned to ascertaining the internal activity of the mind. The measuring techniques turned from physical measurements to the measurement of "intelligence" through the use of mental tests. If it could be demonstrated that Negroes were less intelligent than whites, presumably this might justify their low status and the cruel treatment of them.

In the 1860s, slavery ended, but "race" as social status and the basis of human identities remained. Race ideology, it must be emphasized, was based in a belief in the existence of separate, distinct, and exclusive groups that were made unequal by God or nature. African-Americans, the most

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Smedley, *Race*, 3rd ed., p. 253.

inferior, were at the bottom of the hierarchy, European whites (some of them) were at the top. Other races were variously placed in between whites and blacks on the hierarchy. Each race was thought to have distinct physical and behavioral traits that were inherited "in the blood", and passed on to their children. Thus, we have the continuing stereotype of African-Americans as lacking in intelligence, lazy, overly-sexed, loud, irrational, musical, emotional, and superstitious. Finally, it was believed that these race differences could not be transcended or transformed.<sup>25</sup> As a powerful mechanism of social division and stratification, race can and does replace class, religion and other forms of identity and divisions.

### **The Social, Economic, and Political Consequences of Race Ideology**

After the Civil War, race dominated all social interactions, that is, the economic, political, religious and social lives of all individuals. Social policies proclaimed that races should live in separate communities and have separate institutions, including schools, stores, churches, recreation and health centers, hospitals, etc. All forms of social interaction were limited, except when blacks were needed to work for whites, and always in subordinate roles. The principle of segregation was enforced, informally if not formally, everywhere. Opportunities for work or training were deliberately limited. For both Native Americans and Blacks, the constant thwarting of their efforts to improve their lives has led to overpowering frustrations.

For the United States, and for the world at large, the concept of race has provided the most powerful of all measures of human differences. It was designed to institutionalize rigid inequalities in a world whose fundamental political philosophy was democracy and equality. In the Western world, we have seen the consequences of the idea of race in the way it curtails freedom, controls behavior, and establishes hierarchies of privilege, power, and wealth. Race has reduced competition and access to benefits in an economy where competition was perceived as necessary for progress. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, race ideology was transmitted to other areas of the world where dominant groups used it to justify their treatment and exploitation of subordinate groups.<sup>26</sup>

In the twentyfirst century, a few race scientists persist in promoting the belief in race and the distinct innate characteristics of different races. But in 2002 geneticists succeeded in unraveling the human genome (DNA) and demonstrating the great similarities of humans around the world.

25 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 250-254.

26 For examples and references, see *ibid.*, Chapter 11.

They have shown that any two persons anywhere in the world have 99.9% of their genes in common, and we are all members of the same species. Mounting evidence from science reveals that there is no biological basis for human races.<sup>27</sup> However, "race" as social invention persists as the chief source of human identity and the basis for social stratification and exclusion in the United States and many other regions of the world.

With the election of Barack Obama as president of the United States, on the other hand, and numerous social changes taking place, some theorists claim that we are entering the post-modern world where race will no longer have the same meaning. Many people believe that the power of the ideology of race is declining in the United States, and some forecast its ultimate demise everywhere.

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27 Cf. Jonathan Marks, *Race: Past, Present, and Future*, in: Barbara A. Koenig, Sandra Soo-Jin Lee, Sarah S. Richardson, eds., *Revisiting Race in a Genomic Age*, New Brunswick 2008, and other papers in this volume.



# Racialising Bones and Humanity

## The Scientific Abuse of Australian Aboriginal Human Remains in Nineteenth-Century German Physical Anthropology

Antje Kühnast\*

In this analysis of German anthropological collection catalogues and the associated physical anthropological expertise I will demonstrate how German physical anthropologists appropriated the skulls and bones of the Indigenous peoples of Australia throughout the nineteenth century for the construction of theories on race and evolution. These sources reveal the links between the contemporary Australian and German scientific communities on individual and institutional as well as on scientific and commercial levels. At the same time they allow some glimpses into the macabre circumstances under which these "human collectibles" were acquired and, in some rare cases, whose human remains were shipped across the globe to be subjected to the racialising scientific scrutiny and white supremacist evolutionary theorising of German physical anthropologists on the "lower races".

The appropriation of Australian Aboriginal human remains for the "strange uses" of European scientists started with the colonisation of Australia in the late eighteenth century. The first German to procure Australian Aboriginal skulls for his "anthropological researches" was Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, who in the 1790s complemented his Göttingen museum with two cranial trophies from New Holland. The "father of anthropology" furthered and substantiated his theory on the human varieties on the basis of these cranial specimens.<sup>1</sup>

Roughly seventy years later, when German physical anthropologists established their field as a scientific discipline, they were no longer content with the investigation of single skulls deemed representative of a race. Under the influence of Darwinian evolutionary discourse German anthropolo-

<sup>1</sup> Paul Turnbull, "To What Strange Uses", *The Procurement and Use of Aboriginal Peoples' Bodies in Early Colonial Australia*, in: *Voices* 4 no. 3, Spring 1994, pp. 5-20, here p. 5. On the scientifically legitimised procurement of Australian Aboriginal human remains in the British-Australian context cf. Paul Turnbull's comprehensive work. On Blumenbach's understanding of the term "anthropological researches" cf. John Gascoigne, *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, Cambridge 1994, p. 154; Norbert Klatt, *Einleitung*, in: Frank William Peter Dougherty, *The Correspondence of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Vol 2: 1783-1785*, rev., augm. and ed. by Norbert Klatt, Göttingen 2007, pp. viii-xxx, here pp. xix-xxii.

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gists desired to procure and categorise large amounts of human remains and continuously filled their collection cabinets with "race skulls", "race skeletons" and soft tissues of the "lower races". In this way Australian Aboriginal human remains became a treasured commodity for modern German anthropological research. One of the main objectives to organise their discipline was the creation of standardised measurements and categories, with which anthropologists sought to transform the skulls and bones into comprehensive information for the comparison of the human races.<sup>2</sup>

As a first step the founding members of the German Anthropological Society in 1871 agreed on a large-scale inventory of German collections. The resulting catalogues and their associated expertise reflect agreements and disagreements about methodology and ideology among physical anthropologists. Furthermore, they present illuminating material for the analysis of nineteenth-century racial discourse and the dealings of German physical anthropologists with Australian Aborigines.<sup>3</sup> In addition to revealing the material scope of the appropriations of Australian Aboriginal human remains, they provide insights into the motivations and circumstances of their ruthless acquisition and their scientific utilisation. Predominantly comprising highly fatiguing tables displaying vast amounts of numbers and ratios, they disclose the racial classifications and evolutionary theorising to which the archiving and investigating anthropologists subscribed. Occasionally, they at least partially uncover the networks of human remains trafficking between collectors in Germany and their compatriots in the Australian colonies, who often undertook the gruesome work of unearthing and unflensing decayed bodies for shipment to the other side of the globe. In a few instances these records indicate the particular location of such grave plunder or, very rarely, touch on the individual human being whose remains were so unmercifully robbed and transformed into anthropological specimens.<sup>4</sup>

In this essay I aim to expose and untangle some of these entwined aspects of German scientific discourse on the "New Hollander", the "Austral-

2 Cf. for example Rudolf Virchow, Ueber einige Merkmale niederer Menschenrassen am Schädel und über die Anwendung der statistischen Methode in der ethnischen Craniologie, in: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 12, 1880, pp. 1-26, here p. 10.

3 On the struggle to standardise measurements in the German anthropological community see Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Imperial Germany*, Chicago 2001, pp. 86-94.

4 For examples of partial reconstructions of the lives of the individuals behind those bones in the British-Australian context cf. for example Paul Turnbull, "Outlawed Subjects": The Procurement and Scientific Uses of Australian Aboriginal Heads, ca. 1803-1835, in: *Eighteenth-Century Life* 22 no. 1,

Neger" or "the Australian". I will consider how contemporary discourses on race informed the conclusions German anthropologists drew from the "human material" in their collections. In the first part I will examine Blumenbach's dealings with non-existent and real skulls of New Hollanders in the 1790s. In the second part I will explore the appropriation and scientifically legitimised utilisation of Australian Aboriginal human remains for German racial discourse six decades later.

### **Moulding the "very rare skull of a New Hollander" – Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's Black Race of the Fifth Variety (c. 1775-1795)**

In 1874 the anthropological collection of the German Göttingen University contained almost 450 human "specimens" from the entire globe. Originating from Blumenbach's Golgotha, the collection consisted predominantly of human skulls sorted by geographical and racial categories according to its founder's theory on human varieties. Among them were nineteen "New Hollander" skulls, five "Australian" skeletons, "a head and a brain in spirit of wine" and the "pelvis and other parts of a New Hollander". Compared with other German collections, Göttingen had amassed an extraordinarily high amount and variety of Australian Aboriginal "anthropological items".<sup>5</sup>

The collection started with skull no. 28, acquired by Blumenbach in 1793 and described as that of a "[y]oung man of those who dared to attack the new settlements of the English near Sydney at Botany Bay". This indignantly termed piece of information documents the militant circumstances under which Aboriginal body parts were procured right from the start of Australia's colonisation. By the 1790s relations between the invading British and the local owners of the land, the Dharug people, had escalated to a state of persistent violent conflict. During one of those murderous encounters the corpse of a young Indigenous warrior who "had been beaten to death in a clash with settlers"<sup>6</sup> was appropriated, beheaded and his skull preserved to be shipped to Blumenbach in Göttingen.

1998, pp. 156-171; Cressida Fforde, *Collecting the Dead. Archaeology and the Reburial Issue*, London 2004, pp. 44-54; Antje Kühnast, "In the Interest of Science and of the Colony". Truganini und die Legende von den aussterbenden Rassen, in: Wulf D. Hund, ed., *Entfremdete Körper. Rassismus als Leichenschändung*, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 205-250.

- 5 Johann Wilhelm Spengel, *Die von Blumenbach gegründete Anthropologische Sammlung der Universität Göttingen*, Braunschweig 1880, pp. 76-79, 86f., 90, the following citation p. 77. All translations are my own.
- 6 Turnbull, *Outlawed Subjects*, p. 168. On the appropriation of this young man's head for Blumenbach cf. also Gascoigne, *Banks and Enlightenment*, pp. 149-

Blumenbach had systematically started to collect skulls for his anthropological research and as representations of his racial categories.<sup>7</sup> In doing so he aimed to verify travel literature with what was increasingly regarded as more objective evidence.<sup>8</sup> After announcing a separate variety consisting of the inhabitants of the Southern Pacific he soon was "so anxious above all to obtain" skulls from the "original barbarians inhabiting the Southern Ocean Islands; one of which is of course the New Hollander".<sup>9</sup>

The appropriate addressee for such a demand was Joseph Banks who as a keen Enlightenment naturalist and travel companion to James Cook was among the first Britons to set foot on Australian soil in 1771. Banks stood at the centre of a highly effective "trans-oceanic collection network"<sup>10</sup> and had already supplied Blumenbach with a number of natural historical collectibles including human skulls.<sup>11</sup> Unsurprisingly, his specimen network extended to the newly established convict colony of New South Wales where some of the colonists involved in the killings had a connection with their notable compatriot. Still, due to several obstacles, it took five years before Blumenbach finally held his very first "very rare skull of a New Hollander"<sup>12</sup>

- 155; Paul Turnbull, Enlightenment Anthropology and the Ancestral Remains of Australian Aboriginal People, in: Alex Calder, Jonathan Lamb and Bridget Orr, eds., *Voyages and Beaches: Pacific Encounters 1769-1840*, Honolulu 1999, pp. 202-225, here pp. 215-217.
- 7 On Blumenbach's collecting of human skulls cf. Tim Fulford, *Theorizing Golgotha: Coleridge, Race Theory, and the Skull Beneath the Skin*, in: Nicolas Roe, ed., *Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Sciences of Life*, Oxford 2001, pp. 117-133, here p. 121; Klatt, *Einleitung*, pp. xiii-xiv.
- 8 Cf. Fulford, *Theorizing Golgotha*, pp. 120f.; Turnbull, *Enlightenment Anthropology*, p. 213.
- 9 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*, Third Edition 1795, in: Thomas Bendyshe, *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, London 1865, pp. 145-276, here p. 149 ("anxious"); id., *Decas Tertia Collectionis Suae Craniorum Diversarum Gentium Illustrata*, Göttingen 1795, p. 3 ("alterum nempe Nouo-Hollandi"); on the link between the new variety and South Sea Islander skulls cf. Gascoigne, *Banks and Enlightenment*, pp. 150-153; Fulford, *Theorizing Golgotha*, p. 119 and Turnbull, *Enlightenment Anthropology*, p. 216.
- 10 Fulford, *Theorizing Golgotha*, p. 124.
- 11 Regarding the scientifically established special relationship between Banks and Blumenbach see Gascoigne, *Banks and Enlightenment*, pp. 150f.; Paul Turnbull, *British Anatomists, Phrenologists and the Construction of the Aboriginal Race, c. 1790-1830*, in: *History Compass* 5 no. 1, 2007, pp. 26-50, here pp. 32-34; Bronwen Douglas, "Novus Orbis Australis": Oceania in the Science of Race, 1750-1850, in: id., Chris Ballard, eds., *Foreign Bodies. Oceania and the Science of Race 1750-1940*, Canberra 2008, pp. 99-155, here p. 110.
- 12 Blumenbach, *Natural Variety of Mankind* 1795, p. 239.

in his hands. The second, also supplied by Banks, followed in 1799.

Blumenbach's initial taxonomy, articulated in his doctoral exploration of "the human body and its members"<sup>13</sup> in 1775, devised a system of four human varieties, based on a number of transitional physical and geographical categories. For example, the members of the four varieties exhibited skin shades within a range of five major colours, from the "pure white skin of the German lady through the yellow, the red, and the dark nations, to the Ethiopian of the very deepest black". While he asserted that skin colour was fundamentally useless as a concise racial marker due to its transitional and alterable character, the above statement shows that he nonetheless loosely linked skin colouration to his varieties.

Inconveniently, five colours did not match four varieties. The inhabitants of the Southern Seas, subsumed under the second, Asian and largely "yellow" variety, fell among the "dark nations" according to skin shade.<sup>14</sup> The natural skin colour of New Holland "Indians" could not be determined during the first British explorers' encounters, not even after "wetting ... and rubbing it". However, they were perceived as darker than Pacific Islanders, but only "nearly as black as a Negroe".<sup>15</sup> Blumenbach ignored such inconclusive evidence and merely mentioned their habit of painting their bodies. Nevertheless, as I will show below, he took New Hollander skin colour on board for his classification of their "peculiar skulls".<sup>16</sup>

Evidence from skulls, rather than skin colour, appeared far more reliable to "consider how far they constitute different varieties of the human race". In adherence to his monogenetic environmentalist hypothesis of gradual transition he determined that the deliberate shaping of heads resulted in permanent bony characteristics "although they may have owed their first origin to adventitious causes". "New Hollanders", he announced, "make such a transition to the third variety [black Ethiopians], that we perceive a sensible progress in going from the New Zealanders through the Otaheitans to the fourth [red inhabitants of the Americas]". However, he provided no evidence for this claim. Neither did he know much about the "adventitious" perpetual head shaping they might have practised, nor did he have the slimmest chance to investigate the bone properties of a New

13 Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*, First Edition 1775, in: Thomas Bendyshe, *The Anthropological Treatises of Johann Friedrich Blumenbach*, London 1865, pp. 65-143, here p. 129. The following citation p. 99.

14 Cf. Douglas, *Novus Orbis Australis*, p. 107.

15 The preceding citations John Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages ... Drawn up from the Journals which Were Kept by the Several Commanders, and from the Papers of Joseph Banks*, Vol 3, London 1773, p. 228.

16 Blumenbach, *Natural Variety of Mankind* 1775, p. 114. The ensuing citations *ibid.*, (skulls constitute varieties), p. 115 (adventitious causes), p. 119 (transition).

Hollander's head in 1775. Considering that the appropriation of Aboriginal remains began shortly after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788 it is also highly unlikely that any information on such a skull was available.<sup>17</sup>

The incorporation of a non-existent skull into his body of evidence seems to have hardly bothered Blumenbach who simply construed a cranial geography that was perfectly in line with his skin colour palette and further exemplified his notion of gradual transition. Creating a skin colour-based sequence of skulls within his "dark nations" of the South Seas he positioned Tahitians on the lighter end, while New Hollanders faced the dark, the "very deepest black" Ethiopian.

His distinction between dark and light elements was not restricted to physical characteristics but extended to aesthetic classification as well. Blumenbach declared that "persistent ... lineaments of the face" could be observed particularly in South Sea islanders. Referring to Sidney Parkinson's engraving of "Two of the Natives of New Holland, Advancing to Combat", he identified a "fierce and savage countenance" in juxtaposition to "the milder disposition" of the "Otaheitans" (whom Parkinson had depicted not in combat but predominantly "in the dress of that country").<sup>18</sup> Following his Eurocentric aesthetic sensibilities Blumenbach reiterated a common pre-existing "deeply anti-Negro"<sup>19</sup> bias against dark-skinned peoples and differentiated between appalling dark and appealing lighter-skinned South Sea inhabitants. Thus Blumenbach at the earliest stage of his theorising construed the two elements of his later proclaimed Malay variety. He classified the non-existent New Hollander skull on the basis of skin colouration, concurrently distinguishing between a lighter and a darker component in the peoples of the South Pacific. Consistently, in 1779 he declared the "Australasians and Polynesians"<sup>20</sup> a separate, fifth variety.

With the increasing importance Blumenbach bestowed on human skulls as evidence for his hypotheses his desire for cranial representations grew. Upon receipt of the New Hollander skull and another from a Tahitian

17 Cf. Turnbull, *Enlightenment Anthropology*, pp. 204f.

18 Blumenbach, *Natural Variety of Mankind* 1775, pp. 123 (face lineaments, juxtaposition), 128 incl. FN 4, (Parkinson's engraving); Sidney Parkinson, *A Journal of a Voyage to the South Seas, in His Majesty's Ship, The Endeavour*, London 1773, pp. 23 Plate V, 14 Plate III, 66 Plate IX. A very useful and comprehensively transcribed collection of the Endeavour journey journals is available on <http://southseas.nla.gov.au>.

19 Douglas, *Novus Orbis Australis*, p. 103. Bronwen Douglas shows how Reinhold and Georg Forster's perceptions of physically as well as morally and intellectually "beautiful ... light brown" peoples and "ugly blacks" in Oceania influenced Blumenbach's bi-fold composition of the Malay variety, cf. pp. 103-106.

20 Klatt, *Einleitung*, pp. xi-xii.

woman in 1793 Blumenbach thanked Banks enthusiastically for these eagerly awaited acquisitions.<sup>21</sup> Delighted to finally complement his collection with the "2 skulls of both the two principal Races which constitute this remarkable variety in the 5<sup>th</sup> part of the world; viz. of the black race & of the brown one"<sup>22</sup> he assigned his new trophies the "highest place"<sup>23</sup> in his collection and lost no time in advancing his theory. With the necessary skulls at hand he not only relabelled his varieties but also rearranged, and thereby re-evaluated, his cranial geography. While in 1775 he outlined a rather horizontal sequence based on his skin colour palette, in 1795 he projected the hierarchical order of intermediate and extreme varietal positions in relation to the Caucasian original. Make no mistake, the white and most beautiful (albeit female) Caucasian skull, thus Caucasian variety, remained in its racially elevated territory of white man's superiority.<sup>24</sup>

The Malay variety was interposed between the Caucasian and the Ethiopian. The fifth variety thus remained in a middle position but lost its former neighbourly connection to the Americans. The position of the New Hollanders, however, remained unchanged as their features "approach[ed] the Ethiopians very much".<sup>25</sup> The skull generally paralleled that of the Tahitian, but when looked at from above it resembled the Ethiopian, Blumenbach concluded.<sup>26</sup> A strand of not quite curly hair in his possession similarly demonstrated a "middle place"<sup>27</sup> between African and South Islander head hair. To his delight, the "singular smoothness of the upper jaw" caused by the "paradoxical custom" of inserting bones into the nasal septum presented a distinct trait of the New Hollander.<sup>28</sup>

As John Gascoigne notes, Blumenbach's investigation of the Malay variety "made him more cautious about the fixity of his classifications".<sup>29</sup> Taxonomically, New Hollanders caused irritation not only due to the "wonderful difference in opinion"<sup>30</sup> about their hair (wavy, curly or woolly?) but also their racial unity. While some of his informants, such as Banks, insist-

21 Cf. Douglas, *Novus Orbis Australis*, p. 110 (skull of a Tahitian woman).

22 Blumenbach to Banks, 1 November 1793 cited in Gascoigne, *Banks and Enlightenment*, p. 153.

23 Blumenbach, *Decas Tertia*, p. 11 ("icone exhibitum").

24 On Blumenbach's eventual taxonomy of the original, intermediate and extreme varieties cf. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, rev. exp. ed., New York 1996, pp. 401-412.

25 Blumenbach, *Natural Variety of Mankind 1795*, p. 275.

26 Cf. Blumenbach, *Decas Tertia*, p. 13 ("quam vultu propius ad Aethiopum habitum accedens").

27 Blumenbach, *Natural Variety of Mankind 1795*, p. 225.

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240 (smoothness) and 235 (custom).

29 Gascoigne, *Banks and Enlightenment*, p. 153.

30 Blumenbach, *Natural Variety of Mankind 1795*, p. 225.

ed on the uniformity of the race, Cook's later encounters with Tasmanians seemed to question this assertion. Blumenbach perceived baffling discrepancies between the faces he conjured up from his New Hollander skull and drawings of these Tasmanian islanders. Pondering over illustrations of New Guinean Papuans he also wondered whether the reputable draughtsmen were mistaken or his taxonomy needed adjustment. Such perplexities not only threw the impact of climate and "racial habit" into question, but also the determination of racial relations.

New Hollanders thus presented a difficult case. Geographical aspects and some physical ones prompted their incorporation into the Malay variety, but the meaning attached to other physical features positioned them closer to the inhabitants of the far away African continent. A small relaxation to this confusion came for Blumenbach with the arrival of the second New Hollander skull. Rather than trading it for other valuable specimens (as recommended by Banks) he used it to confirm not only the authenticity and representativeness of both his skulls. Possibly such determination of their genuineness also calmed his doubts about their racial classification.<sup>31</sup>

**"Hop[ing] to find well pronounced the typical, genuine Australian traits" – The Appropriation of Australian Aboriginal Skeletons for German Collections (c. 1860-1870)**

The mutilation of the corpses of two Dharug men, whose deaths were directly connected to the violent colonisation of their country was prompted by Blumenbach's enlightened and scientifically induced desire for representative human skulls. In order to satisfy his enquiry into the diversity of mankind, based on allegedly objective pieces of evidence, he rendered human individuals into scientific specimens. He thereby set the scene for the appropriation of Australian Aboriginal human remains for German anthropological and evolutionary theorising throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

The two skulls were the first human remains from the original inhabitants of Australia seized for a German collection. Blumenbach's long wait and his remark on their rarity indicate that in early colonial Australia anthropological body snatching had not yet become a widely practiced and tolerated activity. One cause for his initial disappointment was the respect the first New South Wales governor Arthur Phillip showed for Aboriginal

31 Cf. Turnbull, *Enlightenment Anthropology*, p. 218 (Bank's suggestion, questioning of race relations); cf. Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, *Decas Quarta Collectionis Suae Craniorum Diversarum Gentium Illustrata*, Göttingen 1800, p. 16.



reverence towards the deceased.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, colonists had qualms about disturbing the dead, whether resulting from moral convictions, abhorrence to unearth corpses and skeletons, or strategic deliberations on the necessity for functioning relationships with local Aboriginal clans. Additionally, Indigenous peoples in Australia effectively protected their dead by altering their ceremonies and determinedly defending funeral sites after the first instances of grave plunder and corpse mutilation occurred. Consequently, very few skeletal remains were seized for anthropological purposes. Those that were nevertheless appropriated, such as Blumenbach's cranial trophies, predominantly resulted from violent deaths.<sup>33</sup>

The Banks-Blumenbach connection presents a pattern for the transformation of Aboriginal human remains into a scientific commodity. A miniature market was created by Blumenbach's anthropologically inspired demand for objects that Banks was willing to supply. However, his contentment with single representative skulls eventually became outdated by new scientific trends. Physical anthropologists of the mid-nineteenth century stated the necessity to investigate "not single but hundreds of skulls of one and the same nation"<sup>34</sup> for the statistically delineated comparison of race traits. While the collections acquired almost no further Aboriginal remains during the first six decades, the number of skulls and skeletons in Göttingen and elsewhere increased significantly during the second half of the century.<sup>35</sup>

The newly established German Anthropological Society partly provided the organisational infrastructure for anthropological trafficking between Australia and Germany. German colonists in Australia were eager to help. By the 1860s immigrants, such as Ferdinand von Müller, played a prominent role in Australian colonial science and in maintaining links with their compatriot scientific and academic communities. A "kind donor",<sup>36</sup> the famous director of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens supplied sev-

32 Cf. Turnbull, *Enlightenment Anthropology*, p. 217.

33 Cf. *id.*, *Outlawed Subjects*, pp. 168f.

34 Rudolf Wagner, Ueber die Begründung einer vergleichenden und historischen Anthropologie durch umfassendere Hilfsmittel, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf mitteleuropäische Völker-Verhältnisse, in: *Nachrichten von der G. A. Universität und der Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* no. 27, 24 December 1862, pp. 557-588, here p. 559.

35 This becomes obvious in the course of my analysis of collection records such as the herein discussed catalogues published in the "*Archiv für Anthropologie*", that I conducted for my PhD research project on the dealings of German physical anthropologists with Australian Aborigines during the nineteenth century.

36 Wilhelm Moritz Keferstein, Bemerkungen über das Skelett eines Australiers vom Stamme Warnambool, in: *Nova Acta Leopoldine* 32, 1865, pp. 2-19, here p. 3.

eral German anthropologists with Aboriginal skeletons and skulls.<sup>37</sup> The merchant, immigration agent and Prussian Consul to Sydney, Wilhelm Kirchner, also made a generous donation of six skeletons to the Frankfurt Senckenberg Society, among them those of two men "killed in combat" and a woman whose skull was considered to be deformed by syphilis.<sup>38</sup> Others procured human remains they had "found in a hollow tree"<sup>39</sup> or "dug up from an Aboriginal churchyard".<sup>40</sup> Anton Vogt, a well-respected physician in rural South Australia excavated the sand grave of an Aboriginal man who had "fallen off a wagon". He later made sure to bring a shovel on his visit to a neighbour where a woman, who had "finally died"<sup>41</sup> (probably also of syphilis), was buried by her family. Vogt exhumed the corpse and prepared the two skeletons for shipment to the other side of the world for the collection and academic merit of his former Freiburg professor, Alexander Ecker. Rudolf Schütte, another German physician who set up practice in Sydney, presented his brother-in-law, Wilhelm Moritz Keferstein of the Göttingen Zoological Institute, with Aboriginal human remains.<sup>42</sup>

European collectors and physical anthropologists indulged in the prestige these scientific commodities brought them; the former relishing their names being linked to the anthropological expertise of the latter. Additionally, economic interest mingled with scientific inclinations to engage in bodysnatching. Trading Indigenous skulls seemed a lucrative prospect to some contemporaries. Schütte, for example, secured a business sideline in the trade of Aboriginal and Fijian skulls, which he sold to Leipzig's leading anthropologist Emil Schmidt.<sup>43</sup> Amalie Dietrich, a professional collector of herbs and ethnographic items, procured eight skeletons from North Queensland and a human skin for her Hamburg employer Ceasar Godef-

37 Cf. Spengel, *Anthropologische Sammlung Göttingen*, pp. 77, 79, 86; Alexander Ecker, Freiburg. *Catalog der Anthropologischen Sammlungen der Universität, Braunschweig 1880*, p. 7.

38 Johann Christian Gustav Lucae, *Zur Morphologie der Rassenschädel*, Frankfurt am Main 1861, pp. 24, 52.

39 Spengel, *Anthropologische Sammlung Göttingen*, p. 76.

40 Emil Schmidt, *Die anthropologischen Privatsammlungen. Catalog der im anatomischen Institut der Universität Leipzig aufgestellten craniologischen Sammlung des Herrn Emil Schmidt*, Braunschweig 1887, p. 148.

41 Alexander Ecker, *Zur Kenntnis der Eingebornen Südaustraliens*, in: *Berichte der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft zu Freiburg* 2 nos. 23-24, 1861, pp. 337-387, here pp. 339 (wagon) and 359 (sick woman).

42 Spengel, *Anthropologische Sammlung Göttingen*, pp. 76, 78f.

43 Cf. Schmidt, *Sammlung Emil Schmidt*, pp. v, 148f.

froy, who traded all sorts of scientific specimens with German museums for their various collections, including human remains.<sup>44</sup>

These examples of the appropriation of human remains reflect the existence of institutional and individual links for the exchange of these human "specimens". They concurrently point to the atrocious consequences of the European invasion, from the killing fields on the Australian colonial frontiers between settlers and Indigenous peoples to the spread of infectious diseases, frequently the consequence of the violation of Aboriginal women by European men.<sup>45</sup> They also highlight that the restraints that prevented early colonists from plundering Aboriginal gravesites did not persist into the second half of the nineteenth century. The authority of scientific inquiry into human evolution and the racial state of "the Australian" overruled them.

The heightened demand for Aboriginal skulls and skeletons for anthropological scrutiny, of course, cannot be explained exclusively by the rise in infrastructure and opportunity. The networks for anthropological trafficking were established, maintained and nurtured because of ideological convictions predominant at the time. In the wake of Darwinian evolutionary theorising Australian Aboriginal human remains became coveted pieces of evidence in European evolutionary discourse. In particular, the debate on Darwin's theory about the common ancestry of all living organisms quickly extended into a discussion about the relationship between humans and apes. Whether they subscribed to the Darwinian scheme or opposed it, physical anthropologists looked for physical signs of a missing link, apish features and Neanderthal vestiges in certain "lower races" in order to prove or disprove Darwinian human evolution.

The European presumption of apishness in Africans had long gained a foothold and the search for African, allegedly apelike, characteristics in Australian Aboriginal bones ensued as soon as the first skeletons of the "Austral-Neger" were scrutinised in German anthropological collections. Ecker, one of the founding members of the German Anthropological Society, investigated his two skeletons to provide a "not superfluous

44 Cf. Paul Turnbull, *Ancestors, not Specimens: Reflections on the Controversy over the Remains of Aboriginal People in European Scientific Collections*, in: *The Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History*, publ. 4.27.1997, <http://www.jcu.edu.au/aff/history/articles/turnbull.htm> [7.4.2011]; id., *Theft in the Name of Science*, in: *Griffith Review* 21, 2008, <http://www.griffithreview.com/edition-21-hidden-queensland/theft-in-the-name-of-science> [7.4.2011]; Fforde, *Collecting*, p. 55.

45 On the colonial frontier see for example Henry Reynolds, *The Other Side of the Frontier. Aboriginal Resistance to the European Invasion of Australia*, Townsville 1981; id., *Frontier: Aborigines, Settlers and Land*, Sydney 1987.

contribution"<sup>46</sup> to the new discipline. He cautioned that the "comparative anatomy of the races" was far from permitting any generalisations as long as German collections were so scarcely furnished. Emphasising that he merely compared the skeletons of "very particular Negroes with particular Australians" and a European, he nevertheless treated these bones of individuals as race representatives and hoped the skeletons would properly confirm what their skulls had already demonstrated: a stage of the Australian below that of the Negro.

The bones, much to his astonishment, suggested "the Australian stands closer to the European than the Negro". But the skulls, whose foreheads seemingly lacked the signs of the civilised brain structure shaping European temples, contradicted this surprise finding. Their skulls, in conjunction with additional information on supposed Australian cultural and intellectual inferiority, ultimately put Aborigines back in their expected place. A colonial government report on the nature of the Aborigines and the "general opinion of the colonists" provided Ecker with all the necessary information to affirm their low state. In fact, documenting the diversity in opinion on Aboriginal physique and intelligence, Ecker was still certain of their "low capacity" for civilisation, scientific education and moral instruction. With recourse to colonial discourse on Aboriginal inferiority he thus saved the superiority of the European from the bony attack of the lower race.

Göttingen's zoologist Wilhelm Moritz Keferstein agreed – and disagreed with Ecker's conclusions. Yes, the Australian skeleton stood above the Negro and the first impression suggested apishness, he concurred. But no, Australians should not be placed on the lowest rank of the human kind. The zoologist felt obliged by contemporaneous difference in opinion to investigate the skeleton of a "genuine cannibal" and "famous chief", which was presented to the Göttingen Zoological Museum by the Melbourne botanist Ferdinand von Müller. Affirming that it certainly belonged to an "outstanding man" of high rank, Keferstein inferred that the cannibalistic skeleton represented a race "far away from civilisation". Ignoring Ecker's cautious disclaimer regarding generalisations, Keferstein confidently announced "we may hope to find well pronounced the typical, genuine Aus-

46 Ecker, *Kenntnis der Eingebornen*, p. 337, the following citations pp. 338 FN (comparative anatomy, individuals), 345 (hope and surprise), 362 (colonists' opinion conveyed to Ecker by Vogt), 368 (capacities). Ecker, as well as Keferstein and Lucae, whose anthropological investigations will be considered below, referred to Victoria Parliament, Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Aborigines, Melbourne 1859.

tralian traits".<sup>47</sup> To him the social and cultural positioning of an individual strongly suggested the existence of collective skeletal race traits.

Apart from evidence of "some fateful experiences" such as broken ribs, a bumpy skull and spinal injuries, he indeed found allegedly low or apish (thus typically Australian) traits. Notwithstanding this, he dissociated Australians from the lowest stage by emphasising the occurrence of European characteristics in the skull and skeleton. Furthermore, Keferstein assured that despite their ugly noses their physical appearance was not as appalling as usually described. In fact, strong beards and straight hair accorded them with an "honourable appearance". Drawing on the same colonial report as Ecker, he assured that at least the children approached their European peers' intellect – and there was potential for improvement. "In the skeleton as well as in the outer appearance and the intellectual characteristics the Australian presents himself therefore not so far away from the European, and is ahead of, e.g. the Negro, in many regards", Keferstein concluded. While his raising of the Australians into the elevated European realm may appear surprising, it was in accordance with Keferstein's objective to assert the unity of mankind based on zoological reasoning. He had previously found that certain skeletal features of wild animals differed from the corresponding bones of their domesticated counterparts. Australian bones, in his opinion, differed from those of Europeans in a similar way resulting from their "pure life under natural conditions". Imagining Australian Aborigines thereby as undomesticated humans, Keferstein insisted that they nevertheless differed less from Europeans than the Indian pig from the European swine. If it was justified to categorise the latter as members of a kind, there was no doubt Australians and Europeans were so as well.<sup>48</sup>

As the examples of Ecker and Keferstein illustrate, the physical anthropological investigations of nineteenth century scientists by no means generated unequivocal results. Both "hoped to find" conclusive Australian characteristics, but were quite unaware that the acknowledgement of such hope exposes the prejudiced nature of their investigations. While Ecker was astonished to find the opposite of his presumptions, Keferstein interpreted his fulfilled expectations to further his ends. More importantly, their physical anthropological expertise on racial difference could neither exist nor could it suffice without recourse to colonial discourse on the alleged inferiority of Aboriginal culture and intellect.

47 Keferstein, *Skelett eines Australiers*, pp. 14 (apishness), 16 (ranking), the following citations pp. 4f.

48 *Ibid.*, pp. 7 (fateful experiences), 11 (noses), 15 (appearance), 14 (life conditions), 16 (pigs).

Not all anthropological experts though resorted to cultural evidence as openly as Keferstein and Ecker. The recipient of Consul Kirchner's generous skeletal presents, the Frankfurt anatomist and craniologist Johann Christian Gustav Lucae, eagerly used them to demonstrate his newly invented drawing apparatus and his technique of reproducing human brains by filling skulls with glue. Lucae did not feel the need to establish the intellectual lowliness of Aborigines by reference to colonial discourse. He bluntly compared the glue-brains of the "lowest and highest races", viz. the "Austral-Neger" and the European. Puzzled at their similar sizes he switched to different categories for their assessment and found that the latter's brain was not only heavier, but also resided in a far more advanced and advantageous position. While the centre of European intellectual capacity was located more to the front of the skull and in a higher position, the brains of the lowest race sat right behind their eyes – "in the face".<sup>49</sup>

Ecker, Lucae and Keferstein investigated the first Australian Aboriginal human remains that were appropriated by German anthropologists since Blumenbach acquired his New Hollander skulls. They belonged to the first generation of German physical anthropologists who dedicated their investigations to their newly established natural scientific discipline and were highly sceptical of Darwinian ideas on human evolution. In the ensuing decades Darwinist anthropologists kept looking for ape-like features in Aboriginal bodies, living and dead, but turned away from comparisons with Africans in favour of hominid fossils. Instigated by Thomas Henry Huxley's remarks on certain similarities between the Neanderthal skull fragment and two particular Australian skulls in the collection of the London College of Surgeons, physical anthropologists set out to unveil an ancient missing link between man and animal in the bodies of Australian Aborigines.<sup>50</sup> Subsequently, their skulls and bones featured prominently in comparative studies of the Neanderthal and Java Man fossil remains.

A puzzling concern that remained for those concerned with the racial categorisation of human diversity was the classification of Australian Aborigines and the determination of their relations to other human groups. The frequently used label "Austral-Neger" is reminiscent of Blumenbach's approximation of the New Hollander to the Ethiopian. Others categorised and labelled them as Papuans, equally based on skin colouration and hair

49 Lucae, *Morphologie der Rassenschädel*, pp. 516 (lowest race Austral-Neger), 526 (face).

50 Cf. Thomas Henry Huxley, *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature*, London, 1863, p. 165; id., *Fernere Bemerkungen ueber die menschlichen Ueberreste aus dem Neanderthale*, in: *Archiv für Anatomie, Physiologie und wissenschaftliche Medicin* 1865, pp. 1-24, here pp. 15, 23f.

texture. These categorisations were intrinsically connected to the question of human origin and diversification, especially in the argumentative framework of Darwinist anthropologists. However, the more they searched for conclusive signs of racial relations, primitiveness and originality the more confusion anthropologists often experienced. Notwithstanding these difficulties, they constantly called for more "material" and constructed "better" measurement procedures and illustration methods.

### Conclusion

As Bronwen Douglas explains, "[t]he tension between the rival imperatives of human unity, racial diversity, and the taxonomic impulse is an undercurrent in Blumenbach's discussion of the Malay variety".<sup>51</sup> Blumenbach's utilisation of the New Hollander makes the inherent ambivalence resulting from this tension tangible. It also highlights the fundamental instability of racial classification encountered by Blumenbach and his collecting and measuring successors of the nineteenth century.

Notwithstanding their general agreement on the reality of racial hierarchies, the scientifically legitimised "alienation of bodies"<sup>52</sup> for the racialising classification and evaluation of thereby inferiorised humans always remained a fragile enterprise for anthropologists; in theory and in practice. Not only did the skeletal specimens often prove inconclusive or stubborn, contradicting their expectations, but also did anthropologists disagree on their methodology and frameworks for interpretation. They frequently amended these problems by changing their criteria, as Luceae's shift from brain size to weight and location demonstrates. This strategy permitted them to discover in the skulls and bones what they were preconditioned to see and interpret despite a range of inconsistencies. In this way the physical anthropological "expertise" on human races was the result of European minds contaminated by contemporaneous imperialist ideologies of white male superiority over all non-white peoples.<sup>53</sup>

Many more Indigenous human remains were plundered from traditional last resting-places or snatched from prison, asylum and mission graveyards and hospital morgues throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Australia. Aboriginal Australians have fought for the return of

51 Douglas, *Novus Orbis Australis*, p. 107.

52 On the ideologically legitimised alienation of racialised bodies see the essay collection in Wulf D. Hund, ed., *Entfremdete Körper, Rassismus als Leichenschändung*, Bielefeld 2009.

53 Cf. for example Wulf D. Hund, *Negative Vergesellschaftung. Dimensionen der Rassismusanalyse*, Münster 2006.

their "Old People" for decades, with significant success in Australia and Great Britain. German institutions holding anthropological "material" have yet to acknowledge the atrocious circumstances under which their collections came into being and take responsibility for their repatriation – in the British-Australian as well as German colonial contexts.

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# "All is Race"

## Benjamin Disraeli's Conceptions of Inclusion and Exclusion

Simone Beate Borgstede

This essay discusses conceptions of inclusion and exclusion in Disraeli's discourses of race, nation and empire drawing on his novels, his letters and his political and parliamentary speeches. It argues that Disraeli's race discourse played its distinct part in both systematising and popularising race as an increasingly important axis of social difference in the middle of the nineteenth century.

The British novelist, Tory MP and later Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli's phrase "all is race" was considered eccentric when first made public in his novel *Tancred* in 1847. It was used by Gladstone and a number of intellectuals to accuse him of being a Jewish traitor to Bulgarian Christians in the Bulgarian Atrocities campaign in the mid-1870s, and taken up by Hitler to ideologically legitimate German National Socialist politics of extermination. Hannah Arendt, discussing it in *Origins of Totalitarianism* claims that we cannot blame Disraeli for that.<sup>1</sup> However, what was it all about? A critical reflection on Disraeli's work and practices of inclusion and exclusion related to race, nation and empire will help develop an understanding of the centrality of race for his thinking and conceptualising of the world.

Disraeli, an Englishman of Jewish heritage and key architect of modern conservatism believed that European civilisation had its origins in the East and wanted to reconcile Judaism with Christianity. From the beginning of

<sup>1</sup> This essay is based on my thesis 'All is Race.' Benjamin Disraeli on race, nation and empire, UCL 2010 that will be published in autumn 2011. I would like to thank Wulf D. Hund for introducing me to cultural studies and particularly the analysis of racism as 'negative societalisation' (Negative Vergesellschaftung). Benjamin Disraeli, *Tancred, or the New Crusade*, Bradenham Edition X, London 1927, p. 153 – all novels are from this edition if not mentioned otherwise. R. W. Stewart, ed., *Disraeli's Novels Reviewed, 1826-1968*, Metuchen, NJ, 1975; Anthony S. Wohl, "Ben JuJu": representations of Disraeli's Jewishness in the Victorian political cartoon, in: Todd M. Endelman, Tony Kushner, eds., *Disraeli's Jewishness*, London etc. 2002, pp. 105-161. E.g. Hitler in an address to the Reichstag, 6 April 1942 quoted in Jim Walker, *Hitler's Bible – Monumental History of Mankind*, 2006, [www.nobeliefs.com/HitlerBible.htm](http://www.nobeliefs.com/HitlerBible.htm) [22 September 2010]. The campaign opposed the violence of Turkey's troops in answer to an uprising in Bulgaria and accused Disraeli of supporting Turkey instead of the Bulgarian Christians. Hannah Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft. Antisemitismus, Imperialismus, totale Herrschaft*, 6th edition Munich 1996, pp. 185, 190.

his career he became the target of antisemitic attacks. He presented himself as a descendant of an 'ancient race' on equal footing with the highest nobility.<sup>2</sup> In his novels he answered antisemitism by deconstructing antisemitic stereotypes. He argued that without the Jews there would have been no Christendom. Europe, and especially the English, should recognize how indebted they were to the Jews for their culture, which they thought made them superior to every other people. Diving deeply into the race-notions of his time when these claimed a high status for the Jews, he developed his own view of history in reference to the genius of 'ancient races' and 'great men', who to him were the "personification of race".<sup>3</sup>

In his 'Young England'-period in the 'hungry forties', when Disraeli participated in an opposition of young MPs in favour of social reforms within the conservative party, he articulated an inclusive concept of the nation. Britain was beset with class divisions, as one of the results of industrialisation. "Society in this country is ... almost paralysed" his Jewish hero Sidonia argued – how were 'the elements of the nation to be blended again together?'<sup>4</sup> The threat of industrial and social revolution made the question of national unity crucial and Disraeli chose the novel to present his vision of a united nation. Novels, as the novelist Anthony Trollope recognized, "are in the hands of us all; from the Prime Minister down to the last appointed scullery-maid".<sup>5</sup>

### **The Centrality of Race**

The centrality of race to Disraeli's way of conceiving history and mapping the world is most striking in his novels. As the literary critic and theorist Cora Kaplan argues, "in the fantasmatic register in which literature operates an alternative history opens up, with a complicated narrative of its own, but one that is at the same time constitutive of the social real, representing most eloquently and sometimes scarily its affective dimensions".<sup>6</sup> In his fiction Disraeli not only tried to come to terms with his personal experience of

2 Cf. Isaiah Berlin, Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx and the Search for Identity in: *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society*, 22, 1968-1969, pp. 1-20, 10.

3 *Tancred*, p. 154.

4 *Coningsby, or the New Generation*, p. 252.

5 Anthony Trollope, *On English Prose Fiction as a Rational Amusement* quoted in Deirdre David, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, Cambridge 2001, p. 1.

6 Cora Kaplan, *Imagining Empire: history, fantasy and literature*, in: Catherine Hall, Sonya Rose, eds., *At Home with the Empire. Metropolitan culture and the imperial world*, Cambridge etc. 2006, pp. 191-211, here p. 211.

exclusion but to think through and develop experimentally his conceptions of inclusion and exclusion.

Disraeli experienced exclusion related to his Jewishness as a schoolboy. He visited Jerusalem after a nervous breakdown in 1830-31 and wrote his first reflections on the horrible feeling of being 'the other' in his autobiographical novel *Contarini Fleming* in 1832. One year later he published *Alroy*, the story of a Jewish 'Prince of the Captivity' leading his people against their oppressors. Disraeli started to see himself as a Jew in response to the antisemitic attacks against him on election hustings from the mid-1830s. He went on exploring Jewish history and responding to antisemitism in the political trilogy *Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845) and *Tancred* (1847). Across this work he developed an increasingly systematic thinking on race.<sup>7</sup>

For Disraeli, the issue was not to defend Jews against antisemitism by drawing on the idea of a universal humanity, but he felt they needed to be defended against antisemitic attacks because they were special. In his view, appealing to universalism would only foster the pressure of assimilation. In the parliamentary debate on Jewish emancipation in 1847 he accused his MP colleagues of being "influenced by the darkest superstitions of the darkest ages that ever existed in this country".<sup>8</sup> It was this conduct which should have been the subject of discussion – not the condition of British Jewry. Arguing for Jewish emancipation he saw himself as righting a wrong and, moreover, preventing Jews from becoming rebels as in other European countries.

Disraeli stressed that Judaism was the basis of Christianity and thus the heart of the whole English/British<sup>9</sup> culture and actual way of life: "The Hebrew intellect thus installed civilised Europe"; otherwise, "the German race might have remained barbarians". He claimed, the Jews "acknowledge[d] the same God" and the English were "indebted" to them "for ... the whole divine knowledge". In this spirit, he let his Jewish heroine Eva in *Tancred* argue that "the holy race supplied the victim and the immolators", otherwise, "what would have become of the atonement?" In the preface to the

7 Cf. Charles Richmond, *Disraeli's Education*, in: id., Paul Smith, eds., *The Self-Fashioning of Disraeli, 1818-1851*, Cambridge etc. 1998, pp. 16-41; *Contarini Fleming*, pp. 4-6; Borgstede, dissertation chapter 2.

8 For assimilation see *Tancred* p. 393-409; Hansard, XCV, 16 December 1847, p. 1329.

9 Cf. Catherine Hall, *The Nation Within and Without*, in: id., Keith McClelland, Jane Rendall, *Defining the Victorian Nation: class, race, gender and the British Reform Act of 1867*, Cambridge etc. 2000, pp. 179-233, here p. 180.

Hughenden Edition in 1870 he saw it as his "duty to ascend to the descendants of that race who had been the founders of Christianity".<sup>10</sup>

But Disraeli did not stop here. It was not enough to reconcile Christianity with Judaism. He sensed that the golden age of religion was past. The new god was science. The German philosopher Kant had pointed to the significance of race for human history. Some scientists like the well-known German professor of anthropology Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, and following him the physician and ethnologist James Cowles Prichard, had argued that the Jews were part of the Caucasian race, as were the Anglo-Saxons and most Europeans. Disraeli took this up and added that the Jews could be considered the only Caucasian race that was unmixed.<sup>11</sup>

In Coningsby, Sidonia, Disraeli's 'personification' of the Jewish 'race' or ideal type to counter antisemitic stereotypes

was well aware that in the five great varieties into which Physiology has divided the human species ... the Caucasian, the Mongolian, the Malayan, the American, the Ethiopian; the Arabian tribes rank in the first and superior class, together, among others, with the Saxon and the Greek. ... But Sidonia and his brethren could claim a distinction which ... the rest of the Caucasian nations, have forfeited. The Hebrew is an unmixed race.

Here, Disraeli categorized the Hebrews as Arabs, a race differentiated through religion into Mosaic Arabs and Mahommedan Arabs. Describing the young Sidonia he even spoke of "that precocity of intellectual development which is characteristic of the Arabian organisation". Focussing on the biological factor he claimed: "An unmixed race of a first rate organisation are the aristocracy of Nature. Such excellence is a positive fact; not an imagination ... but perceptible in its physical advantages, and in the vigour of its unsullied idiosyncrasy".<sup>12</sup>

Echoing wider European race discourses of the eighteenth century, like David Hume's essay 'Of National Characters', Kant's 'Of the Different Human Races' and Johann Kasper Lavater's 'Essays on Physiognomy', and in unison with the anatomist Robert Knox or the Comte de Gobineau, biology and culture belonged together in Disraeli's concept of race: "To the unpoluted current of their Caucasian structure, and to the segregating genius of their great Lawgiver, Sidonia ascribed the fact that they had not been long

10 To the editor of *The Morningpost*, 16 August 1845; *Hansard* XCV, 16 December 1847, 1323; *Tancred*, p. 201; General Preface to the 1870 Hughenden Edition, reprinted in *Vivian Grey* I, pp. xiv f.

11 *Letters* IV, 1433; there is a hint to Kant in *Contarini Fleming*, p. 331; Immanuel Kant, *Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte*, Akademie-Ausgabe VIII, Berlin 1968; James Cowles Prichard, *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, 3rd ed., London 1836, IV, pp. 595f.

12 *Coningsby*, pp. 226, 231f.

ago absorbed among those mixed races" but flourished "in all the primeval vigour of the pure Asian breed".<sup>13</sup>

Sidonia urged Disraeli's English aristocratic hero Coningsby to "study physiology". Even the English were a "race ... sufficiently pure". They were a "famous breed ... these Goths, and Saxons, and Normans". The second novel of the trilogy, *Sybil, or, the two nations*, is indeed a hymn to the mixture of Normans and Saxons, which is completed in the marriage of the Norman aristocrat Egremont with Sybil, the Saxon daughter of a Chartist. Disraeli's two nations are not only two classes – the aristocracy and the working class – but two races:

Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws ... THE RICH AND THE POOR.<sup>14</sup>

In the biography of George Bentinck (1851) he argued "The Norman element in our population" had waned; "the influence of the Saxon population" was "felt everywhere", and hence "the honour to industry, the love of toil, the love of money". In *Tancred*, Disraeli had Sidonia claim that it was "her inhabitants" that let "England flourish" – it was "an affair of race. A Saxon race, protected by an insular position" had "stamped its diligent and methodic character on the century. And when a superior race, with a superior idea to Work and Order" advanced, they might become beaten, since "All is race; there is no other truth". Here his focus on the cultural element was to counter the anatomist Robert Knox' campaign of lectures on race throughout the country in which Knox made the Jews the "Sansculottes", as George Mosse has argued convincingly.<sup>15</sup>

Against Matthew Arnold's praise of "Hellenism" and its "sweetness and light" in contrast to "Hebraism" which excluded the Jews from belonging to the same "great race" as the Anglo-Saxons by stressing an exclusive Aryanism, Disraeli claimed in *Lothair* "God works by races" and argued again for a Caucasian race which included Aryans and Semites, calling the Greeks and the Jews its "choicest families". In his last novel *Endymion* (1881) Disraeli stressed that blood rather than language made race, countering the German Oxford-Professor Max Müller's claims about Sanscrit as the ancient language from which the European languages descended which

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 232.

<sup>14</sup> Coningsby pp. 265f.; *Sybil, or the Two Nations*, p. 77.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Benjamin Disraeli, Lord George Bentinck, *A Political Biography*, New Brunswick 1998, p. 239; *Tancred*, pp. 153f.; George L. Mosse, *Die Geschichte des Rassismus in Europa*, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, p. 92.

distanced the Jews from the English.<sup>16</sup> Disraeli used race as an umbrella-category, when welding the biological and the cultural indistinguishably together in his constructions of race. As Stuart Hall claims, biology and culture are "racism's two registers". The slippages between the biological and the cultural show the flexibility of race in his discourse. What let him emphasise 'blood' in one moment and 'Work and Order' in another was due to the requirements of the specific historical conjuncture.<sup>17</sup>

While he claimed in *Tancred* that all was race, because it included everything, he specified this in the 1870 preface arguing that race could be seen "as the key of history". He put this idea in concrete form in his speech at Manchester in 1872, when he spoke of the importance of sanitary reform for the maintenance of the British Empire, since the country needed healthy workers and soldiers: "the history of that country will soon be the history of the past" where "the stature of the race every ten years" diminished. Addressing students of the University of Glasgow in 1873 he warned:

Under such circumstances, the supremacy of race, which is the key of history, will assert itself. Some human progeny, distinguished by their bodily vigour or their masculine (sic!) intelligence, or by both qualities, will assert their superiority, and conquer a world which deserves to be enslaved.<sup>18</sup>

### **Race and Nation and Those at its Margins**

Exploring the status of exclusion the Jews experienced throughout their history in Europe in *Coningsby* and *Tancred*, Disraeli developed a degree of empathy and sympathy with others who he felt were also excluded. He realised that this might make them rebels. He needed to develop, popularise and make hegemonic an inclusive notion of the nation, which made it possible to hail those excluded on different terms and to include them in ways which strengthened and consolidated the nation.

16 Cf. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1867) London 1960, pp. 72, 43; Lothair, p. 397; Patrick Brantlinger, *Disraeli and Orientalism*, in: Charles Richmond, Paul Smith, eds., *The Self-Fashioning of Benjamin Disraeli, 1818-1851*, pp. 90-105, here p. 102; Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, p. 221; Endymion, p. 246; Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race. Aryanism in the British Empire*, Houndsmills 2002, pp. 41-44.

17 Cf. Stuart Hall, *Conclusion: the multi-cultural question*, in: Barnor Hesse, ed., *Un/settled Multiculturalisms. Diasporas, entanglements, transruptions*, London etc. 2000, pp. 209-241, here p. 223; Borgstede, dissertation, p. 84.

18 'Preface', p. xv; 'Conservative Principles', *Speech at Manchester April 3rd 1872*, republished in: Sir Edward Boyle, ed., *Tory Democrat. Two famous Disraeli speeches*, London 1950, p. 31; William F. Monypenny and George E. Buckle, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli Earl of Beaconsfield*, edition in six volumes, London 1910-20, V, p. 265.

Addressing working-class people in *Sybil*, Disraeli drew on his parliamentary speeches on Chartism where he had criticised all parties for not taking up the Chartist demands for political rights, particularly the vote, for working-class men in serious debate in 1839, since "although they did not approve of the remedy suggested by the Chartists" they might need "to cure the disease complained of". To him, the issue was neither purely one of political rights nor economic hardships. The New Poor Law of 1834 which had deprived people of the right to a life-preserving amount of wheat in order to create a flexible labour market, was understood "on the part of the people", as an invasion of civil rights. The ruling Whig-aristocracy, intoxicated by political economy, had abandoned the traditional bonds between rich and poor without creating new ones. This, Disraeli felt, would lead to havoc which in his novel *Sybil* was embodied in the Hellcats led by the 'Black Bishop' burning the castle – not the only occasion on which he associated blackness with 'rough' working-class rebels, and thus distancing these from the 'respectable'. While these rebels, like other 'uncivilised peoples', had to be excluded, it was essential to include respectable working-class people to prevent them from becoming rebels.<sup>19</sup>

Disraeli promoted social inclusion and cohesion in class terms when he had the opportunity in 1867 and 1875. His management of the Second Reform Act as the Leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons led to the extension of the franchise to a considerable part of the male working class. As Prime Minister he supported his Home Secretary Cross against his colleagues in cabinet in installing the Labour Laws which – as he saw it – put workers on the same footing with their employers, and thus extended belonging to the nation, which the Reform Act had opened up. Prior to this the Master and Servant Act had still led to severe punishment of workers in case of breach of their contracts; ten-thousand were prosecuted every year. Moreover, the Conspiracy Acts against the unions were abolished in 1875. Disraeli's claim in a letter to his friend Lady Bradford, "[w]e have settled the long & vexatious contest between Capital & labour", echoes his hero Egremont's declaration in the House of Commons in *Sybil*, "that the rights of labour are as sacred as those of property".<sup>20</sup>

Disraeli's concern with national belonging extended beyond questions of class. He understood that women were not content with a life strictly ordered by the concept of 'separate spheres'. In his private relations, women played an important part. Both his sister Sarah, and later his wife Mary

19 Hansard XLVIII, 12 July 1839, 246-248; *Sybil*, p. 322; Borgstede, dissertation, p. 79.

20 John Saville, 1848. *The British state and the Chartist movement*, Cambridge 1987, p. 14; to: Lady Bradford, 29 June 1975, BRA BC.B15 B302; *Sybil*, p. 339.



Ann were confidante and critic alike. He needed their emotional support and their reliance on him. However, he also wanted their intellectual judgement, their independence of mind. He marvelled at women in powerful positions like the queen or the widowed Lady Londonderry.<sup>21</sup>

The heroines and heroes of his novels demonstrate his questioning of hegemonic gender stereotypes. Men are not always shown as strong; sometimes, on the contrary, women take the lead. One of these, Theodora in *Lothair*, is even a female Garibaldi. Another strong-minded woman in the same novel enters a Catholic convent – the monastery is already in *Sybil* the only alternative to marriage. In *Endymion*, the political career of the hero is based on the work of two women: his sister Myra and his mistress. The way these women are portrayed conveys a clear message: as long as women were not included in the body politic, they would do politics on their own terms – rebelling, as rich political hostesses, for example, or with intrigue – or their capacities would be lost to society in the seclusion of the monasteries.<sup>22</sup> Disraeli argued in 1848 against the exclusion of women from the franchise:

in a country governed by a woman – where you allow women to form part of the other estate of the realm – Peeresses in their own right, for example – where you allow a woman not only to hold land, but to be a lady of the manor and hold legal courts – where a woman by law may be churchwarden – I do not see, where she has so much to do with State and Church, on what reasons, if you come to right, she has not a right to vote.<sup>23</sup>

To him women, though different from men, were not a race apart. However, when managing the Second Reform Act, to Disraeli the 'working-class question' had priority. Reflecting on this issue in a private letter in 1872 he saw it as the Conservative Party's gravest failure not to have placed women on the same footing as men. It was "injurious to the best interest of the country". Were they not the "mothers of England"? The nation depended on them.<sup>24</sup>

The rebellious Irish, however, presented a more urgent problem. Ireland's secession would mean the beginning of the end of the British Empire. In the early 1830s Disraeli racialised the Irish as a "savage population" and denounced their rebels as an "inferior race". By the mid 1840s his thinking had shifted. He discussed Ireland's colonial status. The problem was that a

dense population in extreme distress inhabited an island where there was an established church which was not their church; and a territorial aristoc-

21 Borgstede, dissertation, pp. 137-142.

22 Ibid, pp. 154-157.

23 Hansard XCIX, 20 June 1848, p. 950 .

24 To: Charles Keith Falconer, 26 November 1872 BL ADD MS60, 753A; to: [Unknown] April 1873 H H/Life [R144-1087]; *Sybil*, p. 163.

racy, the richest of whom lived in distant capitals. Thus they had a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church, and, in addition, the weakest executive in the world.

In other cases the "remedy" was "revolution", but because of the union "with another and a more powerful country" this was not possible. Therefore "the duty of an English Minister" was "[t]o effect by his policy all those changes which a revolution would do by force". As he had argued in relation to Chartism, the solution was fundamental reform from above.<sup>25</sup>

At the peak of the Irish famine Disraeli suggested huge government loans to bring people into employment by building railways. Supporting the scheme of his friend Lord George Bentinck, the leader of the Protectionists, which included "endowment of the Catholic church, tenants' compensation for improvements" and "taxes on absentee landlords",<sup>26</sup> he stressed, Ireland was "as much part of the United Kingdom as Yorkshire and Lancashire".<sup>27</sup> However, Disraeli could not persuade the Irish MPs to support the railway loans.

During the European revolutions of 1848, Chartists and Irish rebels united to challenge the rule of the British Empire from within. Ireland had not been pacified and Fenianism was the response. When militant actions overshadowed his managing of the Reform Act in 1867, Disraeli suggested he could "only account for the Fenian movement on the epileptic principle".<sup>28</sup> By presenting Fenianism as disease, madness, he came close to racialising one part of the Irish – their rebels, thus excluding them while he went on to hail Irish subjects as an important part of the nation.

When Disraeli understood that he had not been able to win the hearts and minds of the Irish people, he concluded that the Irish had lost their "common sense", which made government by consent impossible. His vision of "a united people welded in one great nationality", ruling the "Empire, whose flag floods on many waters" was threatened. However, not by the alien blood of the Celts but because in the long run a people always in rebellion against English domination placed themselves outside of civilisation.<sup>29</sup>

25 To: The House of Lords, 23 April 1836, Runnymede XVII, Letters, II, pp. 400-02; Sybil, pp. 112, 368; Hansard LXXII, 16 February 1844, p. 1016.

26 Paul Smith, Disraeli. A brief life, Cambridge 1996, p. 118.

27 Hansard's XCIII, 28 June 1847, p. 1040.

28 Hansard CLXXXV, 15 March 1867, pp. 1949f.

29 Hansard CXV, 25 March 1851, p. 603; Hansard CCXX, 2 July 1874, pp. 960-963.

### The Imperial Race and its Other(s)

What made Disraeli's politics truly 'imperial' was his grasp of the dialectic of the empire 'out there' and the empire 'at home'. Already in *Sybil* he had argued that only a limited class in England had participated in "the riches of the world". His one-nation-vision depended on an expanding economy of empire ruled by an imperial race and invited those exploited at home to see themselves as the rulers of all these alien people abroad.<sup>30</sup>

After the experience of the European Revolutions and a rebellion in Ceylon in 1849, Disraeli developed the revolutionary idea of making the colonies "integral portions of the United Kingdom" by introducing colonial MPs. In 1851 he expanded, it might "tranquillise the colonies, revive their affection to the metropolis".<sup>31</sup> The empire should be founded on "the *municipal* principle".<sup>32</sup> As stabilizing as this concept might have become, Lord Derby stopped him presenting these suggestions in parliament. As Gramsci noted, "[t]hat imperial parliament would, however, [have] had to legislate for Britain too, which for a Briton is an absurdity".<sup>33</sup>

Disraeli mapped the empire according to race. Indians belonged to diverse races; some of them were considered to be of Aryan descent. Though he created a highly stereotyped uncivilised Indian as a member of a multicultural band of streetrobbers in Alroy, Calidas, Disraeli did not effeminise the Bengali, as was so common, presenting him as the other of the 'manly Englishman'. Perhaps he distrusted this kind of stereotyping because of his own experience. Opposing claims for vengeance after the 'Indian Mutiny' he spoke of bad government which had led to what he called a "national revolt" and the necessity for fundamental change. He had already challenged the rule of the East India Company in 1853 and abolished it in 1858. He now advised the Queen to address her Indian subjects directly.<sup>34</sup> In his second premiership, Disraeli felt united with the Royal family against the racism Indians suffered from English officers who were "speaking always of the inhabitants of India – many of them descendants from the great races – as 'niggers'". He felt relieved when he could report to the Queen that "stringent instructions" had been sent to India "to ... discourage these

30 *Sybil*, p. 69.

31 Letters to Lord Derby, 28 December 1849 and 18 December 1851, both in *Letters V*, pp. 1943 and 2209.

32 To: The Duke of Northumberland, 6 January 1852, *Letters VII*, p. 2219x.

33 Antonio Gramsci, *Further Selections of the Prison Notebooks*, London 1995, p. 261.

34 Alroy, pp. 44, 104; Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinities: the 'manly Englishman' and the 'effeminate Bengali' in the late Nineteenth Century*, Manchester 1995; Hansard CXLVII, 27 July 1857; CXXVII, 30 June 1853.

abuses".<sup>35</sup> He was in favour of the creation of the title Empress of India, arguing: "[o]ur colonists are English". They "look upon themselves, and rightly, as brother Englishmen".<sup>36</sup>

Disraeli was always more interested in India than other parts of the British Empire. He felt that in Canada, First Nation people, the Australian Aborigines, or the Maori of New Zealand could be neglected, since they were not a threat to the maintenance of Empire. People of African descent, however, occupied his attention. In his race fantasies 'mingling' English blood with them might lead to a degeneration of the Imperial race, and the end of the Empire:

What would be the consequence on the great Anglo-Saxon republic, for example, were its citizens to secede from their sound principle of reserve, and mingle with their negroe and coloured populations? In the course of time they would become so deteriorated that their states would probably be reconquered and regained by the aborigines whom they have expelled, and who would then be their superiors.<sup>37</sup>

To mark difference, Disraeli in his second novel, *Contarini Fleming* (1832), distinguished between the stereotypical imagination of the 'negroe's' skin colour as black and the white snow.<sup>38</sup> He was writing this at a time when the question of slavery was very pressing in British society. In his early novels the 'negroe' was either a servant or a eunuch defending an Oriental harem. In these images, the 'negroe's' skin colour was contrasted with bright coloured clothes and white horses; he was paraded like a valuable animal. In his 'Sketches' he presented Africans as being close to nature: "[a] Nubian passed me in a state of nudity". "In this country, the animal called man is fine, although his wants are few". Addressing the Nubian as animal he mused "[a]re his ancestors the creators of the adjoining temple, covered with beautiful sculptures, and supported by colossal figures fifty feet in height?" Obviously, this was a case of a race "worn out".<sup>39</sup>

The African characters in his novels were an African streetrobber in Calidas' gang – the only person without a name and religion, Disraeli's base of civilisation – Oran, a Moor in service of Count Alarcos who represented the 'noble savage' by not violating the racial boundary between a black man and a white woman – a reworking of Shakespeare's *Othello* –

35 To: Lord Salisbury, 13 December 1875, OCC BPD 6164, pp. 117-20; To: Queen Victoria, 24 December 1875, RAC 140.

36 Hansard CCXXVII, 9 March 1876, p. 1726; CCXXVIII, 20 March 1876, p. 280.

37 Bentinck, p. 323.

38 *Contarini Fleming*, pp. 331; 320.

39 'Egyptian Thebes' in 'Sketches' in Henrietta Temple. *A Love Story*, Earl of Beaconsfield K.G., II, Chancellor's Edition, New York 1904 p. 120; *Tancred*, p. 401.

and the Queen of Sheba, whose wisdom let her acknowledge the superior wisdom of the Jewish King Solomon, again a reference to antiquity.<sup>40</sup>

In his biography Disraeli quoted Bentinck denouncing "the idleness of the slaves after emancipation", lamenting, they "ride their horses!!! I don't think when John Bull paid Pounds 20,000,000 to knock off their chains, he meant to make idle gentlemen" of them. Disraeli clearly was not distancing himself from this presentation of Jamaican people of African descent as born to be exploited by British masters.<sup>41</sup>

His opinion of the capacities of Africans was revealed again during the war against the Indian uprising in 1858, when the President of the Board of Control wanted "to raise a black force for service in India". Disraeli used this debate to muse on "the capabilities of the Kroomen" whether "they were a race admirably adapted for naval warfare", or, "shooting with the rifle".<sup>42</sup> Their "capabilities" were exclusively conceived of as utility for the British.

The dichotomy between 'black' and 'white' constructed here is also obvious when he warns white Americans of "the introduction of foreign races in large numbers as citizens, not brought up under the laws and customs which were adapted to a more limited and homogenous race".<sup>43</sup> In 1865, at the end of the civil war he expanded, "[t]here will be several millions of another race emancipated; legally in the full enjoyment of the rights of freemen... placed upon an equality with the Saxon race, with whom they can possibly have no sympathy".<sup>44</sup> As they knew from Jamaica "in practice there will be a difference – a marked difference" – blacks and whites were "certainly not identical". His conclusion reads like a plea for racial segregation.

When during his second government in 1875 the new Sultan of Zanzibar visited Britain, Disraeli constructed an equally clear dichotomy of Caucasian and African describing the Sultan and his African chiefs: "[t]hey were not good-looking, but he himself is an Arab with a well-favored mien, good manners, a pleasing countenance, & the peculiar repose of an Oriental gentleman". Moreover, he was "not darker than a Spaniard of Andalusia" and certainly not inferior to any English gentleman.<sup>45</sup>

40 Alroy, pp. 44f; Lothair, p. 249; *The Young Duke; Count Alarcos. A Tragedy* (1839), Hughenden Edition, London 1882; Ania Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*, Oxford 2002, pp. 91-111; Coningsby, p. 261.

41 Lord George Bentinck, Letter to Mr. Burn, 16 January 1848 in Disraeli, Bentinck, p. 309.

42 Hansard CXLIX, 14 April 1858, pp. 1044f.

43 Hansard CLXIX, 5 February 1863, pp. 81f.

44 Hansard CLXXVII, 13 March 1865, pp. 1573f.

45 To: Lady Bradford, 13 June 1875, BRA BC.B15 B295 ('Oriental'); to: Lady Chesterfield, 13 June 1875, BRA BC.C57 C208 ('Spaniard').

Disraeli initially developed his race discourse to counter antisemitism. Though sensitive to exclusionary practices determined by race and politically fond of empire as 'universal' government, he nevertheless became a strong promoter of the importance of racial difference, hierarchy and segregation, and suggested until the end that race was the motor of history. His race discourse clearly echoes wider scientific and public discourses on race of the period and played a distinct part in systematising and popularising race as the main concept for mapping the world and hierarchising its people/s in Victorian Britain. It did not only legitimise 'the small island nation' ruling an empire 'where the sun never sinks', but made this rule appear natural.

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## The Popularisation Phase



# **Antisemitism – the Racist Form of Jew-hatred**

Micha Brumlik

This essay concerns historical, social and psychological aspects and causes for antisemitic ideology. It explores different forms of Jew-enmity and Jew-hatred, from classical pagan writing and policies to Christian anti-Judaism and anti-emancipatory Jew-enmity during the formation of nineteenth century nation states to the eliminatory Jew-hatred of National Socialist Germany to today's manifestations of antisemitic ideology and practice by nationalist right wing and radical Islamist extremism. The essay shows that each form of antisemitism recurs to previous versions of Jew-enmity while at the same time modifying and adding new elements of anti-Jewish resentment according to its specific social framework.

## **Preliminary Remarks**

Provided that apart from economic, territorial and demographic interests, political ideologies are involved in state crimes, antisemitism was the essential cause of an unparalleled crime in world history: the industrial killing of six million European Jews by National Socialist Germany.<sup>1</sup> This ideology, which emerged in the nineteenth century,<sup>2</sup> arose from an occidental tradition that has evolved over centuries, even millennia. In this case, it was and continues to be a matter of differently palliated forms of Jew-enmity and Jew-hatred.

Accordingly, Jew-enmity finds expression in prejudice ("Jews think about nothing but money") and in generalising resentment ("I knew a Jew who looked at me disapprovingly"), but also in the form of individual aggressiveness, as well as targeted humiliation and defamation, right up to manslaughter and murder. Within the scope of total, dictatorial regimens, as in National Socialism, Jew-enmity assumed the shape of a state crime. This means Jews were stigmatised (imposed wearing of the yellow star, imposed additional first names), disenfranchised (prohibition to exercise their learned occupations, rapacious taxation, pilferage of their property concealed as civil sale – "Aryanisation") and eventually murdered (killing of six million European Jews by deliberate starvation, forced labour, ex-

1 Cf. Saul Friedländer, *Das dritte Reich und die Juden. Die Jahre der Verfolgung 1933-1939*, München 1998; id., *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden. Die Jahre der Vernichtung 1939-1945*, München 2007.

2 Cf. Massimo F. Zumbini, *Die Wurzeln des Bösen. Gründerjahre des Antisemitismus: Von der Bismarckzeit zu Hitler*, Frankfurt am Main 2003; Ulrich Sieg, *Deutschlands Prophet. Paul de Lagarde und die Ursprünge des modernen Antisemitismus*, München 2007.

ecution by shooting, industrially organised mass murder by lethal gas). In contrast to the view of many non-Jewish and also Jewish scholars, Jew-enmity is not a natural constant of society, not even in the Christian occident. Jew-enmity is a social phenomenon and, therefore, can only be explained with reference to social causes; in doing so, the term "social causes" must not be reduced to the economic but take into consideration social psychological and ideological factors.

### **Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism**

Several forms of Jew-enmity are understood by the term "antisemitism", which can be and are expressed in unfounded, spontaneous resentiments, prejudices which are unfounded and wrong in substance, as well as in individual, group-related and institutional behaviours; from verbal agitation and political discrimination to mass murder. The more than two thousand year old Jew-hatred rekindles time and again in the history of Europe and finds expression in differing intensity, changes its form in the context of the society in which it appears and in correspondence to its everyday life. In the European context, the distinction between a church-bound anti-Judaism and a modern racial antisemitism is a crucial issue. Although modern racial antisemitism presupposes clerical anti-Judaism, they are not identical.

Anti-Judaism regards Jews as deicides, children of Satan and inhibitors of salvation – characteristics they can renounce by a conversion to the faith of the Church. By contrast, in modern racial antisemitism, which developed during the early nineteenth century in the wake of anti-Judaism, religious consciousness does not play any role at all. According to this world view, blood and descent determine the actions of the individual Jewish man, the individual Jewish woman. A catchphrase for the early antisemitic movement documents this in rhyme: "What he believes is all the same / in the blood does run the shame".<sup>3</sup> This racist Jew-hatred is a consequence of the civil emancipation of the Jews that remained incomplete in nineteenth-century Western and Central Europe.

### **Jew-hatred in the Age of the Nation-state**

The possibility of following different and antagonistic religious denominations that were, nevertheless, based on the same Holy Scripture emerged with the Reformation. Consequently, the modern debate on the relation between faith and this new possibility generated the distinction of faith

<sup>3</sup> "Was er glaubt, ist einerlei / im Blute liegt die Schweinerei!"

as a 'confession' from ethnicity as the 'natio'. When in the context of Absolutism 'natio' became the consolidation of a people in the modern territorial state, 'nation', ethnicity and religious confession were permanently separated. In the modern nation state, faith transformed from a publicly compulsory custom – to which people belonged without dispute but not consistently – into an individual, freely selectable avowal, the 'confession'.

The Jews of Western Europe followed this trend, which was for the first time politically validated during the French Revolution, even where they did not choose to align themselves with the liberal remodelling of Jewish faith. The constitutional monarchies and democracies of Western Europe, albeit with deviations and under the permanent threat of regresses, gradually established the civil equality of the Jews and formally declared them to constitute a mere religious community within the respective nation-state. This was gratefully and almost overzealously accepted by the majority of the Jews but soon after repeatedly attacked by modern antisemitism with serious consequences.

By contrast, in Eastern and Central Europe, particularly in Tsarist Russia but also in the Danubian principalities of Romania, the medieval concept of a substantial congruency between ethnicity and religion largely survived. That the existence of Jews in the Tsardom was unlike that in Western Europe ethnically grounded is shown by the fact that the late-nineteenth-century Tsardom availed itself of deliberately applied antisemitic propaganda as a defence against revolutionist and reformist ambitions. It further burdened Jewish subjects of the Tsar with a plethora of sometimes stern, but often laxly handled occupational bans and geographical mobility restrictions. Neither the confessional nationalistic self-concept of the Western European Jews nor the collective ethnic identity of the Jews in the Tsardom, expressed in the deliberately maintained Yiddish language, prevented modern antisemitism from targeting the Jews as enemies according to their traditional conception of themselves. Thereby traditional Christian anti-Judaism intersects with a non-scientific ideological adoption of an enlightened perspective on humankind as a biological genus. The biological genus referred not so much to Darwin as to (Social) Darwinism, according to which humankind is divided into antagonistic races competing against each other in the Struggle for Existence. This ideology identified the Jews as the race, whose very mode of existence and religious beliefs particularly threatened the lives and destinies of the other races, and thus – in German National Socialism – subjected them to systematic extermination. In this context, modern antisemitism, without being considerate of special selectivity, availed itself of the 'arguments' of traditional anti-Judaism with its reproaches against the Jews as deicides, inhibitors of salva-

tion, and children of Satan. This antisemitism was sparked off by the social upward movement of the Jews, holding them responsible for the negative consequences of capitalistic development, such as capitalisation, urbanisation, industrialisation and pauperisation.

In all of this, the antisemitic worldview in East and West followed a paranoid pattern: it is obsessed – in the light of the objective complexity of the societal circumstances – with the search for clandestine string-pullers in the background; the disclosing of causes, obscured by a supposedly conformist mainstream opinion, is its passion. Furthermore, antisemitism is perpetually inclined to systematically overestimate the leverage, power and number of Jews. Finally, antisemitism assigns the Jews in a projective wish-fulfilment an excess of wealth, sexual potency, intellectual power of subversion, and internal cohesion.

### **From Pagan Mockery to Radical Islamism Types and Developments**

Historically, Jew-enmity has found its expression as a worldview and prejudice at least in seven configurations:

1. Classical pagan writers, such as the Roman historian Tacitus, considered Jews to be disloyal and superstitious because as monotheists they rejected the emperor cult and followed food and sexual purity requirements, which were not accessible for members of other religions. Other classical authors regarded them as descendants of a group of leprous slaves who had fled Egypt and clandestinely idolised a donkey. Certainly, an increasing number of scholars of ancient history repudiate the theory that there was a systematically propagated Jew-enmity. The expedition of the Hellenistic-Syrian ruler Antiochus IV during the second century before the Common Era, reported in the Books of the Maccabees, seems to be an exception. His defilement of the temple in Jerusalem was actually only a sanction against the Jewish religion, while the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. by the generals and emperors Titus and Vespasian was directed at the counterinsurgency of an anti-imperialistic uprising in an endangered province rather than at the belief practised there. Jews were not restricted in their religious life in the rest of the Roman Empire.<sup>4</sup>

2. This changed at latest with the conversion of the Roman emperors to Christianity since Constantine. Christianity, which just as the rabbinic Judaism developed in the wake of varying Jewish persuasions, initially competed with Judaism under the pressure of persecution by the Roman

4 Cf. Zvi Yavetz, *Judenfeindschaft in der Antike*, München 1997.

emperors to subsequently be heir to it and deny its historical authority. With reference to the gospels and other scriptures of the New Testament – written at first by Jews for other Jews and later for non-Jews – Jews became regarded as the deicides responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, as children of Satan, and as the group inhibiting the salvation of the world due to their disbelief. In their writings and sermons, the Church Fathers of the second and third century combined these 'theological' characterisations with other passed-on reproaches from pagan antiquity: impiety and sexual debauchery.<sup>5</sup> The emperors, who were utterly compliant with the church, on the one hand sought to protect the Jews. On the other hand they tried to restrain them considerably by debarring them from converting members of the household to Judaism or by interdicting their ownership of non-Jewish slaves. The Christian-clerical 'anti-Judaism', which emerged at that time and was partially heir to the pagan Jew-enmity, was voiced until the time of the Migration Period, when it fell temporarily silent.

3. In the early Christian Middle Ages, according to the surviving sources, Jew-enmity had little significance. It was only in the eleventh century with the looming crisis of feudalism, which then erupted in the first Crusades, that the role of the ideal enemy image was assigned to the Jews, still ahead of the Muslims.<sup>6</sup> Even before they had reached the Holy Land, it seemed to be the Jews who now poisoned the wells, slaughtered Christian boys, worshipped Satan, and enjoyed themselves with sows in obscene ways. Furthermore, the Jews – systematically and often violently kept away from agriculture and trade – were believed to be born usurers and exploiters, following outright the very same Judas who according to the New Testament betrayed Jesus for thirty silverlings to the Romans. These processes can be explained by looking at the media landscape and the economic situation of the High Middle Ages and the Early Modern period.<sup>7</sup> While the courts, as well as the burghs, had increasing financial requirements – the coverage of which was complicated by the prohibition of Christians to charge interest – there was only one pattern of interpretation, one master narrative in the Christian culture in which the suffering of the people could find expression: the Passion of Jesus, which, according to the merely superficially read gospels, blamed the Jews. Therefore, those who identified themselves in their sufferings with Jesus or articulated others' sufferings by reflecting

5 Cf. Rosemary Ruether, *Nächstenliebe und Brudermord. Die theologischen Wurzeln des Antisemitismus*, München 1978.

6 Cf. Léon Poliakov, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus IV, Die Marranen im Schatten der Inquisition*, Worms 1981.

7 Cf. Heiko A. Oberman, *Wurzeln des Antisemitismus. Christenangst und Judenplage im Zeitalter von Humanismus und Reformation*, Berlin 1981.

the passion narrative invariably came upon an enemy within easy reach: the Jews living in close proximity. Together with the economic interest to acquit oneself of the debts owed to Jews, this led to a series of pogroms and expulsions during the High Middle Ages, driving a large part of the Jewish population, who were living in Western Europe and German countries, to Poland and Russia.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, the religiously directed ideology of 'anti-Judaism' in principle provided the persecuted and threatened Jews the possibility to convert to Christianity and thus secure themselves against persecution. In this context fifteenth-century Spain attracts attention. The copious, partially voluntary conversion of Jews to Christianity (the so-called Conversos were for generations considered 'New Christians') created distrust and hysteria, culminating in dreadful inquisition trials against ostensible Jewish heretics and the eventual expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. The suspicion against the Conversos' loyalty to the church in the fifteenth century found its expression in the firm belief in the "purity of blood", the "limpieza de sangre" (one would have to say the purity of 'Christian blood'). This doctrine was not only directed against the Jewish Conversos but also against the descendants of the Moorish conquerors remaining on the Spanish Peninsula, the "Moriscos". Both Conversos and Moriscos got caught in the clutches of the Inquisition. Since here – regardless of the known faith – Jewish descent played the crucial role, one can by all means speak of an early or proto-racism.<sup>9</sup>

4. The Age of Renaissance and Reformation exhibited opposed tendencies in relation to the Jews: while some humanists – often referring to Jewish sources – began to develop a concept of human dignity inclusive of every individual man, the reformatory reasoning of Martin Luther once more exacerbated the theological Jew-enmity.<sup>10</sup> Luther, with reference to the Church Father Augustine, attributed justice and law to the god of the Hebrew Bible – thus also to the faith of Judaism. In contrast, he associated love and mercy with Christianity and to Jesus of Nazareth, known as Christ. Thereby Judaism took the place of all those powers which inhibited human emancipation and virtually became their epitome.<sup>11</sup>

8 Cf. Frantisek Graus, *Pest, Geissler, Judenmorde. Das 14. Jahrhundert als Krisenzeit*, Göttingen 1987.

9 Cf. Poliakov, *Antisemitismus IV*.

10 Cf. Heinz Kremers (ed.), *Die Juden und Martin Luther – Martin Luther und die Juden. Geschichte, Wirkungsgeschichte, Herausforderung*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1985.

11 Cf. Micha Brumlik, *Deutscher Geist und Judenhass. Das Verhältnis des philosophischen Idealismus zum Judentum*, München 2000.

5. The Age of Enlightenment was not only characterised by a fierce criticism of religion but also by a disenchantment of the human inspired by the emerging natural sciences. Long before Darwin man was no longer the God-intended crown of the creation but one zoological genus among others, which, such as the breeders' experience, like the other genera was of varying quality.<sup>12</sup> After the Jews had been emancipated and had received full, individual civil rights in the France of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire, and after several German states had fallen into line under the influence or the direct dominion of France, the fight against the emancipation of Jews became the top priority for all those who opposed the French influence and the French dominion. By the same token, the anti-Napoleonic German national movement was hostile to Jews from the beginning. By articulating their conception of the world against the backdrop of both, an emerging, quasi-natural-scientific worldview and the anti-Jewish tradition, these early antisemites allowed space for images and metaphors which depicted Jews as vermin.<sup>13</sup> Then again, most of the early French socialists – but also German poets and thinkers affected by them, such as Karl Marx or Richard Wagner – saw in the Jews nothing but the personification of the parasitic bourgeoisie, particularly characterised by the logics of monetary transactions.<sup>14</sup>

6. With the foundation of the German Empire by Bismarck, who granted the Jews equal civil rights, and its ensuing economic crisis early antisemitism, which emerged during the anti-Napoleonic defensive battle, entered its concluding ideological phase. This form of racism – based on the Christian, anti-Judaist tradition – constituted a paranoid processing of the societal crises caused by the rise of modernity and the implementation of capitalism.<sup>15</sup> When the enemies of the Jews, for example Wilhelm Marr or Otto Glagau, congregated in associations and referred to themselves as "antisemites", they claimed to have a basic scientific attitude and defined Jews no longer as Jews but as members of a linguistically distinguishable race. In contrast to religious conversion or the attribution of merely subjective characteristics they made it clear that purportedly objective, deleterious biological facts could only be remedied by removing the Jews from

12 Cf. Ivan Hannaford, *Race. The History of an Idea in the West*, Baltimore 1996; George L. Mosse, *Die Geschichte des Rassismus in Europa*, Frankfurt am Main 1993.

13 Cf. Werner Bergmann, Rainer Erb, *Die Nachtseite der Judenemanzipation*, Berlin 1986.

14 Cf. Edmund Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage – Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sozialismus vom Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1914*, Berlin 1962.

15 Cf. Helmut Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland*, Frankfurt am Main 1988.

the respective racial corpus. The Göttingen scholar Paul de Lagarde,<sup>16</sup> who was in the majority of his anti-Jewish writings by no means a supporter of racism, nevertheless responded to a public controversy on, inter alia, the Jewish critiques of his works in ways that linked metaphors of the anti-Jewish worldview of the Napoleonic era with the semantics of the emerging hygienic sciences:<sup>17</sup> "It takes", as Lagard wrote in a late-1880s polemic against liberal scholars, "a heart as tough as crocodile hide, ... to not hate the Jews, to not hate and despise those who – out of humanity! – put the case for the Jews or are too cowardly to squelch this rampant vermin. There is no negotiating with trichinella and bacilli, neither are trichinella and bacilli being nurtured, they are annihilated as speedily and as thoroughly as possible".<sup>18</sup>

Modern antisemitism reacts in the form of an ideology to the critical development of capitalist modernity: to industrialisation, to modernisation, to the loss of engaging conceptions of the world, and to the reification of human relations. Modern antisemitism perceives Jews from a paranoid perspective involving conspiracy-theories, expressed, for instance, in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion",<sup>19</sup> which were fabricated by the Tsarist secret service. It views Jews above all as born "subverters" of the traditional trade and peasant economy through money, of religion and mores through science and enlightenment, of the state through treason and disloyalty, of societal authority through insubordinate journalism, as well as of the people and race through the insertion of unsound blood. In the late nineteenth century, this racial discourse consolidated – by no means only in Germany – into the ideology of an integral nationalism.<sup>20</sup> Against all of these destructive powers, as Adolf Hitler related in a letter to an acquaintance in 1919, neither pogroms nor outbursts of rage helped but only a "rational" antisemitism which consisted of the removal of the Jews.<sup>21</sup> However not even in this time of crisis was a racist, i.e. genetic and Social Darwinist, interpretation of Jew-hatred accepted as a matter of course. In the mid-1920s the nationalist author Ernst Jünger for example published an

16 Cf. Sieg, *Deutschlands Prophet*.

17 Cf. Sarah Jansen, 'Schädlinge'. Geschichte eines wissenschaftlichen und politischen Diskurses und politischen Konstrukts 1840-1920, Frankfurt am Main etc. 2003.

18 Sieg, *Deutschlands Prophet*, p. 249.

19 Cf. Wolfgang Benz, *Die Protokolle der Weisen von Zion. Die Legende von der jüdischen Weltverschwörung*, München 2007.

20 Cf. Christian Geulen, *Christian, Wahlverwandte. Rassendiskurs und Nationalismus im späten 19. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg 2004.

21 Saul Friedländer, *Jahre der Verfolgung*, p. 111, trans. id., *Nazi Germany and the Jews. The Years of Persecution 1933-1939*, London 1998, p. 96.



article in which he opted against a scientific racism and for an irrationalism of blood: "A blood without destiny is like an uncharged battery, like the centre pin of a compass without the magnetic pull. The purity and cultivation of the blood or the quality of its mixture are meaningless without this great power. Only at the touchstone of destiny does the blood prove its value". Jünger's remarks can be read as a polemic against the NSDAP's understanding of race when he continues: "We, therefore, dismiss all those ambitions, which seek to intellectually support the terms race and blood. To substantiate the value of the blood by the brain, i.e. by the means of modern science, implies to let the servant testify for his master. We do not want to hear anything of chemical reactions, of blood injections, or cranial shapes and Aryan profiles. All of that will have to dwindle into nuisance and hair-splitting and unlock the gateway into the realms of values, which the intellect will only destroy but never grasp".<sup>22</sup>

The diffuseness of the national socialist race term, which hovered between natural-scientific obscurantism, an intently natural-scientific approach, and an arbitrary humanistic definition of 'race', can be exemplified by the debates that eventually led to the racist 'Nuremberg Laws'. In the course of the preparations of these laws, two schools competed. On the one hand the geneticists taught by Gregor Mendel calculated the Jewish or non-Jewish proportions of a person following mathematic models of allocation and concluded their investigations in the finding of the types of half-, quarter- and one-eighth-Jews, each of which were charged with distinct consequences. On the other hand the so-called contagionists (the best known was the Thuringian Gauleiter Arthur Dinter, whom Hitler eventually expelled from the party) held the belief that even after a single act of sexual intercourse between a non-Jewish woman and a Jewish man his genotype entered her bloodstream. Allegedly, when the Aryan woman afterwards procreated with an Aryan man the Jewish genotype still circulated in the offspring's blood; a delusion Arthur Dinter had fabricated in his novel *Die Sünde wider das Blut (The Sin Against the Blood)*.<sup>23</sup>

Of course, both forms of racist Jew-hatred were guided by the natural-scientific model, while other known ideologists, such as H.K.F. Guenther, confessed to a positive definition of the Aryan race which allowed for subjective acts of volition for the construction of culture. The völkisch-racist

22 Ernst Jünger, *Das Blut*, in: id., *Politische Publizistik 1919-1933*, Stuttgart 2001, pp. 193 f.

23 Cf. Cornelia Essner, *Die 'Nürnberger Gesetze' oder die Verwaltung des Rassenwahns 1933-1945*, Paderborn 2002; Alexandra Pzyrembel, 'Rassenschan-de'. Reinheitsmythos und Vernichtungslegitimation im Nationalsozialismus, Göttingen 2003.

"redemptive antisemitism"<sup>24</sup> assumed by the National Socialists as the state ideology was an intrinsically inconsistent ideology. It was especially suited for the execution of exclusion, pillage, stigmatisation and, eventually, mass murder because it could justify any arbitrary measures with its non-scientificness and ideological fuzziness. Only such an ideology could motivate and palliate for a few the so far unique state crime of murdering six million European Jews in the years between 1939 and 1945.

7. The turn of the twenty-first century added two more variants to the aforementioned forms of antisemitism, which are becoming virulent particularly in societies of immigration. On the one hand nationalist right-wing extremists, who are affected by globalisation cling to the belief that the deed which discredited the antisemitic worldview once and for all, viz. the Holocaust, is in itself the result of a fraudulent conspiracy with no other goal than to break the resistance of peoples against global capitalism.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand – primarily but not exclusively – the Muslim immigrant milieu construes the policy of occupation and repression by the Israeli government against the Palestinians as a projective screen in response to the injustices experienced in the immigration country. With the exception of France and a number of immigration milieus in the Netherlands, Belgium and Sweden attitudes like these exist, of course, to a lesser extent in Europe<sup>26</sup> than in the Islamic world.<sup>27</sup> From the Islamists of Algeria in the West, whose leader Ali Belhadj hated "Crusaders and Zionists"<sup>28</sup> at least as much as Osama Bin Laden, to the Indian Ocean where the long since resigned Malayan premier Mahatir<sup>29</sup> made the case against Palestinian suicide assassins as Adolf Hitler did for a rational antisemitism, to the Iranian president Ahmadinejad and his blustering about the disappearance of Israel.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the state-controlled television of Syria and Egypt broadcasted political soaps about the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", as well as about Jewish ritual murders, without causing any objection.<sup>31</sup> In

24 Cf. Friedländer, *Jahre der Verfolgung*.

25 Cf. Deborah Lipstadt, *Leugnen des Holocaust. Rechtsextremismus mit Methode*, Reinbek 1996.

26 Cf. Souad Mekhennet, et al., *Die Kinder des Dschihad. Die neue Generation des islamistischen Terrors in Europa*, München 2008.

27 Cf. Gilles Kepel, Jean-Pierre Milelli (eds.), *Al-Quaida. Texte des Terrors*, München 2006.

28 Cf. Pierre-André Taguieff, *La nouvelle judeophobie*, Paris 2002.

29 Cf. ADL, *Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir Mohamad: On the Jews*, [http://www.adl.org/Anti\\_semitism/Malaysian\\_1.asp](http://www.adl.org/Anti_semitism/Malaysian_1.asp), [12.3.2010]

30 Cf. Matthias Küntzel, *Die Deutschen und der Iran. Geschichte einer verhängnisvollen Freundschaft*, Berlin 2009.

31 Cf. Memri TV Project 2010, <http://memritv.org/subject/en/363.htm>, [12.3.2010].

this context, the Israeli historian Yehuda Bauer referred to radical Islamism as the third great totalitarian movement beside the European fascisms and Stalinism.<sup>32</sup> The entirely modern, not Islamic but decidedly Islamist worldview sees in the Koran a programme mandating with absolute authority not only salvation in the after-life but also a just system of rule keeping capitalism within bounds. This figure of thought differs from the Darwinist conception of history of the European fascists and the historical determinism of the Stalinists only in its contents. With respect to the belief of having received instructions beyond democratic decision making by means of a super-historical iron law, which if necessary will be enforced by terrorist means, they are as alike as two peas in a pod. Just as in National Socialism and as in the Stalinist polemic against "cosmopolitanism", Jews represent the fixed concept of an enemy. While the Koran oscillates in the style of late antique religious polemic between a rhetoric of execration and remission, radical Islamism draws on the Koran's most negative anti-Jewish statements and rigidifies them into a racist stereotype.<sup>33</sup> With all of this, there was neither talk of the endemic anti-Jewish cartoons in the Arabic press, which are equal to the "Stürmer" in every way, nor of anti-Jewish rants of hate in the mosques and feature articles in the newspapers of Saudi Arabia and the Gaza Strip which approach racist agitation.<sup>34</sup>

A look at the foundational ideological writings of the radical Islamist movement<sup>35</sup> in their varying forms (from the deliberations of the Indian Sayd al Maududi to the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood Hasan al Banna<sup>36</sup> to the more challenging writings of Sayd Qutb, who was incarcerated in Nasser's prisons for years and eventually hanged in 1966) reveals a coherent picture despite all the differences. Paul Berman, in his book "Terror and Liberalism", has fairly but terrifyingly traced the worldview of Qutb, a man who suffers from the disorientation of the secular, western culture and can find stability only in a directive which seems withdrawn from human arbitrariness. According to Qutb's interpretation of the Koran's central passages on Judaism and Christianity – the intrinsically ambiguous sura 5, "The Table" – creates the Jew as the epitome of hypocrites, liars and impostors and concludes that the war started by the prophet against the Jews has to be continued under changed conditions. In actual fact, sura 5, 65 on

32 Cf. Yehuda Bauer, Der dritte Totalitarismus, in: Die ZEIT, 31.07.2003.

33 Cf. Matthias Küntzel, Dihad und Judenhass. Über den neuen antijüdischen Krieg, Freiburg 2002.

34 Cf. Memri TV Project.

35 Kepel, Milelli, Al-Quaida, pp. 85 f.

36 Joseph Croitoru, Hamas. Der islamische Kampf um Palästina, München 2007, pp. 12-64; Gudrun Krämer, Hasan al Banna, Oxford etc. 2010.

the Jews reads as follows: "those who incurred the curse of God and His wrath, those of whom some He transformed into apes and swine...".

Anyone, who considers this one-sided and alarmist and cautions against equating the attitudes of individual ideologists and preachers with those of the majority of populations and their governments and, therefore, urges to take seriously the tremendous complexity of diverse Muslim societies in the midst of open-ended modernisation crises and to not, by any means, get involved with the broad-brush picture of Samuel Huntington, is – as one would expect – also in the right. It is however possible that the elites matter more than the masses. Under these circumstances the speech of Mohammed Mahatir in October 2003, in which he with regard to the Palestine conflict requested Muslims to desist from suicide attacks and to wait for the development of weapons, bombs and rockets, appears in a different light.

One might also say that the fire bottle thrown against a synagogue in the limited world of the Parisian banlieues<sup>37</sup> corresponds to the "Islamic" bomb in the crisis zones of the globalised world. Radical Islamism endangers not only, as in France, the domestic political stability but also, as in Pakistan, global peace. Both are, beyond any conspiracy theory, interrelated, frequently mediated and without distinct centres of command and action. The answers with which liberal societies could counter this menace are yet to be found.

*Translated by Stefanie Affeldt, Hamburg, and Antje Kühnast, Sydney*

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37 Cf. Taguieff, La nouvelle judeophobie.

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## **A Letter from Abraham Geiger to Karl Nauwerck**

**In celebration of the bicentenary of the births of Karl Nauwerck (26 March 1810) and Abraham Geiger (24 May 1810) and the inauguration of the University of Berlin in the winter semester 1810/11**

Lars Lambrecht

The following text presents the publication of a letter by Abraham Geiger to Karl Nauwerck from 30 October 1843 concerning a recommendation for David Honigmann. Furthermore, the article explains its historical context.

From 1869 to 1871, David Honigmann worked on the recollections of his university years between 1841 and 1845. Thus he recorded: "I also personally took a letter of recommendation from my hometown Breslau to [Karl Nauwerck], in consequence of which I made his personal acquaintance"<sup>1</sup> or, as cited on Irene Newhouse's home page, referring to Honigmann's recollections: "and someone in Breslau had given David a letter of recommendation to Dr. Nauwerck".<sup>2</sup> The publication of the letter at hand can clarify the specific circumstances and who the writer of this recommendation was.<sup>3</sup> It was the personal recommendation for Honigmann dating from 30 October 1843, written by Abraham Geiger<sup>4</sup> in Breslau and addressed to Karl Nauwerck, a private lecturer (Privatdozent) at the University of Berlin.

1 Markus Brann, [David Honigmann], David Honigmanns Aufzeichnungen aus seinen Studienjahren (1841/5), in: Verband der Vereine für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur in Deutschland, ed., Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur, Vol. 7, 1904, pp. 133-188, here pp. 168f.

2 <http://einewhouse.0catch.com/index/dh1.html> and <http://einewhouse.0catch.com/kempen/kem-home/htm>; cf. also <http://einewhouse.0catch.com/kempen/dh1.htm> (David Honigmann), [25.8.2010].

3 Karl-Nauwerck-Familien-Archiv (KNFA), prel. sign.: 1.22, p. 84.

4 Besides the usual, not here referenced information of the Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie (ADB); cf. the still pivotal centenary issue Ludwig Geiger, Abraham Geiger, Leben und Lebenswerk, [together with Ismar Elbogen et al.], Berlin 1910 and, including the latest research, Michael Brocke, Julius Carlebach, eds., Biographisches Handbuch der Rabbiner, Teil 1, Die Rabbiner der Emanzipationszeit in den deutschen, böhmischen und großpolnischen Ländern 1781-1871, rev. by Carsten Wilke, Vol. 1, München 2004, pp. 360-363. – Abraham Geiger prepared this reference in Breslau where he had been living since 1839 (cf. Geiger, Lebenswerk, pp. 66f.).

Geiger and Nauwerck had been fellow students<sup>5</sup> in the winter semester 1830/31 and the summer semester 1831, and attended, inter alia, lectures in Arabic studies with Georg Friedrich Freytag, possibly the most outstanding specialist in oriental studies at that time. As Geiger recorded in his diary on 29 April 1831, he was then reading "the first three suras ... with two acquaintances, Nauwerck from Strelitz and Redepenning from Stettin".<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it seems that both students had been able to publish their first academic work due to Freytag's help – at least this is true in relation to Nauwerck, as far as it is known today, and in the case of Geiger it was at any rate his first important academic publication.

The reason for this is that, in 1831, Freytag had formulated – possibly also with an eye to Geiger – the university prize question titled 'Inquiratur in fontes Alcorani seu legis Mohammedicae eas qui ex Judaismo derivandi sunt', and this was subsequently answered by Geiger's prize-winning Latin essay in 1832. The latter was published in 1833 under the German title 'Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?' (What did Muhammad adopt from Judaism?).<sup>7</sup> In the following year he applied for this paper to be accepted as a PhD dissertation with a petition<sup>8</sup> presented to the University of Marburg (because the doctorate at the University of Bonn was inaccessible to him out of financial reasons); he thus was successful in obtaining his doctorate as, in today's terminology, an external candidate

5 This note serves, not least for Wulf D. Hund, celebrated in this Festschrift, to remind him of the semesters we shared in Marburg. – Geiger was, according to his diary entries, already enrolled in Bonn on 29 October 1829 and had just returned to Bonn at the end of October 1830 when Nauwerck enrolled here and continued his Berlin studies until September 1831 (cf. Ludwig Geiger, ed., Abraham Geiger's Leben in Briefen, Berlin 1878, p. 17; Geiger, Lebenswerk, pp. 13, 15; as well as Nauwerck's diary, KNFA sign.: 1.31, p. 3).

6 Geiger, Leben in Briefen, p. 38.

7 English title 'Judaism and Islam'.

8 For the petition to the Faculty of Philosophy and the covering letter to the dean cf. Geiger, Leben in Briefen, pp. 24f. – said letter was dated 4 June 1834; the certificate of doctorate, on the other hand, was already issued on 9 June 1834 (wrong statement of "1832" in Broke, Carlebach, Rabbiner, p. 360), a simply unimaginable circumstance today; even more so, if taking into account that four explicit expert opinions needed to be obtained and four additional votants had to be consulted. Remarkable is also that Geiger as a 'Jewish theologian' – a designation which was at least in the scientific meaning not yet existent – applied for the PhD, which necessitated the piquant consultation with the Christian theologians of Marburg. Marburg was the university that for the first time in Germany conferred a doctorate on a Jew in 1814, namely David Fränkel; Berlin, for example, did not follow until 1823.

without oral examination but with the verdict *oblato egregio eruditionis et ingenii specimine*.<sup>9</sup>

Geiger was one of the first academics who called attention to the Jewish roots in Islam – namely not based on ideology but in a philological-critical way by employing historical source analysis – and he also claimed the same for Christianity against the prevalent German-Christian anti-Judaism of his time. His treatise on Muhammad is far from being only 'historically' significant, and it is also not externally updating with respect to today's theological and religio-political controversies with and within Islam. But it could be understood, in conjunction with Geiger's later Judaistic research (with regard to the interrelations between Torah, Talmud, Mishnah, Gemara and the halachic texts of the rabbis), as a precursor to current studies. Geiger attempted to prove with historical-philological means that especially the Mishnah tradition of the orthodox rabbis did not originate from the bible; instead, it was the product of rabbinism, established after 70 C.E. This is also how Mendel and Edreis's, in their work 'Zweierlei Diaspora' ('The Split Jewish Diaspora') interpret the ancient separation of the 'eastern' diaspora, with its dominance of the rabbinic Talmud experts who were masters in Hebrew, and the 'western' Greco-Latin diaspora whose communities exclusively related to the bible.<sup>10</sup>

Amongst the German rabbis of the nineteenth century, Geiger was one of the most significant reformers of the Rite – if not the most significant one. He remains controversial even today, because Geiger's position was, in principle, oriented towards the Haskalah and directed against rabbinic orthodoxy. Accordingly, early on in his diary he already referred to the deep "orthodoxy, the reason of which was non-thinking" which initially dominated him. He also spoke about the liberation from these "chains of ignorance", adding that "finally the flame of enlightenment destroyed all refuse" (a not unproblematic picture today), and that the Talmud "now became more despicable every day". Later in his letters, he discussed the

9 One of the votants was David Theodor August Suabedissen who had studied theology in Marburg and, from 1822, acted as a professor of philosophy in the wake of Kant, Reinhold and Schelling. Beforehand, until 1815, Suabedissen had been a teacher in Lübeck, where he had produced a range of publications and made the acquaintance of Karl Nauwerck's father Ludwig in Ratzeburg (who became known, amongst other things, as the illustrator of Goethe's 'Faust'), cf. Lars Lambrecht, Ein Brief des Lübecker Professors Friedrich Herrmann an den mecklenburgisch-strelitzschen Kammersekretär, Maler und Dichter Ludwig Nauwerck, in: Zeitschrift des Vereins für lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde, 2008, 88, pp. 343-350.

10 Cf. Doron Mendels, Arye Edrei, Zweierlei Diaspora. Zur Spaltung der antiken jüdischen Welt, Göttingen 2010 – although Geiger remains unappreciated by them.



battle between ignorance and scientific education, the fight of the dead jog trot, which is being sanctified by the misuse of the term religion, "with the awakened veritably religious demands".<sup>11</sup>

In 1835, he founded the 'Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie' (Scientific Journal of Jewish Theology), discontinued after 1847. Within a year he demanded the establishment of a Judaeo-theological faculty for scientific training, which was not realised until 1872 when the "University for the Science of Judaism" was established in Berlin. It continues to be fiercely criticised from a Judeo-centric perspective up until today.<sup>12</sup> In Breslau on 29 May 1842, Geiger founded the "Lehr- und Leseverein" (didactic and reading society) whose objective was to introduce its members to Jewish literature, in which donations were collected for a library, and which, inter alia, served to prepare young Polish immigrants for secondary school, and in which Ferdinand Lassalle (initially an admirer of Geiger) taught Greek. In 1843, the society already had 171 members and 5 lecturers.<sup>13</sup>

Geiger gave lectures on emancipation and literature in the 1840s, and, all in all, his name did not stand so much for the emancipation of Jews as for an internal reform for the purpose of historicisation of Judaic religion.<sup>14</sup>

While Abraham Geiger remains a fairly well-known figure in today's research, one cannot claim the same for Karl Nauwerck, who remains rather unknown or was dismissed as a radical democrat and forgotten.<sup>15</sup> When Geiger in his letter to Nauwerck referred to "such extensive circles"

- 11 Geiger, *Leben in Briefen*, pp. 6f., 9, 81; his position can be understood as an "historically oriented approach to Judaism" which was initially called Reform Judaism or progressive, but today is liberal, cf. Michael Brenner, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, Michael A. Meyer, *Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit*, Vol. 2: Emanzipation und Akkulturation 1780-1871, München 1996, pp. 149f.
- 12 Cf., for example, Gershom Scholem, *Wissenschaft vom Judentum einst und jetzt*, in: id., *Judaica 1*, Frankfurt am Main 1986, pp. 147-164; by contrast, his work is honoured, for example, by the Abraham-Geiger-Kolleg at the University of Potsdam.
- 13 Cf. Monika Richarz, *Der Eintritt der Juden in akademische Berufe*, Tübingen 1974, p. 150.
- 14 With his friend Moritz Stern he "utterly concurred that the question of our time amongst the Jews is not 'emancipation' but 'reform'", Geiger, *Leben in Briefen*, p. 89.
- 15 For the preliminary research based on the KNFA see Lars Lambrecht, Karl Nauwerck (1810-1891). Ein "unbekannter" und "vergessener" Radikaldemokrat, in: Helmut Bleiber, Walter Schmidt, Susanne Schütz, eds., *Akteure eines Umbruchs. Männer und Frauen der Revolution von 1848/49*, Berlin 2003, pp. 431-462.

(L10)<sup>16</sup> with which his friend was associated, it has to be kept in mind that Nauwerck had, at the beginning of the winter semester 1843/44, not yet reached the peak of his public prominence, which he would a few months later. Therefore, Geiger could have aimed his remarks at the manifold publications of his old fellow student in Young Hegelian circles and might have had word of Nauwerck's potentially scandalous lecture at the University of Berlin, as will become apparent later.

Before Nauwerck studied together with Geiger in Bonn, he had, for the moment, taken up his theological studies in Berlin where he mainly studied Arabic. Although there is evidence to prove that Nauwerck attended Hegel's lecture on 'Logics', in his 'Vita' he described the well-known theologian and Hegel-adversary Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher as his revered teacher, and in the 'mouthpiece' of the so-called Young Hegelians, the 'Hallische Jahrbücher' (Halle Yearbooks) he explicitly did not class himself with any of the 'schools' of the time; he should therefore no longer be rated among the Young Hegelians. After his return from Bonn to Berlin and his historio-philosophical post-doctoral thesis in Halle, he qualified as a professor at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-University in Berlin. He achieved this, for one thing, partly for Arabic philology with his article 'Notiz über das Arabische Buch Thôset ichwân asszafa, d.h. Gabe der aufrichtigen Freunde, nebst Proben desselben, Arabisch und Deutsch' (Note on the Arabic book Thôset ichwân asszafa, i.e. donation of sincere friends, along with essays of the same, Arabic and German) published in 1837, for another with the paper 'De Stratone Lampsaceno philosopho disquisitis' (1836).

During the semester in Bonn, spent together with Abraham Geiger, the first journalistic achievements of the only twenty-one-year-old Nauwerck were initially a defence of their mutual teacher Freytag, directed against a review by the orientalist and theologian Heinrich Georg Ewald – one of the 'Göttinger Sieben' (Göttinger Seven) – whom Freytag had seriously criticised in the 'Göttingenschen Gelehrten Anzeiger' and Hegel's 'Berliner Jahrbücher'.<sup>17</sup> After his habilitation in Berlin, Nauwerck worked as private lecturer in the field of Arabic language (during the first semester he had 13 students, afterwards far fewer) and the history of philosophy from the winter semester 1839/40 until February 1844. At the beginning of the 1840s, he possibly attended – but to date there exists no clear evidence for this

16 For the original German citations from Geiger's letter see the corresponding line (L) in the attached reproduction of the letter.

17 Cf. Karl Nauwerck, Bemerkungen über Beurtheilung des Werkes des Hrn. Prof. Freytag durch Hrn. Prof. Ewald, von einem Orientalisten und Wahrheitsfreunde, in: Allgemeine Literaturzeitung, Intelligenzblatt, 1831, no. 50, col. 401-404; no. 51, col. 409-413; no. 52, col. 417-420; no. 53, col. 425-427.

– the so-called 'Doktorclub', which was convened by the Young Hegelian Bruno Bauer, who at that time evoked a few scandals in the emerging bourgeois press publicity, and of which also Karl Marx was a member. What is certain is that, in December 1840, Nauwerck became a member of staff at the already mentioned 'Hallische', later 'Deutsche Jahrbücher' published by the 'chief organiser' of the Young Hegelians Arnold Ruge.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Nauwerck was involved in all organs of political opposition – whether they were academic or part of the daily press, among others the 'Rheinische Zeitung' which was temporarily edited by Karl Marx – thus, he can justifiably be called the most political academic among the Pre-March Movement (A. Cornu). On the occasion of his lecture 'Vorlesungen über Geschichte der philosophischen Staatslehre' (Lectures on the history of philosophical political science), which at that time had already become famous, the Prussian King Frederick William IV – who had just been enthroned in 1840 – arranged Nauwerck's removal from his university post. Nauwerck's literary estate contains 'memory minutes' of the conversation about his dismissal with the incumbent minister of cultural affairs Johann Albrecht Friedrich Eichhorn.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, he, inter alia, became city councillor in Berlin and was elected into the St. Paul's Church Assembly via the only Berlin direct mandate. He took part in several congresses organised by democrats and the formation of a resistance-based government in the so-called Rump Parliament at Stuttgart, and he was then, in contumaciam, sentenced to death because he had previously fled into Swiss exile where he spent more than half of his life, until his death.

After these biographic details – which are more or less addressed in the fourteen-line-short letter (20 lines in the original) published below – we will take a closer look at the content:

Geiger's self-diminishment in respect of his prominence towards Nauwerck presumably was, as mentioned before, an understatement. At least it was so in regard to his impact to date, because he became more impor-

18 Cf. Wolfgang Bunzel, Martin Hundt, Lars Lambrecht, eds., *Zentrum und Peripherie. Arnold Ruges Korrespondenz mit Junghegelianern in Berlin Frankfurt am Main etc.* 2006; Lars Lambrecht, Karl-Ewald Tietz, eds., *Arnold Ruge (1802-1880). Beiträge zum 200. Geburtstag, Frankfurt am Main etc.* 2002; Nauwerck was originally meant to be the co-editor for the successor to the 'Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher' (German-French Yearbooks) planned by Marx and Ruge.

19 Edited in Lars Lambrecht, *La crise politica dell' academica filosofia e la crisi filosofica della politica – per il bicentenario della nascita di Karl Nauwerk*, in: Douglas Moggach, Massimiliano Tomba, eds., *Filosofia della crisi e crisi della filosofia nel pensiero politico posthegeliano*, Hamburg/Padua 2010 (in print).

tant than Nauwerck lived to see – and, after all, he himself had spent his days "not being idle" (L10). All the same, it is noteworthy that Geiger here showed himself to be especially grateful to Nauwerck twice. Firstly, he anticipated the "friendly attention of those with whom a favourable fortune brought [him] into deeper relationship" (L11f.). Secondly, they were "befriended through Arabic studies" (L14), i.e. through the Arabic studies with their teacher Freytag as well as the joint study of the suras. He explicitly referred to him as an "old friend" (L21). This can be (mis)understood, if you will, as a sentimental reminiscence of the youth but also as a recollection of the starting point of their shared political convictions in the context of the Arabic studies after which they "admittedly appeared in public with totally different endeavours" (L15) – i.e. Geiger tended towards Reform Judaism (in an abridged form) and Nauwerck towards an academic career and political opposition. If we understand the former as a religious and the latter as a political system, the two of them were not "far apart" (L16).<sup>20</sup>

They were similar, firstly, in their endeavour for their respective subjects' historical change and their conviction that these systems demanded and were undergoing necessary historical changes and, secondly, in their pleading for the historicisation of 'eternal dogmas' (formally akin to the historical research on the 'historical Jesus' by David Friedrich Strauß, which Geiger had acknowledged earlier) and consequently the joint rejection of any kind of orthodoxy and the holding on to the existing order.

In the following, however, Geiger explicitly, as he thought, alluded to the possible difference to Nauwerck, namely to the distance between reform and revolution, for example when he wrote that his "opinion and position were not as exposed" (L16f.) as those of Nauwerck. In terms of "opinion" Geiger referred to Nauwerck's radicalism, with "position" he presumably meant his position at the University of Berlin.<sup>21</sup> With regard to the substantive knowledge of Nauwerck's works, Geiger might have read

20 By preceding this with the note "and also regarding the length of our pathways" (L15) Geiger alluded to the fact that their joint studies only dated back twelve years and that thus the emergence of major differences was improbable; but at the same time Geiger did not rule out their possibility since he seemed not to be sure of Nauwerck's current point of view; as the following proves.

21 Even at that time the position of a private lecturer was not bright. But in comparison, Geiger's only just achieved 'naturalisation' as a Prussian citizen and, above all, his position as the second rabbi in Breslau (1840) was more than precarious since the senior and exceedingly conservative rabbi Solomon Tiktin of Breslau deprived him of any ability and activity for the duty and engaged into a veritable lawsuit at the Prussian government, lasting until his death in 1843 (cf. Abraham Geiger, *Die letzten zwei Jahre 1840. Sendschreiben an einen befreundeten Rabbiner*, in: Ludwig Geiger, ed., *Abraham Geiger's Nachgelassene Schriften*, Vol. 1, Berlin 1875 [1840], pp. 1-51).

his rather common-political and historical essays in the 'Deutsche Jahrbücher', but certainly the practical-political contributions from 1842 in the 'Rheinische Zeitung' addressing the teaching ban of Bruno Bauer and the downfall of the denunciatory literary man, Otto Friedrich Gruppe, but, most of all, the cause of (the emancipation of) the Jews.<sup>22</sup>

In relation to this, Bauer's 'Zur Judenfrage', i.e. his deliberations 'on the Jewish question' – first published as an essay in the 'Deutsche Jahrbücher' (1842) and subsequently printed as an independent pamphlet – provoked a lot of discussion among the intellectual members of the public and further played a special role for Geiger's own position. In August 1842, Geiger formulated his viewpoint – which only shortly before he had published in his contributions against Bauer – in a letter to Moritz Stern.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Geiger wrote to Stern: "With regard to you, Young Hegelianism seized you and you followed it, and your pursuit of reform of Judaism manifests itself in a

22 Cf. Karl Nauwerck, Die Sache der Juden, in: Rheinische Zeitung, 14.8.1842, p. 226; id., [Rez. zu O.F. Gruppe:] Bruno Bauer und die akademische Lehrfreiheit ... In: Rheinische Zeitung, 8.9.1842, p. 251.

23 Cf. Abraham Geiger, Bruno Bauer und die Juden. Mit Bezug auf dessen Aufsatz: "Die Judenfrage" (Deutsche Jahrbücher 1842 Nro. 274-282), Erster Artikel, in: Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie, 5, no. 2, 1844, pp. 199-234; id., Bruno Bauer und die Juden. Die Judenfrage. Von Bruno Bauer. Braunschweig, Otto, 1843. 115 Seiten 8, Zweiter Artikel, in: Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie, 5, no. 2, 1844, pp. 3245-3371. He had announced these writings as pamphlets to J. Auerbach on 14 December 1812 (cf. Geiger, Leben in Briefen, p. 163). According to Geiger, Lebenswerk, p. 426, both writings were also published in 1843 in the first two editions of the journal. The here-quoted drastic (private) utterances against the so-called Young Hegelians expressed Geiger's actual opinion but crucially differed from the politically assessing and reliable tenor of his Bauer critique without relinquishing an objectively severe controversy and a polemic overtone. He contemplated right at the beginning of the first article that "[i]t is somewhat embarrassing for me to speak out against a man and a paper the tendencies of whom were ostracised. As much as I am far from siding with these tendencies, I do not hold it fit for a man of honour to throw a stone after the one who was justly and unjustly persecuted and proclaimed (sc. Bauer had just been dismissed from the theological faculty in Bonn), and I should like to avert the semblance that I belonged to the class of those who wage an easy but insulting war when the adversary already seems to be crushed by the superior forces". (Geiger, Bauer Erster Artikel, p. 199). That Geiger took Bauer 'scientifically' seriously at all virtually verged on self-denial, if one reads the complaint in his second article, which mentioned that Bauer, in his answer to the critiques to his 'Judenfrage', had not even "mentioned in the title" those by him and Riesser (Geiger, Bauer, Zweiter Artikel, p. 371). – By the way, Geiger's application of the terminus "Young Hegelians" provides evidence for the designation of the very fraction of the Hegel school, which had only acquired vogue as a shibboleth five years before 1843.

'Society of the Free'. This is where we decidedly became dissociated from each other. I frankly confess, I loathe this Young Hegelianism with its pride of subject, I loathe this general fight against the humbleness within the human chest, against this awareness of one's own confinedness, against this inkling of a higher being, even though I gladly welcome many an achievement of the same, which emerged in the 'Deutsche Jahrbücher' within the human sphere. I further frankly admit that I am not paying homage to pantheism". At the end he affirmed: "The point which seems indecent to you may be my decision against Young Hegelianism and my divergence from Hegelian pantheism".<sup>24</sup> This matches the statement in the present letter to Nauwerck that for him the "activities of the Bauer brothers and the like [were] not invigorating" and that "little can be found of humanity and liberalism in these terrorists" (L19f.).<sup>25</sup> In contrast to this Young Hegelian position, he praised Nauwerck's "honest attempts" in the before mentioned publications with which he had "laudably distinguished" himself.

Concerning his own "opinion" he, once again, initially characterised it as a commonality: "thus I constitute in my circle a considerable extreme", even if it is relativised three times: "in my circle", "considerable", and "at least I am deemed as such" (L17f.). In this, he explicitly addressed the internal conflicts between Jewish reformers and 'orthodox' Jews – who considered him to be a 'radical', in the same way as all the reformers have been and are still called liberals today. But amongst the 'reformers' differences in opinion could also be found, since the actual so-called radicals were represented by the 'Verein der Reformfreunde' (Society of the friends of reform), whose formation began under the guidance of Theodor Creizenach in Frankfurt in 1842. Creizenach was a friend of Heinrich Heine and soon afterwards converted to Christianity. The three articles of confession were:

- 24 To Moritz Stern on 25 August 1843 (Geiger, *Leben in Briefen*, pp. 167, 170); at the end of the letter he also wrote that his essay cited above had met with approval "even in Frankfurt", whereas it is not clear what this refers to. For this cf. the exquisitely researched interpretation of this passage in Mayer, which merely needs adjustment in the minute detail that 'Die Freien' (The Unencumbered) in Berlin never existed as an organisation or society – as Mayer conjectured – but that it was only a newspaper hoax pivoting on the Bauer brothers who enjoyed sitting in pubs and serving up such stories for the note-taking gossip writers and informers which, as expected, were promptly published in the confidential reports and in the press (cf. Gustav Mayer, *Ferdinand Lassalle und die jüdische Reformbewegung*, in: *Der Jude. Eine Monatsschrift*, 5, 1920-21, pp. 26-31).
- 25 The reference to the "terrorists" (L 20) can by no means be understood using today's connotations but related to Bauer's own catchphrase of the "terrorism of criticism" which he, with a few adepts, propagated as representative of the modern individualistic self-confidence and as precursor of 'critical theory'.

"We recognise in the Mosaic religion the possibility of an unlimited education. 2. We give no authority to the collection of controversies, tracts and regulations commonly identified by the name Talmud, neither in dogma nor in practice. 3. We do not anticipate or favour a Messiah who leads the Israelites back to Palestine; we know no mother country other than the one we belong to by birth or civic relationship".<sup>26</sup> This sectarian organisation, in the German Jewish movement for reform at most marginal, was basically tantamount to total assimilation and dispensation with religion, or, as it was formulated by the then friend of Geiger, Leopold Zunz: "Suicide is no reform". This little group initially was under the guidance of Geiger's friend Moritz Stern as well as Gabriel Riesser of Hamburg and Creizenach. By identifying Stern's (intermittent) reform suggestions with the Young Hegelian sectarians surrounding the Bauer brothers in Berlin – a group called 'Die Freien' (The Unencumbered) who flirted with atheism – Geiger also delimited his own position, which was always based on the preservation of the internal unity of the Jews, on the yet-to-be-acquired terrain of science and historical research.

Significant about Geiger's letter and his debut paper on Muhammad is the proof of his knowledge of the contemporary intellectual and political debates amongst the Young Hegelians, which has been recognised insufficiently by current research. Moreover, it is a further document adding to the debate on Bauer's antisemitic 'Zur Judenfrage' which is, according to the source editions of Paul Nerrlich, Franz Mehring, Gustav Mayer et al., almost exclusively 'ideology critical' (i.e. here: without new sources and therefore without textual knowledge or knowledge of historical context), considering whether Karl Marx's objection at that time was in fact the actual antisemitic position etc. – whereas to date the counter critique of those attacked by Bauer remains ignored (with the exclusion of a few experts). And, last but not least, it is a contribution to the effective history of these Pre-March controversies extending into the 'terrible century' of Bruno Bauer favorers, such as Carl Schmitt, and into the current anti-Islamic phobias.

Now what remains is only the last name mentioned in the letter: that of David Honigmann who was the crucial reason for Geiger to write the letter to Nauwerck in the first place. Honigmann, about whom unfortunately no research exists,<sup>27</sup> was likewise a representative of reform, friends with

26 Cited in Mayer, Lassalle, p. 27. Take note, though, that Geiger could call, for example, Jerusalem a "venerable memory of the past" to which honour was due, same as it was due to every dead, whose peace must not be disturbed.

27 Apart from laudable exceptions that at least mention him every now and then, for example Richarz, Eintritt.

Geiger (the two of them friends of Berthold Auerbach, the author of the famous 'Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten', published in English titled 'Tales of Villages in the Black Forest'), solicitor, secretary to the city council of Breslau, city councillor and a democrat during the revolution of 1848/49 in Breslau. Previously, he had studied the 'Rugensche Jahrbücher' there and, together with Lassalle, he had taught Latin, German and History at the 'pre-secondary school' of Geiger's "Lehr- und Leseverein".<sup>28</sup> He was, however, soon very critical of Lassalle.<sup>29</sup> Honigmann is an outstanding historical example for the Jewish tradition in Germany to whom his great-great-granddaughter, Barbara Honigmann, dedicated a worthy yet too short tribute in her essay 'Von meinem Urgroßvater, meinem Vater und von mir' (My great-grand-father, my father and I).<sup>30</sup>

However, the very same Nauwerck – who was addressed in Honigmann's memories who, in turn, was recommended by Geiger – only became famous after Geiger's letter in February 1844. We will return now to Geiger's initial self-diminishment and to commemorate the third bicentenary event: the anniversary of the founding of the Friedrich-Wilhelms-University in Berlin. Honigmann remembered the situation of that time, the 'case Nauwerck' at the University of Berlin. He did this with sympathy but quite aptly, which can also be seen as a discovery of a further source for the research on Nauwerck:

The inducement to this ... movement [i.e. the formation of liberal student associations] was ... the prohibition of public lectures given by the private lecturer Dr. Karl Nauwerck. ... In the winter of 1844,<sup>31</sup> Nauwerck

- 28 Brann, Honigmann, *Aufzeichnungen*, p. 151; cf. Alex Bein, *Lassalle als Verteidiger Geigers und der jüdische Lehr- und Leseverein in Breslau. Zwei Jugendarbeiten Ferdinand Lassalles*, in: *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*, 9, nos. 33-36, 1966, pp. 330-341, here: p. 333. Amongst other things, as a law student in Berlin in 1844 he was able to place as a debut paper his 'Die deutsche Belletristik als Vorkämpferin für die Emancipation der Juden' in Theodor Mundt's 'Freihafen'.
- 29 His caustic characteristic of Lassalle: Brann, Honigmann, *Aufzeichnungen*, pp. 152-155; but cf. Shlomo Na'aman, *Lassalle*, Hannover 1971, p. 51, who warned to be cautious since Honigmann only reports "his impressions and ... not facts" und "since later he was a member of the narrow circle of Aron Bernstein who was a true mortal enemy of Lassalle's".
- 30 Cf. Barbara Honigmann, *Damals, dann und danach*, München 2005, pp. 39-55.
- 31 Here Honigmann, himself, revised in a footnote the erroneous dating to the winter semester of 1843/44 as well as the irregular title to 'Geschichte der philosophischen Staatstheorie' as it was meant to be announced in the prospectus and which was then published under the title 'Vorlesungen über Geschichte der philosophischen Staatslehre in 'Wigands Vierteljahrsschrift' (1844, 1, no. 1, pp. 1-17; no. 2, pp. 91-133; no. 3, pp. 178-215; no. 4, pp. 268-302; 1845, 2, no. 1, pp. 9-73).



announced a so-called 'Publicum' on the history of state philosophy. He managed to convey edgy attacks on our governmental conditions and the political theories of the ruling parties in his lectures about Greek and Roman antiquity, Aristotle and Cicero; all under the banner of impartial science. Without pathos, to all appearance with the most distant objectivity, but at the same time with bitter logic, in an otherwise lacklustre, almost monotonous mode of speaking which, due to its delicate Mecklenburg dialect, had an exotic appeal, he told the truth to the government, which previously had never been heard in the holy lecture theatres of the alma mater. Soon the large lecture halls could no longer hold the numbers of listeners piling in who came from all professions.<sup>32</sup> The government intervened by ... inhibiting the lecture ... Amongst the students this caused profound excitement, which was given vent to through demonstrations and manifestations of tribute to the reprimanded lecturer but had no further immediate success, other than sowing in the minds of the young the wind, which resulted in the sad reaping of the whirlwind in 1848. Nauwerck, himself, later was persecuted as a supporter of the most extreme democracy and had fled to Switzerland where he still lives. That I took an active interest in all these proceedings is self-evident.<sup>33</sup>

*Translated by Stefanie Affeldt, Hamburg, and Antje Kühnast, Sydney*

- 32 This perfectly corresponds with the way how no less a figure than His Majesty the King of Prussia, Frederick William IV, got agitated in the presence of his minister of state: "Lösen Sie mir das Räthsel, wie der p. Nauwerck, ein bekannter patentirter Revolutionär hier an der Universität Privatdocent geworden ist, und wie man ihm den größten Hörsaal, d.h. Schelling's und Savigny's Katheder einräumt!!!!!! Ich bin tief betrübt über diesen entsetzlichen Mißgriff, der den werdenden guten Geist der Studenten wieder sehr gefährdet. Es muß endlich in meinem Geist verfahren werden". Cited in Lambrecht, *Radikaldemokrat*, p. 434 ("Could you unravel the mystery how p[rof.] Nauwerck, an infamous revolutionary could have become a private lecturer at this university and how it is possible that he has been granted the largest lecture theatre, indeed Schelling's and Savigny's lectern!!!!!! I am deeply disheartened by this terrible mistake, which will again endanger the students' nascent good frame of mind. It is about time that procedures followed my principles".)
- 33 Brann, Honigmann, *Aufzeichnungen*, pp. 168f. From the aforementioned footnote follows – apart from another short summary of the lecture and hints to the statement, which was demanded by the government, from the faculty of philosophy which could not see any offence in the actions of Nauwerck – that Honigmann had found "amongst his papers a report on the Nauwerck matter which was intended for a newspaper but queried by the body of censors" (*ibid.*, p. 169). If the report had been preserved, we leastwise had a proof of a student of Nauwerck.

Geiger, Abraham, Berlin 30. Oktober 1843 an Karl Nauwerck (KNFA, vorl. Sign.: 1.22,84)

[vs] Hr. Wohlgeb[oren]  
Cfn. Dr. Nauwerk,  
Privatdocenten an der k[öni]gl[ichen]. Universität

5 zu

Berlin

[rs.]

Breslau 30. October 1843

Geehrtester Herr!

Ob Sie sich meiner noch erinnern? Nun, warum sollte ich dies mir nicht schmeicheln dürfen? Ich habe  
10 allerdings nicht in so ausgedehnten Creisen gewirkt, aber doch nicht müßig meine Tage hingebracht  
u[nd]. darf aber auf eine freundliche Beachtung derer, mit denen ein günstiges Geschick mich tiefer in  
Beziehung gebracht, hoffen. Ich ergreife daher gerne die Gelegenheit, die die Reise des cfn. Stud.  
Honigmann, eines jungen talentvollen Mannes, der seine Studien in Berlin fortsetzen will, mir verschafft,  
um mich in Ihrem Andenken aufzufrischen. – Durch Arabisch befreundet, sind wir freilich in der  
15 Öffentlichkeit mit ganz andern Bestrebungen aufgetreten, und auch bei der Länge unserer Bahnen  
nicht gerade sehr weit aus einander. Ist auch erst meine Ansicht wie Stellung nicht so weit  
hinausgeschoben wie die Ihrige, so bilde ich doch in meinem Creise ein ziemlich Äußerstes,  
wenigstens werde ich dafür gehalten. Jedenfalls haben Ihre ehrlichen Bestrebungen mir nun Achtung  
für Sie eingeflößt, und ist mir auch der Gebrüder Bauer u[nd]. ähnlicher Treiben nicht erquicklich  
20 u[nd]. ist bei diesen Terroristen von Humanität u[nd]. Freisinnigkeit wenig zu finden, so haben Sie vor  
diesen rühmlich sich ausgezeichnet. Als alter Freund werden Sie nun hoffentlich meine Empfehlung  
freundlich aufnehmen u[nd] gelegentlich mich auch mit einigen Zeilen bedenken.

In achtungsvoller Ergebenheit

Geiger.<sup>34</sup>

34 Später von Nauwerck mit Bleistift (blaue Farbe) nachgetragen: Abrah[am]. Geiger  
Rabbiner, Schriftsteller,  
ein Studiengenosse  
in Bonn

(Nauwerck added to the letter in (blue) pencil writing: "Abrah[am]. Geiger, rabbi, writer, a fellow student in Bonn".)

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# 'White' Nation – 'White' Angst

## The Literary Invasion of Australia

Stefanie Affeldt

Australian invasion novels were meant to be a tocsin for a country allegedly more interested in sports and leisure than in politics and defence. By telling dystopian stories about a dismal future, their authors urged the establishment of a national army, to unite the classes against the invading foe, and to populate the country while challenging the ties to Britain. These novels not only provide a picture of the stereotypical depiction of Asians and the efforts to close the borders against these undesired immigrants, but also shed light on the intra-societal tension of a country during its early years as a 'white' nation. This article shows how the novels authors used racist elements related to colour, gender, nation, and class to tell tales of invasion in an allegedly endangered 'white' Australia around the time of the Federation in 1901.

*"Australia was true to her destiny ... she stayed white"*  
(William Lane)

The years after the autumn of 1912 turned out to be a tough time for Australia. A stretch of land in the north had been clandestinely invaded. Now a small Japanese society flourished in a British protectorate there on the northern shore. The attempts of the 'White Guard' to fend off the intruders were fruitless. Warnings and appeals for help by the Australian government went unheard. Sold out by a motherland that put trade relations before the safety of its dominion and without a proper national army to defend the vast continent, Australia was falling prey to a nation that was not only numerically superior but also more adapt and suitable to populate the tropical north. White Australia was lost ... or was it?

This dismal vision, contrived by Charles H. Kirmess in his novel 'The Australia Crisis' (1909), is no isolated horror story but part of a genre that became substantial in the last three decades of the nineteenth century in Australia, as well as in Britain and the United States.<sup>1</sup> The novels were

1 Cf. Charles H. Kirmess, *The Australian Crisis*, Melbourne 1909. For a survey of Australian invasion novels see, for example, Robert Dixon, 'Imagined Invasions', in: id., *Writing the Colonial Adventure. Race, Gender, and Nation in Anglo-Australian Popular Fiction, 1875-1914*. Cambridge etc. 1995; Neville Meaney, 'The Yellow Peril'. Invasion Scare Novels and Australian Political Culture, in: Ken Stewart, ed., *The 1890s. Australian Literature and Literary Culture*, St. Lucia 1996, pp. 228-263; David Walker, 'The Invasion Narratives', in: id., *Anxious Nation. Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850-1939*. St Lucia 1999. For invasion novels from Britain and Anglo-America see, amongst others, Ignatius F. Clarke, *Voices Prophesying War, 1763-1984*, London 1966; Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*, Ithaca

dystopian phantasies as well as serious considerations of a possible future which told of the probable invasion by foreign forces and the assumed ensuing consequences.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, the expiring century saw the questioning of the heretofore taken for granted white supremacy in the European colonies. Although being white meant being a member in "an aesthetically as well as morally, intellectually, and culturally privileged part of humankind",<sup>3</sup> the ideology of white superiority was increasingly pressurised. Of all things, it was Charles H. Pearson's twenty-year residence in Australia that was the inspiration to the pivotal study which made him the thought leader of imperilled global white domination. In his main work, 'National Life and Character', Pearson distinguished two kinds of 'inferior races'. Australian Aborigines, 'Kanakas', and other 'primitive' indigenous peoples were deemed "evanescent races" which posed no menace since they were considered doomed to extinction. However, there were those who were not moribund but "too numerous and sturdy to be extirpated". Pearson was concerned that certain nations of the world, in particular African Americans, Chinese, and Japanese, seemed to reproduce at a much higher rate than the 'white race'. By the virtue of their adaptability to the tropical climate they were able to populate landscapes which seemed out of bounds for the climatically unfit whites and would become a hindrance to the expansion of European colonies. Eventually this would lead to a "globe girdled with a continuous zone of the black and yellow races".<sup>4</sup>

In Australia, the invasion genre proved especially popular due to its remote and isolated geographical position. The continent which was to become the white bastion in the southern hemisphere was forced to bid defiance to what was scandalised as the "growing flood of coloured races". As the "isolated outpost of western civilisation" it was considered "the most vulnerable part of the British Empire" – threatened by external as well as internal foes.<sup>5</sup> In particular the 'empty north' posed a problem due

1988; Brian Stableford, 'The Battle of Dorking and Its Aftermath', in: id. *Space, Time, and Infinity. Essays on Fantastic Literature*, San Francisco 1998.

2 One of the first invasion novels was George T. Chesney's 'The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer', London 1871, a fictional account of Germany's invasion of Britain in the context of the Franco-Prussian war.

3 Wulf D. Hund, 'Die weiße Norm. Grundlagen des Farbrassismus', in: Max S. Hering Torres, ed., *Cuerpos Anómalos*, Bogotá 2008, pp. 171-203, here p. 197.

4 Charles H. Pearson, *National Life and Character. A Forecast*. London 1894, pp. 34 ('evanescent'), 33 ('extirpated'), 89 ('globe').

5 Wulf D. Hund, 'White Australia oder der Krieg der Historiker', in: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 51, 2006, 3, pp. 345-353, here p. 351 ('flood') – for the importance of 'whiteness' in the context of Australia see also id., *Mit der Weißheit am Ende. Australien und das Erbe des Rassismus*, in: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 46, 2001, 5, pp. 600-609; Andrew Markus, *Of Continuities and Discontinuities*.

to both its tropical climate allegedly unhealthy to northern Europeans and its closeness to the highly populated Asian countries which were thought to use the unpeopled northern coasts as stepping stones to unobserved immigration.

At the same time cheap, coloured labour from Asia and the Pacific Islands was introduced to replace former convict labourers on cotton and sugar plantations and in the pearl industry. This fanned internal racial fears and, at the end of the nineteenth century, led to strong anxieties about the 'yellow peril' and a fierce debate concerning the 'Kanaka question'. The former expressed a perceived danger coming from without Australia. It was assumed that the overpopulation in the neighbouring Asian countries, especially China and Japan, would cause large-scale (legal and illegal) migration to Australia and, in the worst case, the displacement of white Australian settlers. First signs of this were perceived in the influx of Chinese during the goldrushes in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The second debate played an important part in the intra-Australian pre-Federation discourse. It related to the labour question in the Queensland sugar industry and the demand, expressed most emphatically by the labour movement, to replace the sugar workers from the South Sea Islands (commonly called 'Kanakas') with European workers. Both of these strong concerns about 'aliens' in Australia eventually found legislative expression at the Federation. As the 'pillars' of the White Australia Policy two acts were passed: the Immigration Restriction Act which effected the exclusion of the majority of Asian migrants and the Pacific Island Labourers Act which initiated the expulsion of almost all the South Sea Islanders from Australia.<sup>6</sup>

### **'White or Yellow': A Literary Armament**

In the context of the tension between the firm belief in white superiority and the direct experience of the susceptibility of whiteness in Australia, the

Reflections on a Century of Australian Immigration Control, in: Laksiri Jayasuriya, David Walker, Jan Gothard, eds., *Legacies of White Australia. Race, Culture and Nation*, Crawley 2003, p. 178 ('outpost'); Joseph Cook, Defence Minister, in his address to Parliament upon the Defence Bill 1909, cited in Henry P. Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia. From the Sixteenth Century to World War II*. Melbourne 1991, p. 87 ('vulnerable').

- 6 For the 'yellow peril' see Bill Hornadge, *The Yellow Peril. A Squint at some Australian attitudes towards Orientals*, Dubbo 1976; Timothy Kendall, *Ways of Seeing China. From Yellow Peril to Shangrila*, Fremantle 2005. For an investigation into the 'whitening' of Queensland's sugar industry in the context of the 'White Australia' ideology see Stefanie Affeldt, *A Paroxysm of Whiteness. 'White' Labour, 'White' Nation and 'White' Sugar in Australia*, in: Wulf D. Hund, Jeremy Krikler, David Roediger, eds., *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, Berlin 2010, pp. 99-131 and id., 'White Sugar' against 'Yellow Peril', paper presented at the conference 'Images of Whiteness', Oxford 2011.

invasion genre increasingly attracted the attention of the Australian public. The Australian invasion novels described the sometimes triumphant, sometimes unsuccessful attempts to protect 'White Australia' against invading countries. While fears of invasion were invoked by a variety of countries, such as France, Germany, Russia, China, Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia, it was the stories of Asian invaders which were the most published.<sup>7</sup>

These narratives were meant to be understood as a tocsin, amplifying the public awareness to problems concerning the lack of defence, the intra-societal tensions and the perception of relations to of the British motherland. As "dramatic construction of the new world on the base of the old",<sup>8</sup> they warned the readers of a possibly dismal future and sensitized the public for the latent threat of an Asian invasion. The "Commonwealth" was to "be roused to a sense of danger ... by patient investigation of its real position in the world and of the possibilities arising thence".<sup>9</sup> By setting the storyline in the near future, the authors of the novels suggested that the present situation was urgent but still offered the possibility to change the run of events to the better.

Among the invasion novels published in Australia until the First World War were: 'The Invasion' (1877) by George Ranken, 'The Yellow Wave' (1885) by Kenneth Mackay, 'White or Yellow? – A Story of the Race-War of A.D. 1908' (1888) by William Lane, 'The Battle of Mordialloc' (1888) by Edward Maitland, 'The Coloured Conquest' (1904) by Thomas R. Roydhouse, 'The Australian Crisis' (1909) by Charles H. Kirmess. Later novels of the same genre in the twentieth century and ongoing include 'Celestia: A Fantasy A.D. 1975' (1933) by A. L. Pullar, 'Fools' Harvest' (1939) by Erle Cox, 'The Invasion' (1968) by John W. Hay. This special genre of utopian literature spans as far as 1999 when John Marsden published the last part of his 'Tomorrow' Series.<sup>10</sup>

7 Cf. Timothy Kendall, *Using the Past to Serve the Present*, p. 110. For an invasion by European powers see, amongst others, the anonymous novella 'The Fall of Melbourne' (1885) which deals with French invaders in South Australia. Cf. Enstice, Webb, *Aliens & Savages. Fiction, Politics, and Prejudice in Australia*, Pymble 1998, p. 144.

8 Nan Bowman Albinski, *A Survey of Australian Utopian and Dystopian Fiction*, in: *Australian Literary Studies* 13, 1987, 1, pp. 15-28, here p. 16; see also Meaney, *Peril*, p. 230.

9 Kirmess, *Crisis*, p. i ('Commonwealth', 'investigation').

10 Ranken described the invasion by Russians while in Mackay's and Maitland's novels Russians and Chinese were the invaders. Solely Chinese invasions were depicted by Lane, Pullar and Hay, Cox let the fictive Cambasia intrude, and Marsden used an undefined country in South-East Asia. Not few of the invasion novels were published under pseudonyms: Ranken adopted 'W. H. Walker' as the nom de plume, Lane used the pen name 'Sketcher', Maitland published his 'Battle' anonymously and Roydhouse called himself 'Rata'. For a bibliography of invasion novels see Lyman T. Sargent, *Australian Utopian Literature: An Annotated, Chronological Bibliography 1667-1999*, in: *Utopi-*



The invasion novels of the time around the Australian Federation established a genre which closely interlinked four complexes of racist argumentation discussed in this article.<sup>11</sup>

*'Savage Chinamen' & 'Cunning Japs'* identifies the colour racism which served to draw boundaries between those invading and those defending. In defining the Asian invaders in contradistinction to the white Australians, the classist chasm could be bridged and the otherwise heterogeneous white society was united against the 'yellow waves' of invaders.

*'New Women' & 'Lascivious Invaders'* analyses how gender racism constituted the Australian men as the defenders of both 'White Australia' and white women, while at the same time urging the latter's need for supervision and submission. An emphasis was put on the women's need for protection and the role of women as bearer of racial purity but also, due to their susceptibility for the Asian men, as the crucial weak spot of the 'racial health' of the Australian society.

*'Conniving Capitalists' & 'True Australians'* is the contraposition of two factions exposing the class racism which was reversed in these narrations. Not the lower classes endangered the society by their inability, lethargy and collaboration with 'racial others' but the capitalists and politicians. The businessmen were accused of putting their business before the nation by bonding with the Chinese or Japanese while the political leaders grovelled before the imperial government.

Lastly, *'Nigger Empire' & 'White Australia'* sheds light on national racist elements in the Anglo-Australian relation which was overshadowed by Australian anxieties caused by Britain's siding with China and Japan. Indignation was voiced against the attitude of indifference towards the reports of Asian invasion and the British refusal to support Australia with weapons or arms.

### **'Savage Chinamen' & 'Cunning Japs'**

As "textual productions of a nation obsessed with ceaselessly marking out, and protecting, its borders" the invasion novels mapped the delimitations of who could qualitatively call themselves Australian in soon-to-be White Australia.<sup>12</sup> The guarding and maintenance of both these borders was,

an Studies 10, 1999, 2, pp. 138-173 and Russell Blackford, *Australian Science Fiction*, in: Nicholas Birns, Rebecca McNeer, eds., *A Companion to Australian Literature since 1900*, Rochester 2007, pp. 375-386.

11 For the manifestations of racisms see Wulf D. Hund, *Rassismus*, Bielefeld 2007, in particular pp. 16 ff., 70; for the foundations of colour racism see id., *Die weiße Norm*.

12 David Crouch, *Insane Lane: Crowds, Contamination and Violence in Australia*, in: *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 5, 2006, pp. 72-85, here p. 75.

therefore, considered a matter of "Life or Death of a White Continent".<sup>13</sup> In this context, the fictional confrontations with Asian invasion functioned to put the ability of the 'Coming Australian' to the test. He was seen as the manly, courageous and coarse antagonist of the English gentleman, though he, too, was endangered by physical weakness, moral uncertainty, weakness for women and alcohol, and infatuation by luxury.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to this stood the generic Chinese who was already lost to vices like gambling and licentiousness and immoral behaviour like opium smoking and bribery, and also was accused to be the bearer of diseases like cholera, typhoid and small-pox.<sup>15</sup>

The invasion novels urged a revision of the perception of Chinese as "ze common chow", i.e. market gardeners and furniture producers. In fact, told the narratives, "after a sleep of centuries" these Chinese have "shaken off their death-like stupor". They have the "faces of devils mad with lust and carnage ... sworn to offer up womanly purity, prattling babyhood and helpless age on the altar of a blind, unreasonable revenge". The dehumanizing description of the Chinese as "brave as lions, enduring as dogs, and rapacious as wolves ... cunning as foxes and far-sighted as ravens" acknowledged their war efforts while at the same time devaluating as animalistic instincts the skills of the "savage-looking devils" who are "swarming like ants".<sup>16</sup>

In 'White or Yellow' Lane describes how, after the relaxation of immigration restriction by an Anglo-Asia-affiliated Queensland government, the Chinese "over-ran everything", "monopolised a score of important industries", "sat in Parliament, directed State departments" rendering Australia "more and more distasteful to the Caucasian peoples".<sup>17</sup> The anti-Chinese revolvers feel "degraded" when they are forced to fight against the governmental troops, "men of their own race side by side with these aliens", but eventually the members of the troops recall the 'truth' of distinction by skin colour. "[I]t was no longer 'Law and Order' against the anti-Chinese; it was white against yellow". In the end the "race-fight" is won by the white Australians. The Chinese "passing northwards like great droves of cattle" are expelled from Australia.<sup>18</sup>

13 Kirmess, *Crisis*, p. 92

14 Cf. Dixon, *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, p. 137.

15 Cf. Kendall, *China*, p. 23.

16 J. A. Kenneth Mackay, *The Yellow Wave. A Romance of the Asiatic Invasion of Australia*, Andrew Enstice, Janeen Webb, eds., Middletown 2003 [1895], pp. 231 ('common chow'), 160 ('sleep', 'stupor'), 167 ('faces'), 160 ('lions'), 207 ('devils'), 239 ('ants').

17 Lane, *White or Yellow*, 14, 18.2.1888, p. 9.

18 Lane, *White or Yellow*, 19, 24.3.1888, p. 9; 25, 5.5.1888, p. 6 ('fight', 'cattle'). In contrast to the banishing Asian invaders, elsewhere Russians were allowed integration

The focus of fear started shifting from China to Japan shortly before the Federation. The Japanese victory in the Russo-Japanese War led to the consideration of Japan as the now "real yellow peril".<sup>19</sup> In 'The Australia Crisis' Kirmess took up the contrasts between the "'energetic' Asia" and the "'complacent' Australia" which emerged from the 'empty north' debate.<sup>20</sup> He was sure that it is not the numerical superiority that enables the Japanese to slowly conquer the continent by usucaption but moreover their ability to 'subdue' and cultivate the tropical areas of the Northern Territory and to connect to the "conquered soil by the most sacred ties – by little brown babies".<sup>21</sup>

### 'New Women' & 'Lascivious Invaders'

Defence was promoted necessary to repel invaders from the outside, but likewise dangers manifested within the Australian society. Women posed a threat both to the racial hygiene of the society and the masculinity in Australia. As bearers of racial purity, white women could not be trusted and needed supervision. As supporters of female suffrage, better education and the right for women to pursue a profession, the 'New Woman' of the early 1890s acted as the antagonist of the 'Coming Man' who was the one to found 'White Australia'.<sup>22</sup> Instead of fighting for their political rights and the possibility to pursue a career, as the 'New Woman' did, the "True Woman" (a term used by the anti-suffragists) would recall her plight to the Australian society and bethink of her role as mother and housewife.<sup>23</sup>

The Asian's alleged "unbridled lasciviousness" was turned into a tactic of invasion when the Japanese sailors in Roydhouse's 'The Coloured

into society. Wounded Russians left behind are nursed back to health, the blame for the mutual hostility and the "red demon war" bears the blame for former hatred. Eventually "many of them lived among us, and became as our brothers" – Ranken, *Invasion*, p. 150.

19 Hugh H. Lusk, *The Real Yellow Peril*, in: *The Northern American Review*, 1907, 186, pp. 375-383.

20 David Walker, *Anxious Nation. Australia and the Rise of Asia 1850-1939*. St Lucia 1999, p. 120.

21 Kirmess, *Crisis*, p. 216.

22 'The Bulletin' defined as Australians all "white men who come to these shores" (but then adding some further restrictions) – 'Australia for the Australians', in: *The Bulletin*, 2.7.1887. For the perception of feminism at the time of Federation see Marilyn Lake, *Historical reconsiderations IV: The politics of respectability: Identifying the masculinist context*, in: *Australian Historical Studies* 22, 1986, 86, pp. 116-131; Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police*, chap. 11. For the Coming Man of Australia see Webb, *Enstices, Aliens*, pp. 12 f.; Richard White, *Inventing Australia. Images and Identity, 1688-1980*, St Leonards 1981, pp. 101 ff.

23 The accomplishments of the 'New Woman' were carried to extremes by Millie Finklestein in her dystopian novel 'The Newest Woman: The Destined Monarch of the World'

Conquest' availed themselves of the Australian women.<sup>24</sup> In the invasion novels of the 1880s onwards, the character of the young blond girl falling for Chinese or Japanese treachery and vices features as a further threat to the stability of the white society. In the light of the danger of miscegenation and 'mongrelization', white women cooperating with Chinese men were considered betrayers of their race.

Although Lane granted agency to three white Australian women in his serial 'White or Yellow', he actually combined the two sides of 'racial intermixture' and the allegedly typical treatment of white women by Chinese: on the one hand, the attempted rape and murder of the young white women, on the other, the miscegenous marriage between Stella and her Chinese husband who were supposed to found a dynasty of Chinese-Australians.<sup>25</sup> Cissie is the "heroic Australian girl who by her life had saved her honour, and by her death had roused Australia and saved the white race". Her murder not only causes the female Australians to give up their indifference to the Chinese presence in Queensland, but is also the final straw "to produce a sympathetic rising on the South" which commences the "race fight" between 'white and yellow'. Stella initially plans to "rule a yellow race and rear a yellow brood" with her Chinese husband but realizes the dramatic scale of her fatal liaison when her husband confesses to having killed Cissie. She eventually experiences salvation by assuming the role of housewife for the leader of the anti-Chinese revolt. Lady Stibbins, Stella's mother, is the one who kills Cissie's murderer. While the white revolters "with a blush of shame" refrain from "cowardly" shooting Stella's husband, Lady Stibbins is eager to save her daughter from "a fate worse than death".<sup>26</sup>

That nothing seems worse than 'racial intermixture' was also elucidated by Mackay: the Australian woman was advised not only to carry weapons for her defence but also to "have poison on her, so that protection from worse than death may be assured".<sup>27</sup> The outcome of the battle for Australia in the 'Yellow Wave' remains open. The female Australian protagonist,

(1895). The "True Woman" is not the 'monarch' but the "great power behind the throne" (p. 107).

24 Robin Gerster, Representations of Asia, in: Peter Pierce, ed., *The Cambridge History of Australian Literature*, Port Melbourne 2009, pp. 303-322, here pp. 311 f.; see also David Walker, Shooting Mabel. Warrior Masculinity and Asian Invasion, in: *History Australia* 2, 2005, 3, pp. 89.1-89.11, here 89.3.

25 Cf. Crouch, *Insane*, p. 76.

26 Lane, *White or Yellow*, 24, 28.4.1888, p. 9 ('heroic'); 16, 3.3.1888, p. 11 ('rising'); 22, 14.4.1888, p. 9 ('race fight'); 19, 24.3.1888, p. 9 ('brood', 'blush', 'cowardly'); 23, 21.4.1888, p. 9 ('fate').

27 Mackay, *Wave*, p. 206.

however, meets her demise in a sinking ship together with her Chinese-invasion-leading Russian lover.

"For hearth and homes", the war cry of Mackay's resistance fighters, was the concise depiction of the white male Australians' task to defend both the women (and family) and the white nation.<sup>28</sup> Just as Pearson conditioned the future of the country on the state of its manhood, the authors of the invasion novels were convinced that it was the "racially-pure and self-sufficient white man" who, graced with close bonds to nature by his bush skills, was capable of defending both the white woman and White Australia.<sup>29</sup> The endangerment of the white Australian women by Asian invaders allowed the white men to be depicted as the "principled defenders of female honour" at war for the "sacred cause of womanly purity".<sup>30</sup> Such a promotion of white racial purity and condemnation of racial mixture was obviously not an Australian novelty. It echoed the wider international eugenics movement among western scholars which, inter alia, endorsed ideas of racial purity, white supremacy and racial degeneration through miscegenation.

### **'Conniving Capitalists' & 'True Australians'**

"Deeds, not words" were what the white Australians demanded.<sup>31</sup> Though the invasion novels largely described the imminent 'racial struggle', class was also an issue at stake. Rage was not only raised by Asian immigrants but also by the colonial circumstances and the groups enabling them. In this context, the common man of Australia is shown as falling victim to both the leaders' inability to act instead of debate and the capitalists' greed for money and power. The employers are accused of availing themselves of cheap, tractable immigrant labour and new trade relations with the Far East and, thereby, of fostering a large-scale immigration of Chinese into the country.

Australia as "China's natural prey" was "to be had for the taking" since the white workers in Queensland had been replaced and deterred by the cheap labour of Pacific Islanders, Chinese and Japanese so that the "white population" has "vanished" leaving no one to defend the north. The country was sketched as "divided into two hostile factions" which refrained from cooperating based on their "natural hatred" for each other. The working

28 Ibid., p. 275.

29 Kendall, *China*, p. 41. For Pearson see Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, Cambridge etc. 2008, p. 140.

30 Walker, *Nation*, p. 103 ('honour'); Mackay, *Wave*, p. 257 ('purity').

31 Kirmess, *Crisis*, p. 67.

classes "had not improved either numerically or physically" and the "capitalistic classes ... had similarly degenerated".<sup>32</sup> In the narrations, the warnings of invasion went unheard by the capitalist class which put its interests before the nation's, by city dwellers who were unfit, hedonistic and specimens of the "sporting race", and by parliamentarians whose national longings and national fears were only weak.<sup>33</sup> The politicians, who "had grown to regard war-scares with ... equanimity" due to the "frequent cry of 'Wolf!' from the northern part of the continent, do nothing else "than flood the Hansard with hopeless twaddle". Thus, in the eyes of the novels' authors, rescue for 'White Australia' could only come from the "large body" of those who "were neither capitalists nor yet labourers", were "scorned by both", and constituted the "real intellectual and creating power of Australasia".<sup>34</sup> To further emphasize the class struggle, Mackay wittingly set his novel in the year 1954. This was the centenary of the Eureka stockade, an uprising by European diggers against Chinese on the goldfields which is seen as having been both a rebellion against Australian authorities and the initiation to the "first organised racist campaign".<sup>35</sup>

Lane, too, alludes to the Eureka uprising by letting the defenders of 'White Australia' rally around the Southern Cross flag.<sup>36</sup> "The poor whites ... were fast sinking to a position" worse than the "European masses" and it were the "plutocracy and the landocracy" who were on terms of intimacy with [the invaders'] prominent and wealthy men".<sup>37</sup> For the authors of the invasion novels the fault lay with the local ruling class which grovelled before the British government. They saw the 'Common Man' of Australia as exposed to 'racial danger' by the political leaders who subordinated national interests to British trade and political relations.<sup>38</sup>

In all invasion novels rescue came from rural Australia. The Australian bush of the last decade of the nineteenth century functioned as the imaginative refuge from the city and was presented by contemporary writers as the 'real Australia'.<sup>39</sup> The Australian bushman, the nomad worker who conquered the harsh landscape of the interior of the continent, was the per-

32 Mackay, *Wave*, pp. 79 ('prey'), 80 ('taking'), 81 ('white population', 'vanished'), 87 ('factions'), 256 ('natural hatred', 'not improved', 'degenerated').

33 Mackay, *Wave*, p. 60. Cf. also Walker, *Nation*, p. 111.

34 Mackay, *Wave*, pp. 223 ('hoax'), 250 ('equanimity', 'Wolf'), 251 ('twaddle'), 256 ('body'), 87 ('neither', 'scorned', 'real').

35 Lars Jensen, *Unsettling Australia. Readings in Australian Cultural History*. New Delhi 2005, p. 141.

36 Cf. Walker, *Nation*, p. 107.

37 Lane, *White or Yellow*, 14, 18.2.1888, p. 9.

38 Cf. Meaney, *Peril*, pp. 231, 249; David Walker, *National Narratives: Australia in Asia*, in: *Media History* 8, 2002, 1, pp. 63-75, here p. 71.

39 Cf. White, *Inventing*, p. 102. Also Meaney, *Peril*, p. 258.

sonification of health, wholesomeness, physical fitness, manliness, roughness and, of course, mateship. He was the "true Australian" – therefore, the "hardy pioneers who wrestled with and conquered the hostile nature" were the only hope to defy the intruders.<sup>40</sup>

### 'Nigger Empire' & 'White Australia'

Australia lay helpless at the time of the invasion, there were "no plans of defence ... everything was open, unprepared, and unguarded",<sup>41</sup> but this was not only owed to the inability of defending the continent due to its uninhabited northern shores. It was also a critique to the decrease of British military presence at the end of the nineteenth century.

By the same token as the discontent of removal of the British navy, the novelists' complaints about the inadequate weapons were aimed at the British government. "This absurd British cheek sickens me", stated one of the resistance leaders in Mackay's 'Yellow Wave', "here we are without discipline, short of arms and ammunition, practically leaderless".<sup>42</sup> Though in 'real' Australia, technology might have been seen as the "heart of whiteness", it were the Chinese who were "armed with machine-guns and automatic rifles", while the Australians had neither but relied on their bush skill to manufacture "Australian lance[s]" from their shearing machines.<sup>43</sup> This return to the roots of rural survivability and bush smartness was not so much a praise for old traditions and a statement against modernity but rather symbolical for the under-provision of Australian defence with modern weaponry by the British and a plea for armament.

Australian suspicion of Anglo-Asian relations was furthered by the British agreements with Japan in 1902. An unveiled reflection of the public disapproval following the "Jap alliance", seen as a part of the politics of "Edward VII.'s stupendous nigger empire" that "grows blacker every day",<sup>44</sup> was Kirmess's novel. Japanese settlers have clandestinely arrived on the shores of the Northern Territory. The two witnesses, bushmen of course, vainly attempt to alert the representative of the British government. England is flattered by the Japanese request for help and offers support in

40 Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*, pp. 180 ff., 200 ('true Australian'). See also Warwick Anderson, *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 64; White, *Inventing*, p. 103; Kirmess, *Crisis*, p. 108 ('hardy').

41 Ranken, *Invasion*, p. 12.

42 Mackay, *Wave*, p. 271.

43 Wulf D. Hund, *In the beginning all the World was Australia. In the end all the World will be white*, p. 11 ('heart'); Mackay, *Wave*, pp. 289 ('armed'), 187 ('lance').

44 *The Bulletin*, 22.2.1902, cited in Jürgen Matthäus, *Nationsbildung in Australien von den Anfängen weißer Besiedlung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg (1788 - 1914)*, Frankfurt am Main 1993, p. 280.

the territorial conflicts. Thus Australia has to realize that it "was merely a pawn in the game, not a player" and that "British sentimentality and the White Australian ideal had nothing in common".<sup>45</sup>

The "old world was the enemy, and the Chinese were its most sinister agents".<sup>46</sup> The imperial government had repelled Chinese immigration restriction and thus laid the foundations for the takeover of the Queensland colony by European and Chinese capitalists. Lane advocated the cutting of ties with Britain, as there was "no hope in England and ... her aid will be given to the Chinese and against the whites". Maitland, by contrast, cautioned against this: without the British backing of Australia their position in the southern hemisphere would be fiercely challenged by Russian and Chinese invaders.<sup>47</sup>

All the same, it seemed a 'global liability' to defend the nation. Australia's role as the "precious front buckle in the white girdle of power and progress encircling the globe" meant that if Australia did not hold its position, this 'belt of whiteness' would give way to Pearson's "globe girdled with ... black and yellow races".<sup>48</sup> For this a closing of white ranks was necessary. In the novels, Australia was awakened to the seriousness of the invasion. Labour and capital, bushmen and city dwellers, 'New Woman' and 'Coming Man' united to face the Asian invaders, and eventually "when the race-fight came ... Australia was true to her destiny ... she stayed white". In this, the invasion novels took a dialectic turn, from quality to quantity, during the enfolding of events. After the 'suspect' parts of society – women, capitalists, imperialists, and politicians – were identified, the novels concluded by depicting how these opposed factions were in the end welded together to a united 'White Australia' facing the external Asian enemies.<sup>49</sup>

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45 Kirmess, *Crisis*, pp. 25 ('pawn'), 26 ('sentimentality').

46 Vance Palmer, *The Legend of the Nineties*, Melbourne 1966, p. 82.

47 Maitland, *Mordialloc*, p. 25.

48 Kirmess, *Crisis*, p. 252 ('buckle'); Pearson, *Natural Life*, p. 89.

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# Blackfacing Britain

Michael Pickering

During the nineteenth century, racism achieved wide social circulation not through its pseudo-scientific and philosophical discussion, but through its expression within various forms of popular culture and entertainment. It was through these that its core assumptions and notions became commonplace and broadly accepted. Focusing on the ways in which such assumptions and notions became common currency, this chapter claims that racism is ideologically more effective when integrated with popular aesthetics. In order to illustrate this, the chapter takes blackface minstrelsy in Britain as its case study, showing how this particular form of entertainment differed from its North American counterpart and as a result became more strongly embedded in British culture. During the second half of the nineteenth century in particular, blackface minstrelsy in Britain was well nigh ubiquitous, achieving widespread popularity across the categories of social class, gender and generation. The chapter attends to some of the varied reasons for its long-enduring popularity in Britain, and the consequences of this for banal racism and attitudes towards the racialised Other. It also discusses some of the problems raised by historical analysis of this particular form of popular musical theatre. The different ways of tackling these is manifest in the variation of response and perspective that have been evident in blackface scholarship. The chapter argues that simply unravelling the racist stereotypes of minstrelsy is insufficient. We can only understand how its racist representations operated by fully exploring how they were part and parcel of the theatrical dynamics and multivalent experience of the blackface minstrel show as it was enjoyed by its diverse audiences across Britain, over a remarkably long period of time.

Racism involves the belief that the ethnic group to which you belong is superior to others and for this reason certain exclusionary practices against others are necessary and valid. Various justifications for these may be given, but if you hold such a belief, you are regarded as, by definition, racist. Things are of course not quite so straightforward. Racism as an ideology is rather more complicated, not least because it becomes entrenched and is most effective when it is not perceived and understood as an ideology. That is in some ways what gives it such tenacious purchase in representations of other peoples and other cultures and the unquestioning reception with which they are met. It also takes different forms, and becomes manifest in different ways. While we need to trace the connections across them, it is important that we attend analytically to how racism is articulated within particular sets of representations of the racialised Other. It is important for at least three reasons. Firstly, we need to understand how racism developed historically and became a form of common sense with reference to specific ethnic groups and categories, and then through such reference supported unequal relations of power and domination. Secondly, any meaning or idea is far more likely to become accepted as common sense when it is not

overtly drilled into people or thrown at them in the form of official propaganda. Thirdly, and following from this, racist views and attitudes often seem to take hold and become taken-for-granted when they are hitched to a popular vehicle which brings with it certain pleasures and assurances, attractions and indulgences. These are surplus to the ideological content but allow it to come with a more appealing bounty. They fuel the popularization of the ideological content and help it become integral to the aesthetics of the popular vehicle. When this happens its conceptions of racial difference and division are not only tacitly accepted but also invested with greater resonance and force.

In this chapter I shall deal with a pervasive cultural form which played a central role in the popularization of racist views and values during the nineteenth century in Britain. There is certainly a general pattern of correspondence between these views and values and those that were expounded in learned journals and debating societies of the time, which sought to give scientific or philosophical validity to the concept of race and the notion of a racial hierarchy. Those who read or heard such expositions were in the minority, yet the central tenets of this form of racial discourse were largely commensurate with a popular discourse of race developed through different forms of representation. It was the ways in which these forms of representation were put together and presented that enabled the ideological content they carried to gain hold and become accepted, so in order to see how racist views and the tendency to think in racial terms became so widespread, particularly in the second half of the century, we need to attend to cultural forms and practices which had a much broader circulation. There were numerous types of media and popular entertainment which served as vehicles for racist attitudes and many of these did achieve such social circulation, but few were more ubiquitous or more broadly accepted and enjoyed than blackface minstrelsy. This involved the impersonation by white people – for the most part, white men – of black men and women, and through this impersonation the advancement of various stereotypical notions about them. It was achieved physically through the application of burnt cork or "nigger" paste, and the use of various forms of costume, which together became the basis for a wide range of theatrical acts and shows involving, among other things, popular song and dance, Shakespearean burlesque, mock oratory and other forms of comic and sentimental entertainment. In what follows, I shall discuss how and why minstrelsy became so popular in Britain, and provide some explanation of what its popularity entailed before going on, later in the chapter, to deal with some of the analytical issues it raises. In order to set the scene for all this, I shall begin with an outline of the cultural form itself.

### **The Blackface Arts and their Appeal**

Although blackface entertainment could involve single acts, as for instance in the music hall or in later variety entertainment, its most common manifestation was the minstrel show. This developed in the 1840s and early 1850s, and was staged in theatres and halls both in London and the provinces. It was based on a dynamic ensemble structure which acted as a general framework for the whole entertainment, and proved adaptable to a remarkable assortment of theatrical acts and performances as the minstrel show developed. This consisted, in the first part of the show, of the minstrel troupe sitting in a semi-circle comprised of Mr Interlocutor at the centre, various musicians either side of him, and at the two wings, Tambo and Bones, the two cornermen clowns. The characteristic formation of the troupe in this opening sequence created a sense of inclusiveness and encouraged spoken and musical interaction between the members of the ensemble, who were throughout not only in direct eye and ear contact with each other, but also facing outwards to the much bigger horseshoe formation of spectators in the auditorium. Mr Interlocutor began the show with the stock mock-grandiloquent phrase: "Gentlemen, be seated. We shall commence with the overture". Following this came a session of cut-and-thrust comic banter between the interlocutor and Tambo and Bones. After a medley of plantation songs or an operatic selection, the second part of the show, aptly known as the olio, introduced a hotch-potch of speciality acts that could feature such theatrical delights as comic sketches, sentimental ballads, instrumental numbers, glees, juggling, and clog or sand dancing. The after-piece usually consisted of farcical send-ups of Italian opera or Shakespearean tragedy, or idyllic sketches of life on the slave plantation. The show then came to a close with a grand finale of solo and choral singing, and animated walkaround dancing. Certain songs were written specifically for this end-section of the show, two typical examples being "Jack on the Green" and "The Nigger's Jubilee".<sup>1</sup> The characteristic musical instruments employed in the minstrel show were banjo, fiddle, tambourine, bone-clackers or castanets, and occasionally others such as concertina and viola. These "obstreperous instruments", as an anonymous periodical writer called them in the 1870s, were those with which the earliest forms of syncopation in popular music were made and heard in Britain.<sup>2</sup>

1 Mohawk Minstrels Magazine, Vol. II: no. 33; Vol. III: no. 7. For more on the structure and format of the British minstrel show, and the different roles of Mr Interlocutor and the two cornermen, see Michael Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*, Aldershot etc. 2008, pp. 15-17.

2 "The Black Man", *All the Year Round*, n.s. XIII, 6 March 1875, pp. 489-493, cited p. 493.

The exotic novelty of minstrel songs and melodies were certainly part of the initial appeal of blackface entertainment, but what was central to it right from the start was the construction of the black as a comic buffoon. This construction was a product of transatlantic stage representations of black men. British actors like Charles Dibdin in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century developed proto-minstrel turns and Charles Mathews in the 1820s took this further with the racial mimicry he called "black fun". Mathews's success not only showed a general receptiveness in Britain to what would become thematic of minstrel acts and shows, but also reflected the general fascination with North America and the doings of Cousin Jonathan that always existed, to greater or lesser degree, in the years following the declaration of American independence. This certainly underlay the tremendous storm of popularity which arose around the Jim Crow song and dance act of the American, Thomas Dartmouth Rice, following his initial appearance in Britain in 1836, but it was attributable more to the sheer newness of his dance routine, "nigger" dialect lyrics, and tatterdemalion costume. Rice's act had a considerable impact, even if its novelty was relatively short-lived. What it set in train was far more durable – the characterization of the black man on stage as a grotesque figure of fun – and what made it different to other clown-like personae was that his theatrical presence was a racial portrayal.<sup>3</sup> While this is true of minstrelsy as a whole, so differentiating it from mumming in vernacular popular culture and other forms of disguise and masking in pantomime, Jim Crow became the prototype for one of the two main forms of stereotypical depiction of black people on the British stage.

The two classic stereotypical figures in minstrelsy were the raggedly dressed plantation hand and the pretentiously attired urban dandy. From these there developed variant characters such as the snowy-haired, faithful Old Joe forswearing undying affection for "de Massa", and the lub-struck, chicken-stealing "coon", but in whatever form they appeared, the black stereotypes of the minstrel stage helped make race-thinking seem credible. They contributed not only to an unquestioned assumption of black inferiority and a gradual hardening of views towards "lesser breeds" throughout the rest of the century, but also, by way of self-congratulatory contrast, to the prevailing notion of British racial superiority that underpinned popular support for nationalist values and the project of imperialism and colonialism. They did so by reducing the image of the black to silliness and absurdity on the one hand, childlike simplicity and harmless pathos on the other. Although the razor-toting "coon" bully of the later nineteenth century was

3 For the elision of racial mimicry and mockery in minstrelsy, see Pickering, *Blackface*, chapters 5 and 6.

rather a fearsome figure, this was the exception proving the rule, with the black avenger of late eighteenth-century theatre largely disappearing and being replaced by the tamed comic and sentimental stereotypes which so delighted the audiences of minstrelsy.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, even by the 1840s, any "seriousness or depth of content has been emptied from the black figure in popular entertainment".<sup>5</sup> The two main theatrical registers which then obtained in minstrelsy were comedy and sentimentality, with the latter either having a philanthropic vein that connected with abolitionist values, or simply adding to the "black fun", as for example through the many representations of "nigger" romance, an inherently comic notion within minstrelsy. These two registers – deriving from the imperatives of making 'em laugh and plucking at the heartstrings – were the staple of the entertainment.

These are typically opposed, yet mutually reliant registers in much popular entertainment, and part of the vibrant appeal of minstrelsy was that it was continuous with the experience of alternating response to them in popular culture more generally. The ability to shift in appreciation between opposed frames of theatrical impersonation and representation seems also to have affected the ways in which audiences apprehended minstrelsy in one modality as knockabout clownish entertainment, at times involving social satire, and in another as more or less faithfully representing black character and culture. This would explain why one commentator in the early 1860s could speak of minstrelsy at one and the same time as "an important item of ethnological instruction" and yet separated "completely from the real world, and ... accepted as a convention, like the ordinary figures of pantomimes".<sup>6</sup> Another writer seems even to have made playfully ironic reference to these shifts of reception between theatrical convention and realist depiction when he told of a friend who was once informed by an American that his country was not in the least like the stage representations of minstrelsy. His friend "nearly lost his temper" and "insisted that the coloured population all did sand dances and wore striped knickerbockers with one leg turned up and played the banjo".<sup>7</sup>

What linked the two frames of comicality and sentimentalism is of course the practice of racial stereotyping, for this created the "black fun" in the first place while also conveying the sense of mimetic representation. Blackface performers were not only described as "nigger" minstrels but

4 For the degradation and decline of the black avenger figure, see Hazel Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage*, Cambridge etc. 2007, chapters 1 and 2.

5 Waters, *Racism*, p. 125.

6 *Negro Minstrelsy in England*, in: *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 19, June 1861, pp. 98f.

7 Dion Clayton Calthorp, *Music Hall Nights*, London 1925, p. 36.

also as "negro delineators". Unsurprisingly, many of the stereotypical features purveyed by minstrelsy were quite inconsistent with each other – the black man was, for example, indolent and yet capable of hard work, faithful and yet untrustworthy, pretentious and yet content with his lot, meek and yet inclined to sudden violence – but this did not prevent their being taken as representative of the "negro" type. As Douglas Lorimer has put it, blackface minstrels "provided not only lively music and droll comedy" but also gave "what the mid-Victorians considered to be a realistic portrayal of Negro life in the United States".<sup>8</sup> Despite being hugely distant from the reality of that life in the Deep South, and an utter travesty of what it entailed, many white people accepted minstrelsy's representation of it as accurate and its depictions of the black as true. Such acceptance was integral to the way British minstrelsy operated as a homeopathic treatment for encountering alien blackness. In the comic or sentimental low-Other it constructed through the switch-changing mechanism of the "nigger" mask, the minstrel show acted out a notion of the black as naturally inferior, and did so in an entertainment form that was taken alternately as realist disclosure and theatrical artifice, or as both simultaneously in an alluring symbolic conflation. In this respect minstrelsy's portrayal of the black proved to be racially flattering to white British people, reinforcing the national self-image by showing a highly appealing version of its diametrically racialized opposite.<sup>9</sup>

Frederick Douglass, the great abolitionist leader, quite rightly judged minstrelsy to have increased racial intolerance in Britain. He excoriated blackface performers as "the filthy scum of white society, who have stolen from us a complexion denied to them by nature, in which to make money, and pander to the corrupt taste of their white fellow citizens".<sup>10</sup> His vitriol is understandable. Minstrelsy certainly involved the commercial exploitation of black stereotypicality, but Douglass's criticism does nothing to explain the taste of white citizens for minstrelsy as popular entertainment. There are a number of points to be made in this connection. To begin with, it needs to be emphasised that "nigger" minstrelsy was popular in the widest possible sense. No doubt it had little appeal to the minority black population in Britain, and when black performers themselves blacked up, this was because of theatrical convention rather than love of the demeaning mask. But minstrelsy was well nigh ubiquitous because it found favour

8 Douglas Lorimer, *Bibles, Banjos and Bones*, in: B. M. Gough, ed., *In Search of the Visible Past*, Ontario 1975, pp. 31-50, here p. 41.

9 For further elaboration on the dynamics of masking in British minstrelsy, see Pickering, *Blackface*, chapter 4.

10 *North Star*, 27 October 1848, cited in Eric Lott, *Blackface and Blackness: The Minstrel Show in American Culture*, in: Annemarie Bean et al., eds., *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, Hanover etc. 1996, pp. 3-32, here p. 3



with every other social category during the Victorian period and beyond. In sharp contrast to minstrelsy in North America, at least in its early days, minstrelsy in Britain was cross-class, cross-gender, and cross-generation in its appeal. While its reception and what was taken from it were socially and culturally differentiated, its various attractions as light entertainment were registered up and down the social scale: "everybody, from Queen Victoria to the chimney-sweep, laughed at minstrel jokes and the antics of blackface performers".<sup>11</sup> The aesthetics of popular entertainment in the nineteenth century may have been ethically lacking from a contemporary perspective, but we shall not be able to arrive at a reasonably comprehensive understanding of the taste for minstrelsy, in particular, and why it was able to popularise a developing racism towards black people, if we merely regard it as corrupt. Minstrelsy was successful as a racist vehicle because it satisfied other requirements beyond the need of white citizens for affirmation of their sense of racial or cultural superiority. There were clearly other factors in British minstrelsy which made it so enduringly popular and we need to attend to these if, in our own period, we are to go beyond a self-flattering approval of Douglass's just condemnation.

Such factors were plentiful. Along with the dynamism of the minstrel show format, the novelties that were involved, the ability it had to accommodate a heterogeneous range of variety entertainment, and the way it creatively extended a propensity for complex aesthetic shifts and inversions in British popular culture, minstrelsy gained its enormous popularity for a number of reasons. It became a characteristic feature of the developing landscape of urban popular culture in the newly industrializing towns and cities, alongside the music hall, the race course, the gin palace and other such venues, and it was taken up and adapted in a wide spectrum of other forms outside of the professional theatre: as busking and street entertainment, as a form of amateur theatre, as seaside entertainment, as a variation on the Christmas pantomime, as a new ingredient in pub singalongs, and as a sure-fire means of raising money for charities.<sup>12</sup> This in itself points to other reasons for its popularity beyond its racial footings. British minstrelsy ran historically in parallel with its counterpart in North America, but its appeal in Britain was only partly associated with a fascination with African-American life, and in many ways only tangentially with the issue of slavery. Although there was considerable trafficking of shows and performers across the Atlantic, British minstrelsy soon diverged from the American influence of "Daddy" Rice and early minstrel troupes like Dan

11 Nils Erik Enkvist, *Caricatures of Americans on the English Stage Prior to 1870*, Helsinki 1951, p. 89.

12 Cf. Pickering, *Blackface*, chapter 3.

Emmett's Virginia Minstrels, who toured Britain in the 1840s. There were initially more or less straightforward imitations of Rice by performers like John Dunn, the 'English Jim Crow', but even with early British minstrel performers like E.W. Mackney, British traits and allusions were introduced *ab initio*. Mackney alternated between polite and plebeian versions of minstrelsy, with a divergent appeal to lettered and unlettered audiences. He traded in racial mockery – as with

Sally has got a lubly nose,  
Flat across her face it grows,  
It sounds like thunder when it blows ...

– yet also introduced English references, as in his misogynistic song "In the Strand", which told of an East End girl who sports a black eye and possesses a sharp tongue.<sup>13</sup> Most of Mackney's songs were non-racial in content, and drew their appeal from topicality and localization, so that "singing about Rifle Volunteers, crinolines, taxes, and Darwin" while in blackface on the platform of the Mechanics' Hall in Birmingham, made him "a strangely compounded" but also "peculiarly English figure".<sup>14</sup>

The distinction between polite and plebeian forms of minstrelsy helped broaden its overall appeal. There was always some element of knockabout fun and comic grotesquerie in all forms of minstrelsy, but aesthetic elevation and sophistication in the musical arrangements became characteristic of British minstrelsy. With "refined negro music" there was a further process of anglicization in the shift from black dandyism to aristocratic dress in court minstrelsy.<sup>15</sup> The Livermore Court Minstrels appeared in powdered wigs and George III costumes, and offered an "elegant and refined programme of coloured minstrelsy and comicalities". Such troupes provided a nostalgic throwback to the eighteenth-century fashion for black footmen and pages, and the Janissary music associated with black musicians in regimental bands, but their attraction lay mainly in their refinement.<sup>16</sup> This went hand in hand with their provision of respectable family entertainment. In contrast to the music hall, especially in its earlier period of development, British minstrelsy was a form of entertainment which

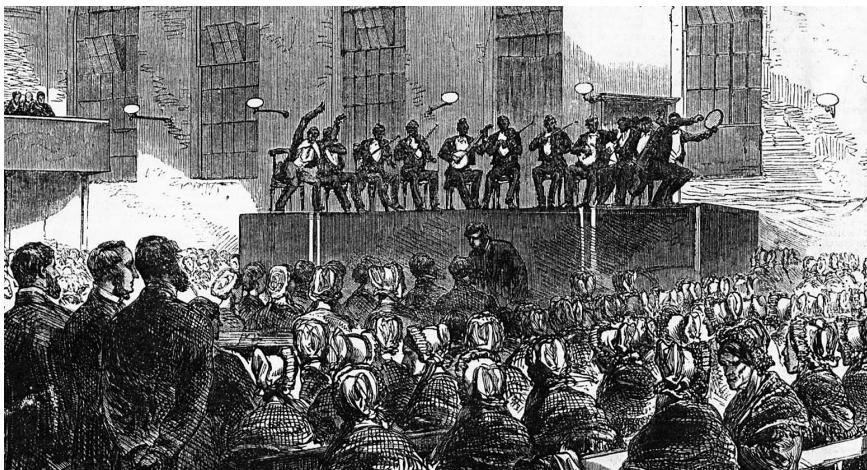
13 Mackney's *Songs of Negro Life* London, (n.d.), p. 6. For further details of the racial mockery of minstrelsy, see Pickering, *Blackface*, pp. 125-137.

14 Bratton, J. S., *English Ethiopians*, in: *Yearbook of English Studies*, 1981, pp. 127-142, here p. 142.

15 The evaluative phrase "refined negro music" is taken from the *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 9 July 1859.

16 Pickering, *Blackface*, 20f., 79; Harry Reynolds, *Minstrel Memories*, London 1928, pp. 173-182; Peter Sherry, *A Theatre in the Family*, London 1972; Paul Catcheside, *The Music Hall Tradition in the Catcheside Family – Livermore Court Minstrelsy*, Fareham 2004.

middle-class ladies, professional men and even the clergy could attend without damage to their reputation. As MacQueen-Pope put it, the "nigger minstrels with their good, clean and artistic show were just the thing for most Victorians".<sup>17</sup> It was for this reason as well that minstrelsy appeared in so many different settings and venues. The eschewal of vulgarity went hand in hand with the uplifting sentiments and didacticism of many of the songs, with British minstrelsy able to absorb such genres as the motto song (appealing, for example, to the dignity of human labour or the ethos of self-help) as well as sentimental parlour songs and comic songs, many of which satisfied the typically Victorian delight in the pun. Unlike most cultural forms of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the songs, dances, sketches and stump speeches of British minstrelsy helped it straddle both working-class and bourgeois cultures, which otherwise were in various ways very much divided.



*Fig. 1: The Delaware Minstrels were an amateur minstrel troupe whose members worked by day as bank clerks and by night masked up as "nigger vocalists" for charitable purposes. Here they are performing for inmates in the austere environment of the Bethnal Green workhouse in the late 1860s, their songs and skits being "set off by appropriate costumes and gesticulations". (Source: Illustrated London News, 16 February 1867, p. 152.)*

<sup>17</sup> Walter MacQueen-Pope, *Goodbye, Piccadilly*, London 1960, p. 86.

**Banal Racism**

All of what has been said so far is not intended to diminish the strongly marked elements of racism in minstrelsy but rather to provide an account for its successful popularization. It is far easier to focus with the self-righteous indignity of hindsight on the racist images and ideas in minstrelsy than it is on the reasons why these were so widely accepted as part and parcel of what this form of popular entertainment involved. That is what marred some of the earlier, pioneering work on blackface shows and practices. No doubt the effort made in debunking the racial stereotypes purveyed by minstrelsy was appropriate for the first steps in blackface scholarship, but the result could at times be rather one-dimensional, proving successful in castigating the racism but unsuccessful in producing a satisfactory account of its popularization.<sup>18</sup> My argument in this chapter is that this can only be done by moving analytically between, on the one hand, the theatrical dynamics of minstrelsy, and the full range of meanings and pleasures involved in its reception, and on the other the notions of racial inferiority and backwardness which it most obviously disseminated. Merchants and bankers and their families did not attend to "refined negro music" simply in order to have these notions confirmed; an East End coster did not take his donah to a minstrel show just because it afforded the opportunity to hear stock racist jibes; and children did not sit enrapt listening to seaside minstrels only in order to bolster anything they had learned in their school textbooks about hard-working "black folk" in the "cotton fields of America", and how, after work, "they love to dance and sing to the music of the banjo ...".<sup>19</sup> There were clearly other factors involved, and it was these that were crucial for minstrelsy's popularization of racism.

This may seem somewhat naïve. It is a widely observed consequence of racial stereotyping that it tells us much more about those who engage in it than it does about the stereotypical object. This can be seen through a psychological lens as appealing to a person's sense of *amour propre* and acting as a refracted means of self-referral which bolsters one's good view of oneself, but it also needs to be seen in a sociological frame as serving to maintain a sense of collective identity and belonging, whether racially or nationally defined. The stereotyping of black people, as this developed through popular cultural forms in the nineteenth century, also involved an antithetical colour contrast which reinforced white normativity and the

18 Cf. eg. Robert Toll, *Blackening Up*, London etc. 1977; and Sam Dennison, *Scandalize My Name*, New York etc. 1982.

19 Anon, *Little Folk of Many Lands*, London and Glasgow, n.d., p. 64. 'Donah' is a cockney word for a girlfriend or wife.

constitution of whiteness in racial taxonomies.<sup>20</sup> Whiteness then, regardless of anyone's gender or class status, became synonymous with "us" as civilized subjects, as opposed to "them" as barbarous "objects" who needed to be suborned and ruled for their own good. For the working class in Britain there was a peculiar symbolic inversion of status here, for "through the colonial connection domestic 'under-classes' could become imperial 'over-classes'".<sup>21</sup> It was because of ideological shifts of this kind that the boy's story writer, G. A. Henty, could write as a matter of course about black colonized peoples that if they lived among "white men, their imitative faculties enable them to attain a considerable amount of civilization, but when left alone to their own devices they retrograde into a state little above their native savagery".<sup>22</sup> Minstrelsy affirmed the mind-set that sustained such views, and in this sense there is no doubt that it contributed to British race-thinking. As this grew more virulent during the later nineteenth century period of "high" imperialism, the racial stereotypes of blacks in minstrelsy grew more vicious, as in the "coon" song craze that emerged in the 1890s. The black man in particular then became little other than a figure of grotesque ridicule, leavened only to some extent in the meek Uncle Tom figure whose theatrical highpoint was in the mid-century but whose image proved stereotypically adaptable in many plantation songs and sketches up to the end of the century.<sup>23</sup>

All this is undeniable, but to regard the successful ascendancy of popular racism in the nineteenth century as solely the effect of stereotyping is in itself naïve. As with Henty's stories for young lads, imperialist sentiments were interlarded with an appeal to their sense of adventure and derring-do, and the propaganda value they had was made possible by the ripping yarns in which it was embedded. This is true even of the humble cigarette card. As well as proving attractive to the collector's mentality, this otherwise ephemeral means of encouraging the habit of smoking was another popular vehicle of Empire. "The seemingly banal character of the cigarette card hides the extraordinary impact that these texts had on the dreams and

20 Cf. Wulf D. Hund, *The White Norm*, transl. Die weiße Norm, in: Max S. Hering Torres, ed., *Cuerpos Anómalos*, Bogotá 2008, pp. 171-203.

21 John MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, Manchester 1984, p. 254. In *The Age of Empire*, London, 1987, Eric Hobsbawm also shows how notions of white racial superiority helped bind societies together that were divided along lines of social class.

22 G. A. Henty, *By Sheer Pluck*, London 1883, p. 118.

23 Cf. Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania*, London 2005, chapters 5 and 6; also Waters, *Racism*, chapter 7. For a contemporary account of Uncle Tom's mid-century popularity, see Henry Tuckerman, *A Month in England*, Gloucester 1982, pp. 80-85.

aspirations of their male consumers, for it was through images of exploration and conquest that they discovered not only the idea of Empire but also of their place in the world". In the view of Solomos and Back, they were "as important in the reproduction of racism as the electronic counterparts that were to come later".<sup>24</sup> They were successful because of the way they were packaged as a form of popular culture, however "seemingly banal". So with "nigger" minstrelsy, for it was for the most part the blend of racial mimicry and mockery with other aspects of popular entertainment that made the mockery both palatable and easy to accept.

This is perhaps especially true of minstrel humour. Laughter can go a long way in making any view seem acceptable. It not only sugars the pill, as the saying has it, but also protects itself from criticism by its comic frame. This announces to all comers that whatever is said by way of the comedy is not meant to be taken seriously; it is by definition anti-serious and what is advanced within its frame is meant only as fun. That is what is happening when, after offence is taken and expressed, there is always the classic get-out clause: "We're only joking". The implication then is that if you cannot accept the joke as a joke, you are somehow lacking; you are incomplete or deficient as a personality. Yet with blackface humour, such self-protection in comic discourse was hardly necessary. When British minstrelsy was in its heyday, the black population was relatively small, and those in all other social categories did not find the comedy offensive. There was general acceptance that in such comedy the jokes were not only about black people. Black people were themselves the joke.

That may be taken as one measure of minstrelsy's common-sense effectiveness as racism, but stereotypical representations of black people as naturally stupid or silly, or innately rhythmical and inclined "to dance and sing to the music of the banjo", were made to stick all the more readily because their stage presence was that of the clown. The tomfoolery of the cornermen, Tambo and Bones, was closely akin to the knockabout humour of the circus or pantomime clown, but as with Rice's Jim Crow, the blackface clown in general was the first clown-type whose persona was built upon a form of racial impersonation which involved not only mimicry, but also mockery. This was a convenient device in a social order based on structural inequality and strict moral discipline, for it not only helped to relieve the tensions and conflict which this bred. It also served to define the antitype of order and discipline and so reinforce them. Blackface interludes in British life regaled those present with the image of a racial low-Other while also offering a temporary space in which licence and freedom from

24 John Solomos and Les Back, *Racism and Society*, Basingstoke 1996, p. 159. See also MacKenzie, *Propaganda*, pp. 23-26.

restraint were permissible. White people could laugh, and cry, to their imperial content.

Blackface clowning and its veiled carriage of racial views was in itself historically variable. It would take an essay in itself to demonstrate this at all fully, but it can perhaps be readily illustrated by comparing two comedic extracts from minstrel routines, one from the early days of British minstrelsy, and the other from the tail-end of its widespread popularity. The first is taken from a minstrel script penned by John Labern for performance at London's Vauxhall Gardens. After an opening song, one of the performers discourses on the stock minstrel instrument:

Talk about musick! De banjo's de food ob lub, arter all, nigger; dis instrument am warranted to reach a higher note dan de highest one in de Bank of England ... Allow me to 'splain de horrigin ob de banjo; his farder was de celybrated double base, dat went so low in de fust ac' ob de operer ob "Fried debil O", dat he cou'dn't be found till de end ob de las' ac'; his moder was de big drum, desended down from de kittle drum; dey were both jined togeder in de full band ob holy hemlock, an' dis banjo am de offspring – put dat in your smokes and pipe it, nigger.<sup>25</sup>

This typical piece of minstrel gabble works in at least two ways. It can on the one hand be read as a mixture of punning humour and absurd drollery that has a similar appeal to the bull, nonsense rhyme, and mundane word-play. That would be to see it as continuous with other forms of humour based on verbal dalliance and the inversion of serious forms of public address. On the other hand, it was delivered by a man in a "nigger" mask and meant also not only to amuse by way of its deliberate mashing of the English language, but also to demonstrate the black's ill-mastery of this language and worse, his low intelligence, as evident in his credulous belief in the absurd explanations and associations he delivered. This was the case with all stump speeches and "nigger" sermons.

Ninety years after this script was performed, two minstrel entertainers, Scott and Whaley, were amusing audiences with similar samples of word-play and verbal whimsy. Here is the start of one of their dialogues, with Eddie Whaley playing the straight man (A) and Harry Scott the comic (B):

A: Why! Is it really you?

B: I must have notice of that question.

A: Where have you been all the summer?

B: I hurt my foot and couldn't put it to the ground.

A: Couldn't put your foot to the ground – that's bad – what did you do?

B: I stayed in Kent and went hopping.

25 Sharp's Vauxhall Comic Song Book, 1st series, London, n.d., p. 62. The spoof opera title is a reference to Daniel Auber's *Fra Diavolo*, an *opera comique* in three acts first performed in Paris in 1830.

- A: Excuse me being personal – but is it true that your brother Robert, who worked at leather tanning is now a policeman?  
 B: Yes, Bob used to be tanner, now he's only a copper!  
 A: And how have you been getting along?  
 B: Well, I got a job as a Christmas card poet, but things went from bad to verse.<sup>26</sup>

Their routine, which carries on at considerable length in the same manner of straight question and comic retort, is simply an extension of the cut-and-thrust banter between the cornermen clowns and Mr Interlocutor as this had been established in the mid-nineteenth century. We may then ask how much had changed. Scott and Whaley's humour continued to depend upon puns and malapropisms, as in the first excerpt, though sometimes in quite inventive ways, but it was no longer delivered in comic "nigger" dialect. Its medium was still the minstrel show, but now adapted for BBC radio. Scott and Whaley were regular members of the cast for *The Kentucky Minstrels*, a programme initiated by Harry S. Pepper and having a remarkably long run, playing to audiences from the early 1930s to the early 1950s. Their cross-talk act was a staple item in the show. A further difference was that both Scott and Whaley were black. Neither Eddie Whaley, nor the other black man in the show, the singer Ike Hatch, needed by this time to appear in blackface. That would in any case have been superfluous in a soi-disant blind medium like radio, but Scott and Whaley were also regular seaside entertainers. When they appeared in marine holiday resorts, Harry Scott did black up, and adorn himself with big white lips, as the other half of the pair. Whaley as "straight man" would appear as a smart, debonair dresser with bowler hat or straw boater, while Scott would play the big-booted, lugubrious clown. Since he also adopted this persona on radio, his audience may well have imagined him in customary form, or in other words in virtual blackface.

Scott and Whaley were no longer trading so directly in "nigger" humour, but they continued to work within the minstrel tradition, retaining at least a half-portion of the degrading humour. Black stereotypicality was only partially dismantled in their act. As black people, they had more control over the popular comedy in which they specialized, but their success still trailed the remnants of a comic tradition that demeaned them on racial grounds, and seemed in some ways to acquiesce in that. Their act did register and reinforce certain changes, and perhaps the most important of these was that Harry Scott was now a black person playing a white person playing in blackface. The degree to which his performance of a white im-

26 The Old Time Stars' Book of Comedy Sketches, London 1971, p. 66. A tanner was the colloquial term in pre-decimal coinage for sixpence; the copper was a penny piece.



personation of blacks self-consciously "othered" the racist representation that it entailed is difficult to tell, regardless of the control the two of them were able to exercise over what they did and said. It was perhaps a first tentative step towards liberation from the blackface mask, especially on Eddie Whaley's part, but they were an inseparable show-business duo and so stood or fell together.<sup>27</sup> More broadly, escape from under the long shadow of minstrelsy was only fully achieved towards the end of the twentieth century, and that again is a measure of how successful this form of popular entertainment was in providing a vehicle on which racism could ride with both impunity and appeal.



*Fig. 2: The Mohawk, Moore & Burgess Minstrels were a combination of the two leading companies in London who amalgamated for four years from 1900 to 1904 during the decline of the large-scale metropolitan minstrel show. The illustration shows them performing at St James's Hall, Piccadilly. Note the two cornermen clowns, Tambo and Bones, with two extra minstrels offering support on both tambourine and castanets. Harry Hunter is Mr Interlocutor, seated centre-stage, front row. (Source: picture postcard, Rotary Photographic Series, author's collection.)*

<sup>27</sup> For further analysis of Scott and Whaley's work within the context of radio minstrelsy in Britain, see Pickering, *Blackface*, chapter 8, where it is shown that the amelioration of blackface stereotypicality at this time was also the result of a shift from racist to sexist comedy.

**Blackface Analysis**

The argument I have developed is designed to show some of the complexity of the popular dissemination and circulation of racism and related ideologies.<sup>28</sup> Such ideologies achieve hegemonic status – as racism undoubtedly did in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century period – by working partly under wraps and in doing so coming to appear intrinsic to cultural forms which successfully engage with the broader popular aesthetics of their time. The racism of blackface minstrelsy is in many ways repugnant to us today, but we cannot successfully rid ourselves of its legacy unless we fully understand how it operated. The British minstrel show and all it stood for in respect of black stereotypicality has clearly been superseded, despite the many requests for its return following the demise of its final manifestation in a famous British television show of the postwar period. These continued for years after the BBC's *Black & White Minstrel Show* stopped screening in the 1970s. Since then, various conflicting views of it have become apparent. Some see blackface minstrelsy as harmless fun, with its demise due to an excess of political correctness, while others regard it as pernicious in its stereotypical representations, its demise a clear sign of progress in contemporary multicultural society. Over the past thirty years or so, the predominant response to British minstrelsy has been a general sense of distaste at its part in the popular culture of the past, showing evidence not only of wanting to move on but also expunge it from collective memory. This has made analysis of the blackface form more, rather than less difficult and when the topic has arisen, usually generated more heat than light.

While this has been an initial problem to be overcome, there has been a far more difficult and abiding one to deal with in blackface scholarship, despite the expanding acknowledgement that blacking-up is in itself offensively racist rather than simply racially presumptuous. The problem has been that of achieving an appropriate analytical balance between the registration of offence, as we identify and dissect minstrelsy's racist representations and their banal pervasiveness, and the effort to understand historically the manifold attractions of the minstrel show. These did not of course remain constant, and part of that effort involves showing how they changed, but variation of response is also a characteristic feature of the historical work that has been done on minstrelsy. The earliest work was warmly appreciative and often celebratory, as for example in the first history of its development in Britain, Harry Reynolds's *Minstrel Memories*, and

28 For a more elaborate discussion of these in relation to minstrelsy, see *ibid.*, pp. 109-125.

in MacQueen-Pope's mid-century treatments of it in various books dealing with popular song and theatre.<sup>29</sup> A similarly uncritical stance is found in Carl Wittke's *Tambo and Bones*, which appeared a couple of years after Reynolds's largely descriptive account. The majority of work in blackface scholarship has, like Wittke's, been devoted to North American minstrelsy. This, as I have stressed, was significantly different to its British counterpart, not least because of the existence and then the continuing legacy of slavery as the broader social context in which American minstrelsy developed. In the States, the scholarly analysis of minstrel shows and acts has steadily increased in sophistication, and with this moved to quite different perspectives on the whole phenomenon. Perhaps most significantly, there has been a shift from emphasis on the racist dimension and its relation to white ethnic identity, to emphasis on its performative features and, without dismissing its racism, recognition of minstrelsy's slippery meanings and multifaceted experience which, it is argued, could extend at times to compromising or undermining the racism.

If in the critical work of the 1970s and 1980s, "simply underlining the stereotypes in minstrelsy served as a satisfactory analytic manoeuvre", this is now regarded as having failed to get properly to grips with either its theatrical dynamics or the complexities of the social and cultural contexts in which they were embedded.<sup>30</sup> An analytical focus solely or even mainly on black stereotypicality thus oversimplifies the blackface arts and all they involved. The constituent parts of minstrelsy "added up to more than the commercialized exploitation of racial imitation or the commodification of ethnic or racial envy and white supremacy".<sup>31</sup> Compelling though recent studies are, as Philip Gura has remarked, "they still leave us wondering why, precisely, people flocked to minstrel shows". He goes on to ask: "What if people were amused not only by the blackface inversion they witnessed but [also] by other, less racially charged, situations?"<sup>32</sup> To this we could add: what if the non-racial elements of minstrelsy were more, rather

29 Walter MacQueen-Pope, *The Melodies Linger On*, London 1950; id., *Ghosts and Greasepaint*, London 1951; id., *Goodbye, Piccadilly*; Reynolds, *Minstrel Memories*.

30 The quote is from W. T. Lhamon, *Raising Cain*, Cambridge, MA etc. 1998, p. 6. This is representative of latterday North American scholarship on minstrelsy. See also Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder*, Cambridge etc. 1997, and William J. Mahar, *Behind the Burnt Cork Mask*, Urbana, IL etc. 1999. For earlier work manifesting a predominantly ideological emphasis, see Robert Toll, *Blacking Up*; Dennison, *Scandalize My Name*; Eric Lott, *Love and Theft*, New York etc. 1993.

31 Mahar, *Burnt Cork Mask*, p. 329.

32 Philip Gura, *America's Minstrel Daze*, in: *The New England Quarterly*, 72:4, December 1999, pp. 602-616, here p. 611.

than less, important than the racial elements? The problem here is that we are still lacking studies of sufficient scope and depth to be able to answer this question with confidence.

British scholarship has in its own ways tried to fathom the multivalent appeal of minstrelsy, firstly by Douglas Lorimer in setting its contribution to a changing racism in a broader historical context, secondly by George Rehin in work on its cultural antecedents and vernacular forms, and thirdly by J. S. Bratton in an important article focusing on the reasons for early minstrelsy's success in Britain.<sup>33</sup> It is this focus which, among other things, I have tried to expand in my own book-length treatment of British minstrelsy, and in doing so it was the task of achieving analytical balance that was the most difficult aspect of the study. Why is this significant? Why is it important to try to understand minstrelsy in all the complexity of its cultural contexts, from the early reign of Queen Victoria through to the emergence of media minstrelsy? Surely we do want to move on and away from minstrelsy and all that it represented? It is precisely because I think this is so that I believe analytical balance is crucial.

With a more recent British comedian like Bernard Manning, we may, like Frederick Douglas with "nigger" minstrelsy, feel little compunction in denouncing both the racist humour and the favourable reception it has received among certain audiences. Minstrelsy was not of course as monolithically racist as a comedian like Manning, and as I have tried to indicate, its ambivalent meanings and complex codings were fundamental to its widespread popularity. Manning was, at best, a minority taste, while British minstrelsy enjoyed broad popularity across at least six generations. But what I think is far more significant than this is the argument that historical research and analysis that is primarily driven by a prearranged agenda rarely produces a satisfactory study. The kind of balance I am referring to is more important for historical analysis than for contemporary debate because if we want to understand why particular forms of racism have been popularized in the past, and so avoid similar waves of popularization in the future, we need to develop a fully rounded account of how and why this happened, rather than an account which simply provides affirmation of our anti-racist views in the present.

Historical study should deepen and enrich our understanding of the past, rather than give us only a one-dimensional picture or a view that is heavily

33 Lorimer, *Bibles, Banjoes and Bones*, and *id.*, *Colour, Class and the Victorians*, Leicester 1978; George Rehin, *Harlequin Jim Crow*, in: *Journal of Popular Culture*, 9:3, Winter 1975, pp. 682-701; *id.*, *Blackface Street Minstrels in Victorian London and its Resorts*, in: *Journal of Popular Culture*, 15:1, Summer 1981, pp. 19-38; Bratton, *English Ethiopians*.

skewed to a single interpretative perspective. Such study should involve us in critical engagement with our own values as well as those of the past. We have of course to work with our own values. They are necessary and vital in providing us with our initial bearings on a research topic, but allowing them to take centre-stage and command the work of analysis is unlikely ever to defamiliarize our leading presumptions or surprise us out of our existing frameworks. Critical opposition to minstrelsy's undoubted racism was the position from which I began the research. It was also the position I returned to at the end, but I did not write the book simply to validate an originating standpoint. In order to understand how its racism was popularized and became so effective – effective because banally accepted – it was crucial always to remember that what I was studying was a form of popular theatrical entertainment. That, first and foremost, was its *raison d'être*, and not its racism. It made people laugh with joy, and cry with the emotion it stirred; it was hugely enjoyable to them; and if I sometimes forgot or overlooked this, I was taking unfair advantage of hindsight. Hindsight is unavoidable, and often very helpful, but we shouldn't study history simply in order to show that it, and we, are right.



*Fig. 3 Sheet-music cover for "What's the Hodds, As Long As You're 'Appy?" – words by Charles Dunphie, music by Walter Howard. Howard was a "banjo humorist", and this song was typical of his comic song repertoire. Howard was a cornerman clown for the Moore & Burgess Minstrels until 1884, after which he worked with the Mohawks. The illustration is by Alfred Concanen, the famous lithographer of Victorian music covers who often portrayed artistes in the costumes they wore on stage. (Source: sheet music in author's collection.)*

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# Promoting Racism

## Elements of Trademark Stereotyping

Malte Hinrichsen

Commercial advertising and commodity culture have been major influences of western societies since the late nineteenth century, creating both images of identity and of otherness. Emerging in post-abolition America and colonialist Europe, early marketing campaigns presented a range of racial stereotypes and set the base for racialized trademarks and for widespread usage of racially charged visual language in promotional activities during the following century. Facing critique and opposition from social movements, racist advertising changed, but did not disappear. Following critical approaches to the analysis of commercial imagery and covering a range from early stereotyping to contemporary multiculturalism, this chapter reveals the perpetual promotion of whiteness through continuing pictorial exclusion and observes techniques of visual subordination as well as their historical transformation.

"The Aunt Jemima products continue to stand for warmth, nourishment and trust – qualities you'll find in loving moms from diverse backgrounds", announces Quaker Oats at the bottom of a list of their trademark figure's transformations. Beyond the explicit gender segmentation, the company seems to have recognized the need for a declaration of ethnic tolerance, although the "image of Aunt Jemima was updated by removing her headband and giving her pearl earrings and a lace collar" (figure 1).<sup>1</sup> The motivation for this clarification and for the cosmetic changes of their character is obvious since Aunt Jemima has been struggling with political protests for fifty years by now. Black artists during the civil rights movement armed the servile mammy against the white suppression of her pancake box and fought for her sexual liberation up to the nineties (figure 2).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the Quaker Oats Company acted like other companies facing a similar dilemma, among them Uncle Ben's, Banania in France or Sarotti in Germany: they maintained their emotionally charged trademark while only

- 1 Aunt Jemima's Historical Timeline, in: [http://www.auntjemima.com/aj\\_history/](http://www.auntjemima.com/aj_history/) [10.10.2010].
- 2 For a history of Aunt Jemima see, for example, Maurice M. Manring, *Slave in a Box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima*, Charlottesville 1998. For the critical reception in black arts cf. Michael D. Harris, *Memories and Memorabilia, Art and Identity. Is Aunt Jemima Really a Black Woman?*, in: *Third Text* 44, 1998, pp. 25-42. Find an in depth analysis of the mammy stereotype in Micki McElya, *Clinging to Mammy. The Faithful Slave in Twentieth-Century America*, Cambridge 2007.



slowly trying to translate it to multicultural societies with alleged respect to "diverse backgrounds".<sup>3</sup> Either turning "easygoing servitude ... into a commercial attribute" as in figures of contented slaves (Uncle Ben's) and docile servants (Sarotti), or falsifying exploitative colonial history as in the image of the Tirailleur Sénégalais (Banania), all of these companies had positioned their products in the ideological context of white supremacy and refused to abandon the adopted imagery in times of social and political change.<sup>4</sup>

The history of racism is a history of imaginations and imagined others. Since the development of the modern public sphere in the course of the "emergence of early finance and trade capitalism",<sup>5</sup> as Habermas put it, these imaginations were affected by widespread printed publications and the commercial advertisements they delivered. Moreover, by the time of mass production and expanded purchasing power in western societies, the creation of imaginations of a product's use and value became a main interest of industries and their marketing strategies.<sup>6</sup> In his uncritical approach to the "Birth of Modern Advertising", Rob Schorman incidentally reveals the early intersections of the construction of utility values and the representation of cultural and racial difference, when he refers to an advertisement for Bissell Carpet Sweepers from 1893 which "says nothing about the sweeper's functional capabilities".<sup>7</sup> To arouse the interest of potential customers the promoter, who "had a knack for matching his sales pitches with popular modes of thought",<sup>8</sup> praised the Indian origin of the sweeper's material, underlining the connection of a fascinating orient with numbers ("19,000 miles") and four depictions arranged around the text in a framing square: A bearded, brown-skinned man with a traditional turban, a veiled and exotically decorated woman, an Indian elephant as representative of natural abundance and, as the buyable surrogate, the sweeper (figure 3).

3 Cf. Wulf D. Hund, *Die weiße Norm: Grundlagen des Farbrassismus*, in: Max S. Hering Torres, ed., *Cuerpos Anómalos*, Bogotá 2008, pp. 171-203, here p. 173.

4 Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black. Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*, 3rd edition, New Haven etc. 1998, p. 155.

5 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, translated by Thomas Burger, Cambridge 1989, p. 14.

6 Cf. Wolfgang Fritz Haug, *Kritik der Warenästhetik*, Frankfurt a. M. 1971, p. 17.

7 Rob Schorman, Claude Hopkins, Earnest Calkins, *Bissell Carpet Sweepers and the Birth of Modern Advertising*, in: *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 7, 2008, 2, pp. 181-220, here p. 194.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 195.

As J. Stanley Lemons recognized, "[p]opular culture is an exceptional means for gaining an insight into what masses of people are thinking, feeling, and dreaming".<sup>9</sup> In this context, racism analysis has to emphasize the impact of contemporary racial representations – without disregarding its historical conditions. My examination of "the legacy of several hundred years of western expansion and hegemony" as "recycled in western cultures"<sup>10</sup> and its commercial advertising in particular, starts with a brief introduction to the concepts of othering and stereotyping and their epistemological dimensions. Combined with social-psychological insights into the consumer imaginations of utility values, one receives suitable analytical tools for scrutinizing specific products and trademarks in order to uncover racist backgrounds and ongoing racializations. Thereby unmasked as elementary protagonists in the social construction of race, the trademark figures will be removed from their current transformations and – in an attempt to historically contextualise them – will be integrated in the discourses on slavery and exoticism, colonialism and sexual exploitation. Furthermore, the article focuses on the impact of the represented stereotypes on the consumer society, with respect to the evocations of former power structures and to the context of the products' connotations.<sup>11</sup> I will in this context have to ask the question why Bissell Carpet Sweepers, and in the following so many other companies, could successfully effectuate the increase of sales by referring to stereotypical representations.

### **The Racialized Other in Advertising**

To begin with, we have to take into consideration two historical processes of detachment which led to the amalgamation of stereotypical depictions of race and imagined utility values in the development of racialized trade-

9 J. Stanley Lemons, *Black Stereotypes as Reflected in Popular Culture, 1880-1920*, in: *American Quarterly* 29, 1977, 1, pp. 102-116, here p. 103.

10 Pieterse, *White on Black*, p. 9.

11 For a history of race in relation to advertisement from the announcing of runaway slaves to the present promotion of whitening utensils in East Asia and Africa, see Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben, and Rastus. Blacks in Advertising, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, Westport etc. 1994; Deseriee A. Kennedy, *Marketing Goods, Marketing Images: The Impact of Advertising on Race*, in: *Arizona State Law Journal* 32, 2000, 2, pp. 615-694, here pp. 638-660. A profound analysis of the represented stereotypes concerning the different sociological and historical layers is provided by Michael Pickering, *Stereotyping. The Politics of Representation*, Houndmills etc. 2001. The most relevant attempt to connect general theories of advertising and otherness can be found in William M. O'Barr, *Culture and the Ad: Exploring Otherness in the World of Advertising*, Boulder 1994.

mark figures and to a widespread usage of racially connoted visual language in modern advertising. In this approach, the first element to focus on is the segregation of collective, visual and ideational identifications of racial stigmatized others from their original representatives in the course of social history. Secondly, by showing the removal of promised utility values from real practical advantages of promoted products in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, we can prepare the investigation of racial symbols and their subtextual value for advertising and thereby illustrate the meaning of medial communicated racial visualizations as social substitutes for the scientific naturalization of racism.<sup>12</sup>

Especially gender-focussed research after Erving Goffman's study in 1977 on "Gender Advertisements" clarified the distinctive mechanisms of visual representations in popular culture and referred to concepts of "otherness", without clearly identifying the historical context of their examinations and the genesis of the presented "others".<sup>13</sup> Goffman defined the commercial display of humans as the making and preserving of roles, containing messages of "social identity" and referring to "conventionalized portrayals" of established cultural and social relations.<sup>14</sup> Although he himself, strangely, was not seeing the racial dimension of his examinations, his approach sowed the seeds for further sociological studies of advertising in order to reveal visual constructions of difference. In the context of racism analysis, Stuart Hall positioned the "marking of difference" as the "basis of that symbolic order which we call culture".<sup>15</sup> Thus, he likewise alludes to the Enlightenment attempts to establish precise race sciences with hierarchical frameworks of humankind and the tradition of racial representation in arts and popular culture.<sup>16</sup> Michael Pickering shows how these figures overlap in the development of 'othering' stereotypes when he points out the spadework of race scientists in preparing "'the basic racial hypothesis'", consisting of assumed biological and cultural inferiority, meanwhile concluding that "the pervasiveness of racist view ... owed more

12 For racism as "naturalized" ideology see Stuart Hall, *The Whites of Their Eyes. Racist Ideologies and the Media*, in: Gail Dines, Jean M. Humez, ed., *Gender, Race, and Class in Media*, London etc. 2003, pp. 89-93, here p. 90.

13 Cf. Barbara B. Stern, *Gender and Multicultural Issues in Advertising: Stages on the Research Highway*, in: *Journal of Advertising* 28, 1999, 1, pp. 1-9.

14 Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements*, London etc. 1979.

15 Stuart Hall, *The Spectacle of the 'Other'*, in: Stuart Hall ed., *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London etc. 1997, pp. 223-290, here p. 236.

16 For race sciences in the eighteenth and nineteenth century see, among others, Wulf D. Hund, *Negative Vergesellschaftung. Dimensionen der Rassismusanalyse*, Münster 2006, pp. 32-34. The visual correlates can be observed in Pieterse, *White on Black*, pp. 30-51.

to its easily accessed images".<sup>17</sup> In this perspective, "'primitivism' (Culture) and 'blackness' (Nature) became interchangeable" and resulted in "'black types'" being easily reproducible "with a few, simple, essentialized strokes of the pen".<sup>18</sup> Therewith, the internalization of stereotypes could reach a subconscious level of epistemological subordination, which in the words of Charles W. Mills made "the white body the somatic norm" and provided the subtle but certain "affirmation" of "whiteness that distinguished one from the subpersons on the other side of the color line".<sup>19</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, when "advertising had begun to take on an increasingly ubiquitous form",<sup>20</sup> science and culture had arranged a wide repertoire of ready-made stereotypical depictions, charged with metaphors of white superiority. These were already a commonplace part of public discourse. In America the minstrel images of "Uncle Tom", "Sambo" and the "ol' mammy" were "so familiar that few people had any notion that they degraded black Americans".<sup>21</sup> This phenomenon was limited neither to the United States nor to representations of Africans and their descendants. Although in different varieties and with a stronger focus on oriental features the image of the black servant amongst others, shaped European visual culture and led to the 'Moor' becoming a synonym for luxury, exoticism, devotion and the "contrast between light and dark".<sup>22</sup> Likewise, constructions of "emasculated, asexual Asians co-existed with the image of Orientals as licentious beasts", and Jews or Irish were equated with Blacks as "White Negroes".<sup>23</sup>

Recent business studies textbooks argue that stereotypes are "a necessity" for successful advertising and are "the best way to cut through the background and get directly to a storyline that will sell".<sup>24</sup> However, racist stereotypes most of the time do not actually guide the way to advertisement storylines, but *are* the stories and lead more directly to the "'racialisation'

17 Pickering, *Stereotyping*, p. 126.

18 Hall, *Spectacle*, pp. 247, 249.

19 Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract*, Ithaca etc. 1997, pp. 61, 59.

20 Anandi Ramamurthy, *Imperial Persuaders. Images of Africa and Asia in British Advertising*, Manchester etc. 2003, p. 1.

21 Lemons, *Black Stereotypes*, p. 102.

22 Pieterse, *White on Black*, pp. 124-131.

23 Minjeong Kim, Angie Y. Chung, *Consuming Orientalism: Images of Asian/American Women in Multicultural Advertising*, in: *Qualitative Sociology* 28, 2005, 1, pp. 67-91, here p. 74; Pieterse, *White on Black*, pp. 212-218.

24 Marie Hardin, *Argument: Stereotypes are the best way to give consumers a quick understanding of the creative impact of the message*, in: Carol J. Pardun, ed., *Advertising and Society. Controversies and Consequences*, Chichester 2009, pp. 130-135, here p. 130.

of brand identities".<sup>25</sup> Wolfgang Fritz Haug, in his inquiry into the aesthetic and economic dimensions of advertising, argues that brands are primarily not competing concerning the practical use of their product but rather in respect to its outward appearance and constructed image.<sup>26</sup> Following this approach, and additionally with regards to Judith Williamson's work on the subject, we have to examine the "structures of meaning" created and transported by racialized advertising, not only simulating the consumer's not-belonging to the working class but also confirming him of whiteness and therefore of "aesthetically and morally, intellectually and culturally" superiority to the degraded others.<sup>27</sup>

### **Imagined Slaves and Buyable Colonies**

In the United States of the late nineteenth century, trade and advertising cards were a common means to increase a product's popularity by simultaneously transporting explicit or subtle racist messages.<sup>28</sup> Industries often referred to traditional stereotypical imaginations, when, for example, the N. K. Fairbank Company was represented by a white, fair-haired child asking its dark-skinned peer, why it is not properly washed with Fairy Soap.<sup>29</sup> This concept of "white-washing" made its way into printed advertising and was transferred to the macro-level of white supremacy by Sapolio, according to 1936 Time Magazine "probably the world's best-advertised product" between 1899 and 1905.<sup>30</sup> This company used Miss Liberty, armed with sword and soap, as a symbol for white purity and the "generic 'dirtiness' of ... racial others", proclaiming that "A clean nation has ever been a strong nation".<sup>31</sup> At the same time, Pears' Soap advertisement invoked their customers' alleged moral duty by referring to the "White Man's Burden" – their soap was meant to bring "cleanliness" as well as "civilization" to the

25 Ramamurthy, *Imperial Persuaders*, p. 15.

26 Cf. Haug, *Warenästhetik*, p. 38.

27 Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements. Ideology and Meaning in Advertising*, London etc. 1978, pp. 12f.; Hund, *Weißer Norm*, p. 197.

28 For a history of trading cards and its racial connotations cf. Marilyn Maness Mehaffy, *Advertising Race/Raceing Advertising: The Feminine Consumer (-Nation), 1876-1900*, in: *Signs* 23, 1997, pp. 131-174.

29 For the stereotypical context of "Mohrenwäsche" cf. Nana Badenbergh, *Mohrenwäschen, Völkerschauen: Der Konsum des Schwarzen um 1900*, in: Birgit Tautz, ed., *Colors 1800/1900/2000: Signs of Ethnic Difference*, Amsterdam 2004, pp. 163-184, here pp. 164-168.

30 *Business & Finance: Sapolio*, in: *Time*, 06.04.1936, in: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,848470,00.html> [14.10.2010].

31 Mehaffy, *Advertising Race*, p. 143.

"dark corners of the earth" (figures 4-5).<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the message of a black complexion could not only be used as proof for the alleged cultural backwardness of Africans and their descendants. As in the case of Payson's ink it also exemplified the persistence of colour in the racial other as well as in the advertised product ("Both indelible!"), and thus implied that a biological element of difference existed (figure 6). The flexibility and ambiguity of such stereotypes were reflected in their medial reproduction and enabled companies to refer to socially internalized images in connection with their commodities.

However, these marketers used popular tales and visible symbols of racism to promote the essential purpose of the advertised articles. In a more complex fashion and therefore in a more sustainable way of denigrating racial others, some companies around the turn of the century introduced black figures as embodiments of specific products. The new trademarks were not directly or 'naturally' connected to the goods they represented, but were embedded in a web of stereotypical connotations and artificial marketing strategies. Thus, Aunt Jemima was introduced by Quaker Oats as a legendary "Pancake Queen" from a "charming Southern scene" and in Uncle Ben the heritage of a preeminent Texas rice farmer was meant to live on.<sup>33</sup> With Rastus, the Cream of Wheat Chef, and some other black advertisement figures, these impersonations were evocative of the antebellum South and the corresponding stereotypical imaginations of Mammy and Uncle Tom, the desexualized, humble servants in the planter's mansion. Through their continuing servile appearance in popular culture of the post-civil-war United States, the early racial trademark figures "offered a ready solution ... to the problem of how to assimilate former slaves into contemporary society".<sup>34</sup> Especially in the case of Aunt Jemima the public representations were underpinned by models, which were sought to "exemplif[y] Southern hospitality". Nancy Green, the first living embodiment of Jemima, successfully presented the new Pancake Mix at the World's Columbian Exposition

32 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather. Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, New York etc. 1995, p. 33. For the nexus of soap and commodity racism see *ibid.*, chapter 5 'Soft-Soaping Empire. Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising'; and Ramamurthy, *Imperial Persuaders*, chapter 2 'Soap advertising, the trader as civilizer and the scramble for Africa'.

33 Kern-Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima*, pp. 70-73, 48f.

34 Jo-Ann Morgan, *Mammy the Huckster: Selling the Old South for the New Century*, in: *American Art* 9, 1995, 1, pp. 86-109, here p. 88. For a historical analysis of Mammy and Uncle Tom representations in twentieth century America see Patricia A. Turner, *Ceramic Uncles & Celluloid Mammies. Black Images and Their Influence on Culture*, New York 1994.

in Chicago in 1893.<sup>35</sup> Therewith, she fatally completed its racist spectrum of "living exhibits" assuring the white audience in so-called "White City" of black inferiority, either as natural savages or domesticated servants.<sup>36</sup>

A different set of stereotypes was, at the same time, employed and constructed by European marketers during the establishment of trademarks in colonial and orientalist contexts, referring to racial hierarchies in the global dimension. As David Ciarlo shows for Wilhelmine Germany, "[i]mages of subordinate Africans" were commercially used to "present graphic configurations of power to German viewers", hidden in the visual language of discourses on the "'colonial' realm".<sup>37</sup> The 'Moor'-figures, combining dark complexion with exotic features and commonly used to represent colonial produce, could optionally symbolize the luxury tradition of the 'Kammermohr' or be transferred to an African environment as naturalized savages.<sup>38</sup> Thus, Pieterse identifies the Sarotti-Mohr, this exotic black servant, as the "most visible black figure in German popular culture" and famous leftover of early twentieth century branding (figure 7).<sup>39</sup> Similarly, French companies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century developed a "handful of black types" promoting "commodities as bananas, coffee, soap, shoe polish, tobacco, and, of course, chocolate", resulting in the images of the laughing, ungrammatical Senegalese Banania soldier, which, in the francophone world, "are as pervasive as ones of Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben are in the U.S." (figure 8).<sup>40</sup>

35 Kern Foxworth, *Aunt Jemima*, pp. 66f.

36 For the representation of white supremacy in context of world fairs cf. Henrietta Lidchi, *The Poetics and the Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures*, in: Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London etc. 1997, pp. 151-222, pp. 195-198; Loren Kruger, "White Cities," "Diamond Zulus," and the "African Contribution to Human Advancement". *African Modernities and the World's Fairs*, in: *The Drama Review* 51, 2007, 3, pp. 19-45. For the controversies surrounding the World's Columbian Exposition, see Elliot M. Rudwick, August Meier, *Black Man in the "White City": Negroes and the Columbian Exposition, 1893*, in: *Phylon* 26, 1965, 4, pp. 354-361.

37 David Ciarlo, *Advertising and the Optics of Colonial Power at the Fin de Siècle*, in: Volker Langbehn, ed., *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory*, New York etc. 2010, pp. 37-54, here p. 50.

38 Cf. David Ciarlo, *Rasse konsumieren. Von der exotischen zur kolonialen Imagination in der Bildreklame des Wilhelminischen Kaiserreichs*, in: Birthe Kundrus, ed., *Phantasiereiche. Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus*, Frankfurt etc. 2003, pp. 135-179, here pp. 144f.

39 Pieterse, *White on Black*, pp. 158f.

40 James Smalls, "Race" As Spectacle in Late-Nineteenth-Century French Art and Popular Culture, in: *French Historical Studies* 26, 2003, 2, pp. 351-382, here p. 368; Jana Evans Braziel, *Trans-American Constructions of Black Mas-*

This process of interaction between colonial politics and early advertising is profoundly observed for Britain by Anandi Ramamurthy, who emphasizes one of the crucial questions for further investigations: While initially "[b]lack people were never intended as consumers", multi-cultural societies generated widespread "disapproval of overt racist ideas"; how did, in spite of that, "[a]ll the representations" survive to "late-twentieth-century advertising"?<sup>41</sup> Although transformed, racist stereotypes obviously kept their profitable impact and moreover, as I will try to show, conserved the social significance of their messages through constant reproduction and continuing entrenchment.

### **Persistent Stereotypes and the Messages of Difference**

As relevant studies of U.S. media suggest, "many negative and demeaning stereotypical portrayals of African-Americans (e.g., servants, maids, porters) have largely disappeared", or at least "changed in character, taking subtler and more symbolic or underhanded forms".<sup>42</sup> Although most of these approaches critically challenge popular culture, claiming the emergence of "new and subtle ethnic stereotypes", they widely neglect the consistency of traditional racial constructions. From a more comprehensive analytical perspective, Michael Pickering points out ambivalence as an essential characteristic of stereotypes and shows that imaginations of the Other arise primarily in distinction to the self-perception of the stereotyping group and are manifested "in and for its subordination, in and for its 'inferiority' to the self-in-dominance".<sup>43</sup> From this, it can be argued that the core issues of analysis should not be the concrete features of othering depictions, but rather the subliminal and pervasive patterns of degrading differentiation. Denial and overemphasis of black sexuality as well as imaginations of bloodthirsty and noble savagery have always been visualized separately, but are two sides of one coin of exclusion.

With regards to its reference to traditional racial representations and relating to its implications for the consumer society, contemporary visual language in advertising can be analytically divided along two main lines.

culinity: Dany Laferrière, *le Nègre*, and the Late Capitalist American Racial machine-désirante, in: *Callaloo* 26, 2003, 3, pp. 867-900, here p. 889.

41 Ramamurthy, *Imperial Persuaders*, pp. 215-216.

42 Julia M. Bristor, Renée Gravois Lee, Michelle R. Hunt, *Race and Ideology: African-American Images in Television Advertising*, in: *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 14, 1995, 1, pp. 48-59, here p. 50; Anthony J. Cortese, *Provocateur. Images of Women and Minorities in Advertising*, 3rd edition, Lanham etc. 2008, p. 91.

43 Pickering, *Stereotyping*, p. 75.



First, there is the direct quotation of established racist stereotypes, as seen in many of the mentioned trademarks and in specific product segments. The Sarotti-Mohr of the German chocolate company Sarotti from 2004 tells the same story as its descendant from 1922. The character combines connotations of eroticism and exoticism, of luxury and servility slightly transformed from a black to golden complexion.<sup>44</sup> Banania's Tirailleur Sénégalais experienced visual rejuvenation but kept his happy-go-lucky Sambo appearance and, although now equipped with attributes of middle class or entrepreneurship, Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben cannot belie their slavish past.

However, also recent advertising campaigns overtly play with racially charged imagery. When, in 2006, Magnum promoted its new chocolate product with a Spanish actress and her lusty, cocoa-covered clone, they commemorated a wide range of racist symbols.<sup>45</sup> Besides the obvious reminder of alleged black female lewdness in the context of slavery and colonial life,<sup>46</sup> the company uses blackface methods to connect the black, eroticised body with an appetite for chocolate and therefore is evocative of edible blacks either in form of 'gator bait' images, of German 'Negerküsse' and 'Mohrenköpfe', or, most prominent, of Spanish 'Conguitos' (figures 9-10).<sup>47</sup>

Second, and needing a different reading, are the demeaning subtexts of multi-cultural advertisings, either proclaiming a peaceful coexistence of the ethnicities, or provoking social reactions with a supposedly calculated usage of racial stereotypes. Benetton's 'Tongues' campaign from 1991 or Virginia Slims promotion in 1999 tried to show representatives of assumed races in heterogeneity but equality. To emphasize the value of multi-cultural opportunities, they provided the race agents, on the one hand, with similar mimicry of satisfaction and happiness and, on the other hand, with physical and cultural attributions of the specific racialized group.<sup>48</sup> In contrast to the above-mentioned companies, who mostly refer to racist histo-

44 Cf. Joachim Zeller, Heiko Wegmann, Fotogalerie: "Mohren" – Ein Stereotyp in der Alltagskultur, in: <http://www.freiburg-postkolonial.de/Seiten/Mohren-Stereotyp.htm> [28.10.2010].

45 Cf. Jill Lane, *Becoming Chocolate, a Tale of Racial Translation*, in: *Theatre Journal* 59, 2007, 3, pp. 382-387.

46 For the relation of sexual and racial subordination see Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire. Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, London etc. 1995.

47 See "Negerküsse" etc. in Regina Bendix, *Of "Mohrenköpfe" and "Japanesen": Swiss Images of the Foreign*, in: *Journal of Folklore Research* 30, 1993, 1, pp. 15-28; and examinations of the literarily connection between black bodies and food in Kyla W. Tompkins, "Everything 'Cept Eat Us". The Antebellum Black Body Portrayed as Edible Body, in: *Callaloo* 30, 2007, 1, pp. 201-224.

48 Cf. Kim, Chung, *Consuming Orientalism*, pp. 79-83.

ries in holding up their established trademark, these promoters actively transfer the social and political discourses of identity and diversity into their campaigns and commodify the racial difference as part of their political representation.<sup>49</sup> The emphasis on differentiation, although ostensibly made in order to position the product or brand as culture and race uniting, perpetuates the category of race with all its distinctive implications.

Moreover, some agencies expand their marketing strategies towards the intentional reproduction of stereotypical depictions, challenging the concept of multiculturalism and its illusion of overcoming racism. Lacking theoretical embedding and presenting their provocative imagery in non-critical commodity surroundings, they revive deeply internalized imaginations of white superiority, which need to be analysed – as suggested here – in their historical discursive contexts. According to this approach and picking up on a word of Wulf D. Hund, we can identify 'Systemwerbung' for the sake of whiteness as an integral component of popular commodity culture and as an influential means of reproduction of racialized power structures.<sup>50</sup>

## Figures



*Fig. 1: The trademark figure Aunt Jemima of 1968 and the adapted version of 1989. Changing her looks, Quaker Oats tried to signalize racial sensibility and to appease critics from social movements. (Kern Foxworth, Aunt Jemima)*

49 For advertising as representation of politics see Henry A. Giroux, *Consuming Social Change: The "United Colors of Benetton"*, in: *Cultural Critique* 26, 1993/94, pp. 5-32, here pp. 5f.

50 Wulf D. Hund, *Werbung Whiteness Rassismus*, in: [http://wulfdhund.de/forschung/?Werbung\\_Whiteness\\_Rassismus](http://wulfdhund.de/forschung/?Werbung_Whiteness_Rassismus) [20.01.2011].



Fig. 2: Murry DePillars, Aunt Jemima (1968). From the 1960s onward, artists were "giving voice and humanity to all the black women aggrieved by ... Aunt Jemima and the mammy image". (Michael D. Harris, *Colored Pictures. Race and Visual Representation*, Chapel Hill etc. 2003, pp. 107, 112)

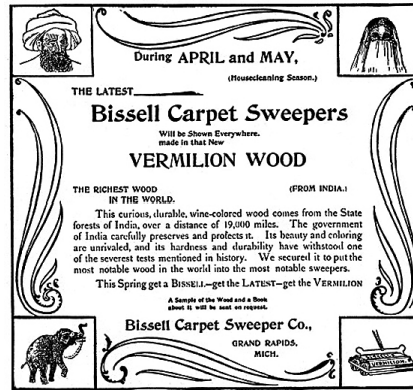
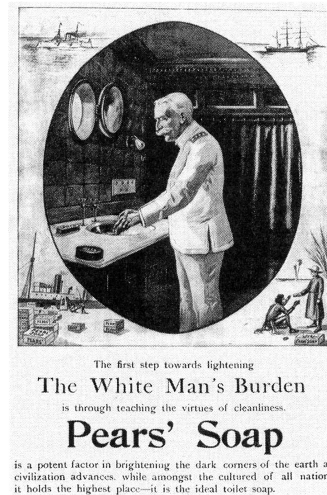


Fig. 3: Advert for Bissell Carpet Sweepers (1893). Early on, Otherness was a crucial element in promotional activities, frequently applied to create images of exclusiveness and luxury. (Schorman, Claude Hopkins, p. 194)



Figs. 4 (left) and 5 (right): Advertisements for Sapolio (1899) and Pears' Soap (1900). As examined by Anne McClintock, especially soap advertisements linked cultural stereotypes and product attributes to highly political campaigns of racial superiority in imperialist contexts. (Mehaffy, *Advertising Race*, p. 147; McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 33)



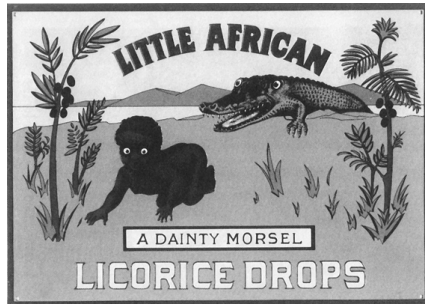
Fig. 6: Payson's Ink exemplified how stereotypes of popular culture were 'naturally' linked to ideas of racial characteristics, such as the indelibility of colour and of the associated qualities. (Pickering, *Stereotyping*, p. 122)



Fig. 7: Representing the tradition of 'Hofmohren' on European courts and incorporating Orientalism as well as minstrelsy, the Sarotti-Mohr since 1918 sold the taste of exotic blackness to German consumers. (Rita Gudermann, *Der Sarotti-Mohr: Die bewegte Geschichte einer Werbefigur*, Berlin 2004, p. 59)



Fig. 8: Banania advertising (1915). Resulting from discourses on colonial troops and their operation in Europe, Bonhomme Banania represented the Tirailleur Sénégalais as a "grand enfant, ... in order to make sense of France's new unease during and after the Great War". (Brett A. Berliner, *Ambivalent Desire. The Exotic Other in Jazz-Age France*, Amherst etc. 2002, pp. 10, 13)



*Figs. 9 and 10: The stereotype of the edible black, as a perversion of the racist suspicion of cannibalism, is reflected in language and popular culture, and has witnessed a history of promotional display reaching from the late 19th century down to the present day. (Kern-Foxworth, Aunt Jemima; Lane, Becoming Chocolate, p. 386)*

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# **African Sexuality Reloaded**

## **Discursive Shots at Explaining HIV/AIDS**

Nadine Anumba

This article argues that mass media explanations of HIV/AIDS in Africa are strongly influenced by longstanding notions of a savage African sexuality. It presents results of a discourse analysis of Germany's leading quality newsmagazine and newspapers from 1982 to 2010. These are shown to depict African sexuality as heterosexual, unrestrained, but partly gendered, turning the African woman into the icon of whore or Madonna.

HIV/AIDS, as theorist Paula Treichler explains, is not merely a biological but also a cultural phenomenon: "the AIDS epidemic has produced a parallel epidemic of meanings, definitions, and attributions", "an epidemic of signification".<sup>1</sup> Whether AIDS is conceptualized as the modern plague, a CIA or KGB plot, God's punishment for immoral sexual behavior, or the result of a bodily invasion by attackers which kill the soldiers of the immune system, it is embedded in a web of meanings which allows us to make sense of the disease and generate new meanings. Our knowledge of it is thus mediated, inflated, and circumscribed by cultural constructions.

In a discourse analysis of leading German quality press, I found that in connection with the African continent, AIDS is for the most part set in and refracted through a European projection space which turns 'AIDS in Africa' into 'African AIDS': a disease described and explained in line with historically developed, widely accepted truth claims about Africa as one of the 'Others' of Europe or the West. This paper will focus on one aspect of this construction: sexual difference. The media I examined (re)produce the idea of an African sexuality characterized by distinctive properties.<sup>2</sup> Firstly, black Africans' sexuality is depicted as invariably heterosexual. Secondly, it is portrayed as excessively promiscuous both within marriage, in the form of polygamy, and outside of it, mainly in the form of prostitu-

1 Paula A. Treichler, *How to Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS*, Durham 1999, p. 1.

2 The corpus comprised the rather conservative daily 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung', the more liberal weekly 'Die Zeit', and the main political magazine 'Der Spiegel'. I analyzed all articles (about 1900 in total) from the beginning of AIDS coverage in 1982 to 2010 which contained references to AIDS in Africa. While the constructions of Africans and African sexuality presented in this paper can only be exemplified by quotes from specific sources and times, they were found regularly in all three media.



tion. Thirdly, it is profoundly gendered and linked to a hierarchical order which constructs African women as the passionless and completely powerless victims of African men. Altogether, African sexuality in HIV/AIDS coverage indicates a lack of civilization in comparison with whites. In doing so, it draws on discursive traditions which have created such objects or images as the 'bestial black'.

Joep Leerssen describes images as "tropes, commonplaces [which] obtain familiarity by dint of repetition and mutual resemblance". He explains that

this means that whenever we encounter an individual instance of [an image], the primary reference is not to empirical reality but to an intertext, a sounding-board, of other related textual instances. In other words: ... [images] are a matter of commonplace and hearsay rather than empirical observation or statements of objective fact.<sup>3</sup>

While my concern is to reconstruct images and to delineate the sounding-board which gives them the ring of truth rather than to refute the media's assertions, it should be mentioned that research since the 1980s has challenged common assumptions about sexuality in Africa and painted a much more complex picture than the press, making it "impossible for any serious scholar in the future to use the phrase 'African sexuality'".<sup>4</sup>

In this article, terms such as African sexuality, the African woman, blacks and whites, Europe or Western are not used to refer to any kind of pre- or extra-discursive empirical reality but to the objects which have been discursively created. The word African, for example, usually denotes indigenous Africans, who are categorized as black, and Africa has little to do with the land mass called Africa in AIDS discourse but refers to the image of a black Africa, the Dark Continent as the "antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization".<sup>5</sup> The heterosexual African, the promiscuous African, and the male African perpetrator and female African victim are constructions of blacks whose sexuality is part of that alleged darkness.

3 Joep Leerssen, *Imagology: History and Method*, in: Manfred Beller, Joep Leerssen, eds., *Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of National Characters, A Critical Survey*, Amsterdam 2007, pp. 17-32, here p. 26.

4 Marc Epprecht, *Sexuality, Africa, History*, in: *The American Historical Review* 114, 2009, pp. 1258-1272, here p. 1271. For an overview of this research also see Chi-Chi Undie, Kabwe Benaya, *The State of Knowledge on Sexuality in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Synthesis of Literature*, in: *JENDA* 8, 2006, pp. 1-33.

5 Chinua Achebe (in his criticism of the image of Africa in Joseph Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'), *An Image of Africa*, in: *Research in African Literatures* 9, 1987, pp. 1-15, here p. 3.

### The Heterosexual African

Whether as desire, behavior, or identity, homosexuality, that is, male homosexuality (for female homosexuality does not exist in the AIDS coverage) is assumed by the media to hardly be present in Africa. If it occurs in the German press, it mostly does so in such exceptional situations as those enforced by prison life – out of necessity, it seems, rather than by desired choice – or among white people. One article, for instance, maintains:

Since homosexuality is very rare in Africa, AIDS is predominantly transmitted through heterosexual contact there. Women and men are affected by the epidemic in equal measure – an exception is South Africa: There, white homosexuals acquired their infections through contacts with Americans, whereas the heterosexual infections among whites and blacks apparently came into the country via Zaire.<sup>6</sup>

More forcefully, but along the same lines, another article states that "the black Ngolo [i.e. phallic; N.A.] power resolutely presses towards the woman".<sup>7</sup>

Homosexuals are generally white according to the media, and black Africans are heterosexual. This does not even have to be stated explicitly in many articles. The impression that homosexuality does not exist in Africa's indigenous population is also created through regular contrasts between homosexual HIV transmission in the industrial states and heterosexual transmission in Africa. Moreover, heterosexual sexuality is constantly problematized, while the possibility that sex between men may also be a factor in the spread of HIV in Africa is not considered.

There are a few articles which address the construction of homosexuality as un-African and the silence on homosexuality in Africa with regard to AIDS.<sup>8</sup> However, they create the impression that it is only black Africans who engage in this denial and not the German media. Africans are represented as especially intolerant, while African homophobia should be considered in the context of Western influences and attempts by those who have been 'othered' to establish accepted identities. "The colonialists did not introduce homosexuality to Africa but rather intolerance of it", Stephen Murray and Will Roscoe explain. In their collection of studies which attest to widespread and diverse same-sex practices and patterns as constituent parts of 'traditional' African societies, they assert: "Among the

6 Reiner Klingholz, *Aids frißt Afrika*, in: *Die Zeit* 50, 1986, p. 41. All translations of primary sources are mine.

7 Wilhelm Bittorf, "Ngolo ist unser Gott", in: *Der Spiegel* 25, 1991, pp. 146-174, here p. 153.

8 E.g. Robert von Lucius, *Mehr als eine Million Aids-Tote in Afrika?* in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 84, 1987, p. 10.

many myths Europeans have created about Africa, the myth that homosexuality is absent or incidental in African societies is one of the oldest and most enduring".<sup>9</sup> Marc Epprecht, who traces its history from the Age of Exploration to the present day, argues that in the nineteenth century, constructions of Africans as under-civilized and of homosexuality as a result of over-civilization converged to produce the naturally heterosexual African.<sup>10</sup> Obviously, this image has become so culturally ingrained that it is not questioned but perpetuated in AIDS discourse.

### **The Promiscuous African**

The gist of the media's explanation for the spread of HIV in Africa is summarized by an article which states that in contrast to Europe and the USA, "[h]omosexuality is very uncommon in those countries, while heterosexual promiscuity, polygamy, and prostitution are widespread".<sup>11</sup> Whereas the alleged African promiscuity is contrasted with the sexual behavior of white heterosexuals, presented as the norm in the press, it is likened to that of white homosexuals, who are blamed for the AIDS epidemic in the West.<sup>12</sup> One journalist, for instance, explains "the alarmingly fast spread of AIDS among white homosexuals (Europe, USA), but also among heterosexuals in Africa" as follows: "At least in some homosexuals and in some regions of black Africa, promiscuity is much more pronounced than in the white heterosexual population of the industrial states".<sup>13</sup> Another maintains: "Promiscuity, that is for sure, promotes the spread of the disease – among homosexuals and heterosexuals. And African men change their partners twice to three times more often than Europeans – within and outside of marriage".<sup>14</sup>

The supposed African promiscuity is closely linked to prostitution and polygamy, and all three are predominantly portrayed as conventional, approved parts of African culture. "In many African countries, prostitution

9 Stephen O. Murray, Will Roscoe, Preface: "All Very Confusing", in: id., eds., *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of African Homosexualities*, Houndmills 1998, pp. xi-xxii, here pp. xvi and xi.

10 Marc Epprecht, *Heterosexual Africa? The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS*, Athens OH 2008, pp. 38-40.

11 Reiner Klingholz, *Tödliches Puzzle am Äquator*, in: *Die Zeit* 10, 1986, p. 88.

12 On the construction of AIDS as a gay disease, see e.g. Treichler, *Theory*, pp. 11-41 and Thorsten Eitz, *Aids: Krankheitsgeschichte und Sprachgeschichte*, Hildesheim 2003, pp. 90-112, 160-65.

13 Hans Schuh, "Eine schwer übertragbare Krankheit", in: *Die Zeit* 28, 1987, p. 58.

14 Erich Wiedemann, *Aids: "In Afrika droht eine Apokalypse"*, in: *Der Spiegel* 48, 1986, pp. 140-144, here p. 143.

with many female partners is the same as going for a beer in Germany or for an espresso in Italy. This is still connected to the traditional polygamy of the tribal chiefs", one can read in an article.<sup>15</sup> Male promiscuity is described by the media to be "widely respected" and "sometimes expected".<sup>16</sup> If proof is deemed necessary at all, the statement by a man whom reporters meet in the street that he has had sex with many women is sufficient.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the press maintains that "in Africa, prostitution ... is valued differently than in Europe". This can supposedly be seen, for example, in African prostitutes' wish not to be derogatorily called whores but commercial sex workers instead – as if this were unique to Africa and not the case in Europe.<sup>18</sup>

Promiscuity and prostitution are set in the context of traditional sexual morals which in contrast to Christian Western morals and despite missionary work have been permissive, according to many articles. Some explicitly describe African culture not only as different but deficient, or they diagnose a lack of morals and reason, demanding "the right ethical education and a reasonable lifestyle".<sup>19</sup> No great culture or religion, in the words of one of these articles, "accepts how human beings – sinners according to biblical teaching; 'half angel, half animal' in the opinion of several thinkers – want to behave".<sup>20</sup> While the "black ancestors' sinless worldview"<sup>21</sup> is not always portrayed in negative terms, no doubt is left that the "fucker's paradise"<sup>22</sup> has turned into "Sodom and Gomorrah" punished by God for "a too excessive sex life".<sup>23</sup>

The ideas that sexual morals in Africa are traditionally loose and have not been influenced by Christianity are not supported by all articles. At times, exceptionally strict morals and prudishness are described.<sup>24</sup> Rather

15 Jürgen Petermann, Rainer Paul, "Es geht an die Wurzeln der Sexualität", in: *Der Spiegel* 35, 1985, pp. 164-171, here p. 165.

16 Robert von Lucius, *Zwei Drittel aller Infizierten in Afrika*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 290, 1997, p. 10.

17 E.g. Bittorf, Ngolo, p. 172.

18 Rainer Paul, "Der Tiger ist in unserem Haus", in: *Der Spiegel* 9, 1991, pp. 148-161, here p. 155. As with the other terms, I use 'prostitute' (rather than 'sex worker') in this paper to reflect the concepts employed and evoked by the press.

19 Heinz-Joachim Fischer, *Prinzip und Wirklichkeit*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 70, 2009, p. 8.

20 *Ibid.*

21 Bittorf, Ngolo, p. 166.

22 Paul, Tiger, p. 155.

23 Günter Krabbe, *Für viele Ugander ist Aids ein böser Zauber*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 212, 1985, pp. 9f., here p. 10.

24 E.g. Robert von Lucius, *Vier von fünf Soldaten sind infiziert*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 220, 1999, p. 15.

than restraining promiscuity, however, this morality is portrayed as hampering HIV prevention because it goes against the Enlightenment principles of rationality and the critique of traditional customs, superstitions, and dogmas. Among the reasons given to explain why Africans allegedly refuse to use condoms are not only a primitive preference for sensuality over protection or "pre-modern sex myths" and "ancient rites",<sup>25</sup> but also sex morals which are mainly guided by religious, especially Christian fundamentalism.<sup>26</sup> While Africans are sometimes described to be "smarter than Rome"<sup>27</sup> and Washington under President Bush, the Vatican's teaching is seen as a grave problem for Africans – and Africans alone, for Europeans "even in traditionally Catholic countries such as Ireland, Spain or Poland"<sup>28</sup> are said to reject it as irrational. As one author makes explicit, the Pope is imagined to powerfully influence only "the unenlightened".<sup>29</sup> The Vatican's power is not sufficient, however, to put a rein on promiscuity according to the media: Even the strongest African Catholics are described not to adhere to abstinence and marital monogamy.<sup>30</sup>

Besides such counterexamples to a lack of restrictive morals, the press also contains narratives which, rather than presenting the supposed pathological promiscuity and especially prostitution as traditional problems, relate them to structural changes brought about mainly by the colonial and capitalist development of Africa. Such depictions exhibit two different tendencies. One of them is to point to the social, economic, and political pressures which influence sexual behavior. Rather than as a feature of 'African-ness', having multiple partners is portrayed as a result of the separation of households, for example.<sup>31</sup> Often, these accounts include a critique of civilization, as in linkages of prostitution to capitalism.<sup>32</sup> They also, however, tend to imply that Africans are not fit for civilization or able to appropriately civilize their sexual behavior. Cities and highways, as tokens of modernity, signify the uprooting of Africans, whose sex drives are no longer contained in tribal surroundings. Let loose, especially migrant workers and

25 Maria Benning, "Lasst uns über Sex reden", in: *Die Zeit* 38, 2007, p. 44.

26 E.g. Thomas Schulz, Genoppt-geripptfruchtig, in: *Der Spiegel* 10, 2002, p. 108.

27 "Die Priester in Afrika sind schlauer als Rom", in: *Der Spiegel* 42, 2003, p. 188.

28 Hans Küng, Pontifikat der Widersprüche, in: *Der Spiegel* 13, 2005, pp. 107-110, here p. 108.

29 Patrick Bahners, Warum sehe ich den Rollenwechsel mit Ungeduld? in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 188, 2006, p. 34.

30 E.g. Wiedemann, Aids, p. 143.

31 E.g. Jede fünfte Schwangere infiziert, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 151, 1999, p. 9.

32 E.g. Bittorf, Ngolo, pp. 168, 170.

long-distance truckers are represented as going rampant in their use of the services of prostitutes, turning roads into "AIDS-transmission-routes".<sup>33</sup>

Mostly, the press thus creates the impression "that the African obsession with sex is truly cut from another cloth than our white, polished in Europe".<sup>34</sup> Whether with respect to morals or behavior, Africans are described to lack civilization. The presence of restrictive ideals is a sign of culture in the framework of the AIDS discourse. However, these ideals are not only portrayed as part of an unenlightened culture, but their supposed failure to put a rein on sexual excess downgrades Africans even more and points to a difference rooted in biology rather than cultural development: African sexuality diverges from European sexuality in the media because it is not polished and because it is cut from another cloth. The animalization of Africans implied by the ascribed lack of morals and/or civilized behavior, by the failure to restrain their sexual drives, is at times made very explicit: "The frightening animality drives the plague", one author asserts and adds:

AIDS would now have to achieve what missionaries did not succeed in doing, what neither Christianity nor Islam accomplished: The fear of the epidemic would have to arrest black sexuality, would have to domesticate and contain it to bring the epidemic under control. ... But the overwhelming majority of men are not ready for a sexual sacrifice which could appease the demon AIDS.<sup>35</sup>

A savage sexuality is presented both as the reason for the epidemic and the greatest obstacle to its end. Moreover, Africans are brought close to animals on the basis of sexual behavior in accounts of the origin of HIV. Not only do articles state that Africans inject monkey blood to have sex like monkeys; they also suggest that Africans might have sex with monkeys, thereby providing a route of transmission for the simian predecessors of HI viruses onto humans. Presentations of the use of monkey blood by "tribes" which are "not yet Christianized" to cause "a sexual frenzy for magical purposes"<sup>36</sup> in a "bizarre sexual rite"<sup>37</sup> link African sexuality to primitiveness and irrationality and depict it as uncivilized. While the notion that simian viruses have been transmitted to Africans through sexual intercourse with apes is explicitly rejected as racist in one article,<sup>38</sup> others

33 Axel Wermelskirchen, Ukimwi, der vielbeschwiene Tod, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 149, 2005, p. 9.

34 Bittorf, Ngolo, p. 172.

35 Ibid., pp. 156 and 174.

36 Ibid., p. 166.

37 Ulrich Bahnsen, Stefan Klein, Die Brutstätte der Seuche, in: Die Zeit 38, 2000, p. 45.

38 Christiane Grefe, Aids hat ein weißes Gesicht, in: Die Zeit 28, 1988, pp. 42, 45.

indirectly suggest the idea.<sup>39</sup> This includes the characterization of carriers of viruses which are closer to simian than human types or described as the link between them as African prostitutes.<sup>40</sup>

The animalization of Africans on account of their sexuality has a long history in Western thought. Linkages between apes, supposed savages, and carnal desire can be traced to ancient Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian mythology, which knew a number of lascivious creatures, some with grotesquely huge genitals, most hybrids or interbreeding, often ape-like and assigned to far-away places, and conceived of the monkey as an emblem of sexual prowess and excess.<sup>41</sup> While Greeks and Romans held Africans to be promiscuous because of the continent's high temperatures, Judeo-Christian tradition, in a racial interpretation of the Curse of Ham, not only constructed Africans' skin colors and their enslavement as a Godly punishment but also condemned blacks to shamefully oversized male members and a sinful love of fornication.<sup>42</sup> Africans' sexuality came to signal how close they were to nature and bestiality and how far from God and the proper state of civilization:

Christianity declared a division between man and beast in the realm of sexual behavior. To be human was to contain one's animal passions; to accede to them was to sink to the level of a brute. But the Western imagination, shaped in Greece and Rome, was still haunted by pagan myths that spoke of satyrs, centaurs, and other beings half-man and half-beast. Implicit in those myths was the idea that to be closer to nature was to be closer to sex – and farther from civilization. After whites reached black Africa, the Greco-Roman images of natural sexuality were revived and infused with the Christian notion of sin, then projected onto Africans.<sup>43</sup>

The lack of control over sexual instincts which travelers purported to see in Africa was soon established as a scientific fact. Anatomists presented allegedly larger black genitalia as outward proof of innate savagery and an extremely developed sex drive, while Europeans' supposedly larger brains were read as signs of intellectual superiority and the ability to restrain their urges.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, scientists validated tales of simian humans in Africa by ascertaining a special similarity between blacks and apes. Discussions of

39 E.g. Christian Heinrich, *Die Rache der Gorillas*, in: *Die Zeit* 9, 2009, p. 39.

40 E.g. Hans Schuh, *Ein sexuell übertragbarer Tumor*, in: *Die Zeit* 7, 1990, p. 90.

41 Gustav Jahoda, *Images of Savages: Ancient Roots of Modern Prejudice in Western Culture*, London 1999, pp. 1-9, 30f.

42 David M. Friedman, *A Mind of Its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis*, New York 2001, pp. 107-110; Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812*, Chapel Hill 1968, pp. 32-37.

43 Friedman, *Mind*, p. 114.

44 *Ibid.*, Klaus Hödl, *Gesunde Juden – kranke Schwarze: Körperbilder im medizinischen Diskurs*, Innsbruck 2002, pp. 240-243.

their relationship took part against the background of the classical doctrine of the Great Chain of Being. From minerals via plants, animals and humans up to the angels, all creations were arranged as links of an ascending chain. The racialization of this chain in the middle of the eighteenth century involved an ordering of what were then considered races according to their degree of proximity to apes and the tracing of the so-called missing links between humans and animals in Africa.<sup>45</sup> As Virey put it, "in these ancient forests, where the heat of the climate, the brutal life of the inhabitants, the solitude and the delirium of passion, without law, religion, morals, can lead to daring everything", "monsters half-way between humans and apes" are a reasonable presumption.<sup>46</sup> The belief not only in a similar sexuality but also sexual relations between blacks and apes became common<sup>47</sup> – not least because they were held to "agree perfectly well in lasciviousness of disposition".<sup>48</sup> Upheld by science, these images spread back to the popular level and were disseminated, for instance, through literature, advertisements, and displays of 'savages' in zoos.<sup>49</sup>

The images were neither innocent mental misconceptions nor without consequences. Black hypersexuality as a marker of racial difference and inferiority, a sign of savagery, even bestiality, served to justify colonialism and slavery<sup>50</sup> and helped maintain the racial hierarchy which was created.<sup>51</sup> "In particular", Joane Nagel writes, "the sexual slander of Africans directed attention away from the true scandal of whites' savage sexual treatment of blacks", which included breeding programs, castration, sexual servitude, and assault.<sup>52</sup> While black women's supposed sexual availability to white men turned them into victims of rape who did not have to be perceived and treated as such by the white community, the myth of the bestial black male

45 Jahoda, *Images*, pp. 32-94; Peter Martin, *Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren: Afrikaner in Geschichte und Bewußtsein der Deutschen*, Hamburg 2001, pp. 195-232; Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*, New Haven 1992, pp. 39-43; Raymond Corbey, *The Metaphysics of Apes: Negotiating the Animal-Human Boundary*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 36-54.

46 Virey 1826, cited in Jahoda, *Images*, pp. 45f.

47 Jahoda, *Images*, p. 37; Martin, *Schwarze*, pp. 208f.

48 Long 1774, cited in Jahoda, *Images*, p. 56.

49 Jahoda, *Images*, pp. 197-213, 216; Martin, *Schwarze*, pp. 223-225.

50 Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, New York 1995, p. 96.

51 Nederveen Pieterse, *White*, pp. 174f.

52 Joane Nagel, *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality: Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers*, New York 2003, pp. 96f.



rapist of white women, reminiscent of earlier notions of apes and ape-like savages as rapists,<sup>53</sup> rationalized executions and lynchings.<sup>54</sup>

Notions of an uncivilized African sexuality also offered explanations for diseases. HIV/AIDS press coverage not only draws on the discursive tradition of an African sexuality in general but also has more specific precursors in colonial and missionary medicine. Megan Vaughan discerns two views on the cause of venereal disease in Africa:

For some, including many missionaries, African sexuality was, and always had been, 'primitive', uncontrolled and excessive, and as such it represented the darkness and dangers of the continent. For others, the supposed 'primitiveness' of pre-colonial African sexuality was reassuringly 'innocent'; the danger lay rather in the degeneration of this sexuality which was seen to have come about through the social and economic changes of colonialism.<sup>55</sup>

Whereas mission medics tended to emphasize an innate sinfulness of such African traditions as polygyny and propagated the establishment of Christian morality as the solution to disease,<sup>56</sup> government medics saw the breakdown of traditional institutions as the problem. In their opinion, the supposed natural promiscuity of Africans was controlled by customs in a rural tribal environment but got out of control in the city because Africans were unsuited to the civilized industrial world.<sup>57</sup>

In particular, the problem was seen in the disintegration of patriarchal authority. Colonialists, missionaries, and African men agreed that uncontrolled female sexuality was the source of venereal disease.<sup>58</sup> In contrast to European women, African women had not been civilized before they were liberated and thus remained sexual beasts:

The freedom enjoyed by women in civilized countries has gradually been won by them as one of the results of centuries of civilization, during which they have been educated ... Women whose female ancestors had been kept under surveillance were not fit to be treated in a similar manner. They were,

53 Jahoda, *Images*, pp. 5, 8.

54 Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race & Class*, London 1982, pp. 172-201; Nagel, *Race*, pp. 98-117; Friedman, *Mind*, pp. 119-135; Hödl, *Gesunde*, pp. 250-252; Nederveen Pieterse, *White*, pp. 176-178; Jock MacCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902-1935*, Bloomington 2000, pp. 4-6.

55 Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness*, Stanford 1991, p. 129.

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 135f.

57 Karen Jochelson, *The Colour of Disease: Syphilis and Racism in South Africa, 1880-1950*, Houndmills 2001, pp. 111-128, 166f.; Randall M. Packard, Paul Epstein, *Medical Research on AIDS in Africa: A Historical Perspective*, in: Elizabeth Fee, Daniel M. Fox, eds., *AIDS: The Making of a Chronic Disease*, Berkeley 1992, pp. 346-376, here p. 349.

58 *Ibid.*, Vaughan, *Curing*, pp. 133-135.

in effect, merely female animals with strong passions, to whom unrestricted opportunities for gratifying these passions were suddenly afforded.<sup>59</sup>

White middle-class women were increasingly constructed as pure and passionless angels of the household in Victorian Europe, as paragons of moral virtue whose chastity became the mark of civilization.<sup>60</sup> Generally, a division between mind and body associated white men with rationality and projected dangerous sexuality on women. However, there was a "dichotomizing of the conception of woman in Madonna/whore: woman-as-body is carrier of sexuality, but ... through efforts of chastity and self-control with passionlessness as a model ... they succeed in turning into the angel-woman pedestal".<sup>61</sup> While white women could become Madonnas, black women were placed even further down the Chain than black men.<sup>62</sup> In the nineteenth century, they represented "the sexualized female [and] the female as the source of corruption and disease", an image which was merged with that of the prostitute.<sup>63</sup>

In AIDS coverage, as has been shown above, prostitution is portrayed as an appreciated part of African culture, and prostitutes are described to wrongly not mind or even take pride in their work. Moreover, there are alleged to be so many more prostitutes in Africa than in the West that researchers rub their eyes in disbelief in view of their numbers.<sup>64</sup> Prostitution is presented as the "main route of transmission"<sup>65</sup> for HIV in Africa, African prostitutes are depicted as a special risk group almost completely infested with disease,<sup>66</sup> and they are associated with the origin of HIV through characterizations likely to conjure up images of sexual relations with apes. All in all, the racialized and gendered construction of the black woman as uncivilized whore is thus reproduced. However, there is another, more prominent current, which disrupts the old story of the uncontrolled African woman as the reason for sexually transmitted disease and rather constructs her as Madonna.

59 Lambkin 1908, cited in Vaughan, *Curing*, p. 133.

60 Signe Arnfred, 'African Sexuality'/Sexuality in Africa: Tales and Silences, in: id., ed., *Re-Thinking Sexualities in Africa*, 2nd ed., Uppsala 2005, pp. 59-76, here p. 67; Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*, Boston 1993, pp. 159f.

61 Arnfred, *African*, p. 62.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

63 Sander L. Gilman, *Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature*, in: *Critical Inquiry* 12, 1985, pp. 204-242, quotation p. 231.

64 Paul, *Tiger*, p. 155.

65 Günter Krabbe, *Wegen Aids nicht nach Kenia in den Urlaub?* in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 63, 1987, p. 10.

66 E.g. Wiedemann, *Aids*, p. 143.

### **The Male African Perpetrator and the Female African Victim**

Media discourse on AIDS divides Africans into two sexes, men and women, whose biological existence positions them in a culturally conditioned gender order presented as traditional. In this societal hierarchy, the African man dominates the African woman in every sphere of life. Not only does this view, in line with the heteronormative standard, preclude the possibility of other sexes (as constructions of what is natural), genders, and disruptions of the expected linkage between sexual and gender identity or role. It also erases any other categories of social stratification, thus homogenizing men and women into monolithic 'blocks' stapled upon each other. Cultural differences between Africa's diverse groupings and systems of social organization are ignored. Institutions which may be sources of power for women are neglected. No matter the status a man and a woman may have with respect to class or parenthood and disregarding whether a society is organized patrilineally or matrilineally, to name but a few examples of factors which can affect relations between men and women, the woman in German AIDS coverage is always subordinated to the man, who completely subjugates her. African women are thus denied any power and agency.<sup>67</sup>

This conceptualization involves and interacts with significant assumptions and constructions regarding the spread of HIV among Africans. The most important concrete problem which the hierarchy of the sexes entails according to the media is that a woman can neither successfully demand faithfulness nor condom use from her partner. This portrayal of the gender order as an obstacle to HIV prevention takes for granted that women want to utilize condoms while men do not.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, men in this scenario are always unfaithful, whereas women would never have extramarital relations. The idea that the wives of the often cited migrant workers may equally have affairs to satisfy their sexual needs does not even arise. In the case of African men, in contrast, it is presented as natural, almost necessary. Ironically, the press reproduces Western gender ideas in its assumptions while it portrays the corresponding norms as a traditional African double-standard.<sup>69</sup>

67 E.g. Paul, Tiger, p. 161.

68 Female condoms are ignored by the press: Condoms, as if naturally, are 'male'. Rare glimpses of other possible realities than those presented with respect to gender and the spread of HIV are neglected as well. In one article, for instance, an African peer educator reports that older men are afraid to start using condoms because their wives might wrongly suspect them of having committed adultery (Christian Schubert, *Gegen den schleichenden Tod in der Belegschaft*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 100, 2005, p. 22).

69 E.g. Lucius, *Zwei Drittel*, p. 10.

Following the logic of the discourse, it is always men who introduce HIV into their families. As the "origin of the infection",<sup>70</sup> they pass the virus on to their wives and, via their wives, to their children: the "death sentence for the whole family".<sup>71</sup> While the powerless women can only be innocent victims, the omnipotent man is held responsible and blamed for his own and his family's infection. In a quotation of Jerry Rawlings by the press, this sounds as follows:

We Africans take so many liberties against our wives. We are unfaithful and allow ourselves girlfriends and concubines. And then we may infect our partners, who devotedly take care of us at home. That is the height of disrespect. Many of us men would die from a heart attack if women did only a tenth of what we do to them to us.<sup>72</sup>

Notably, African women in this discourse are not only victims as wives but also as those girlfriends and sex workers who infect the husbands. Women have multiple partners only in the context of prostitution, and they are mostly described to engage in sexual relations with clients and so-called sugar daddies because the circumstances force them to do so. Having sex for money is an understandable alternative to a "normal life" described to consist of a "mud hut, mostly without electricity and running water, a bunch of children, a small field, a goat, a husband who has nothing in mind but to fuck and drink pombe (banana beer)".<sup>73</sup> Let down by her husband, even the most faithful wife may have to prostitute herself to feed their children – a moral rather than disreputable act.<sup>74</sup> Sugar daddies, in contrast, are portrayed as older men who use their money to bend young girls to their will and sexually exploit them.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, although prostitution is depicted as the main route of transmission, promiscuous men are said to be the "real virus vectors"<sup>76</sup> who carry HIV from one community of prostitutes to the next. Articles which by exception identify the wife as the infector of her spouse stay true to the notion of the man as the origin of the disease. Thus Kevin De Cock of the World Health Organization explains in an interview that it is "a legend that it is always the men who bring HIV into their marriage. Women are typically infected by older men at a very

70 Peter-Philipp Schmitt, *Mit Algen gegen HIV*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 105, 2006, p. 11.

71 *Männlichkeit und Tod*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 57, 2000, p. 2.

72 Hans Hielscher, "Wir Afrikaner gehen fremd", in: *Der Spiegel* 21, 2001, pp. 172, 174, here p. 172.

73 Wiedemann, *Aids*, p. 143.

74 E.g. Thomas Scheen, *Über Aids spricht man nicht*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 66, 2005, p. 6.

75 E.g. *Viel mehr Mädchen als Jungen infiziert*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 154, 2002, p. 9.

76 Klingholz, *Tödliches*, p. 88.

young age. Later, they pass on the virus to their husband in the framework of a stable relationship".<sup>77</sup> The moral saturation of the discourse and the rule of the construction of the innocent woman become especially clear in a UNAIDS representative's exceptional contrary statement that "of course we do not say that AIDS has become the disease of innocent women [as opposed to white homosexual men; N.A.]. After all, women not only have sex because they cannot defend themselves".<sup>78</sup>

This is exactly the impression the press predominantly creates, however. In addition to the structural forces imposed upon African women, African men are also described to directly coerce them into sex through acts ranging from the misuse of gatekeeper positions to the sheer employment of physical force. Just as heteronormativity and the homogenization of power relations between men and women preclude the existence of sugar mommies and male sex workers in AIDS-in-Africa discourse, so male victims or female perpetrators do not normally appear in the press: As a rule, it is girls and women who are raped by boys and men. This is the case even though the acting South African minister of justice states in an article from 1999 that every fifth man in South Africa has been raped according to statistics.<sup>79</sup>

Widespread sexual violence by boys and men against girls and women, in contrast, is described to not only fuel but also be fueled by the AIDS epidemic in Africa. According to the press, "infernal rites"<sup>80</sup> are performed on increasingly younger victims because of the widespread idea, variously qualified, for instance, as superstitious, mad, or traditional, that sex with a virgin can cure AIDS. Rape is thus explained within the framework of the construction of Africans as pre-modern, unenlightened, irrational, and even diabolical. The media also describe systematic mass rapes aimed at infecting the victims as an especially brutal weapon in violent conflicts,<sup>81</sup> and a few authors link sexual violence to African ideals of manhood, polygamy, and traditionally different sex morals.<sup>82</sup> In contrast to earlier images of the black male rapist, the focus is thus on a lack in cultural rather than biological development and black instead of white women as the victims.

77 Marco Evers, "Wir sind zu langsam", in: *Der Spiegel* 24, 2008, p. 148.

78 Peter-Philipp Schmitt, "Aids ist eine Familienkrankheit geworden", in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 280, 2004, p. 7.

79 Robert von Lucius, Jede zweite Südafrikanerin vergewaltigt? in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 250, 1999, p. 12.

80 Thomas Scheen, Herz und Seele gegen Aids, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 264, 2002, p. 38.

81 E.g. Peter-Philipp Schmitt, Zwei Pillen für Kongo, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 167, 2005, p. 9.

82 E.g. Charlotte Wiedemann, Das Land der Waisen, in: *Die Zeit* 31, 2007, p. 11.

On the whole, female African sexuality is presented as forced sexuality rather than anything else. The form of sexuality which is idealized in Germany, between a man and a woman who love one another, does not exist in AIDS discourse; mutual love does not appear at all. Rather, the impression is created that whatever conceptualization of love is applied, there is simply no such thing in Africa. While in Jerry Rawlings' words women at home devotedly take care of their husband, their wives' wellbeing and safety do not matter to men. In fact, they are said to have no respect for women's bodies and lives.<sup>83</sup> If and when men infect their wives is of no interest to them, and once the woman falls ill, her husband leaves or expels her.<sup>84</sup> Obviously, African men in AIDS coverage are driven only by crude sexual urges.

While media constructions of African men thus reproduce earlier racist stereotypes of an African lack of civilization, let alone the sophisticated level of culture assumed to be a precondition for reputedly higher feelings like love,<sup>85</sup> the image of the African woman as whore lingers on but is superseded in part by the application of the Victorian Madonna ideal. The notion of African women as victims of African men is not new but has discursive precursors as well. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, black men's supposed extraordinary mistreatment of black women was presented as further proof of their savagery.<sup>86</sup> Colonialists and missionaries viewed such institutions as polygyny as signs of excessive patriarchy and the complete dependence and powerlessness of women.<sup>87</sup> While they "undermined whatever power positions African women might have occupied in pre-colonial, pre-mission days",<sup>88</sup> they perceived themselves as the women's saviors. What appears to be new is that the emancipation, especially the sexual emancipation of African women is presented as the solution to rather than the cause of an epidemic of a disease which can be transmitted sexually. However, even in this narration African women

83 E.g. Männlichkeit, p. 2.

84 E.g. Holger Appel, Claudia Bröll, Die Hoffnung liegt im 7. Stock, in: Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 19, 2009, p. 12.

85 Marc Epprecht, The Making of 'African Sexuality': Early Sources, Current Debates, in: History Compass 8, 2010, pp. 768-779, here p. 771.

86 Sydney B. Austin, AIDS and Africa: United States Media and Racist Fantasy, in: Cultural Critique 14, 1990, pp. 129-152, here p. 136.

87 Josephine Beoku-Betts, Western Perceptions of African Women in the 19th & Early 20th Centuries, in: Andrea Cornwall, ed., Readings in Gender in Africa, Oxford 2005, pp. 20-25, here p. 22.

88 Signe Arnfred, Re-Thinking Sexualities in Africa: Introduction, in: id., ed., Re-Thinking Sexualities in Africa, 2nd ed., Uppsala 2005, pp. 7-29, here p. 12.

symbolize African difference and inferiority, allowing the West to appear especially modern and civilized.

Altogether, presentations of AIDS in Africa in the German press heavily draw on and reproduce constructions of a savage African sexuality which have roots in ancient mythology and formed essential elements of modern scientific racism in the West. Analyses of mass media in Britain and the USA present similar results,<sup>89</sup> and these racisms have been shown to strongly influence recipients' attitudes.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the race thinking of the Enlightenment has entered HIV/AIDS science and policy.<sup>91</sup> Eileen Stillwaggon remarks that ostensibly scientific statements have "often been indistinguishable from popular notions of 'what everyone knows' about Africans" and explains that the "dominance of the behavioral paradigm in spite of the absence of empirical support derives to a great extent from the overwhelming influence of long-standing Western stereotypes".<sup>92</sup> Insofar as HIV/AIDS intervention has been based on unfounded assumptions about sexuality in Africa as well as a focus on sexual behavior which ignores its socio-economic contexts and deflects attention from other factors and avenues of HIV transmission, the discursive shots at explaining HIV/AIDS may in fact have cost lives.

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## Contributing Authors

**Stefanie Affeldt** has studied Socioeconomics at the Department of Economics and Politics, University of Hamburg, Germany. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from the Macquarie University, Australia, and her Master of Arts degree in Cultural and Social History from the University of Essex, United Kingdom. Currently, she is a PhD candidate at the University of Hamburg, investigating into historical racism in Australia. Her research interests include the historical sociology of racism, commodity racism and whiteness studies, in particular the White Australia policy and the 'White Sugar' campaign in Australia. Her most recent publication is: *A Paroxysm of Whiteness. 'White' Labour, 'White' Nation and 'White' Sugar in Australia*, in: Wulf D. Hund, Jeremy Krikler, David Roediger, eds., *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, Berlin 2010. E-mail: saffeldt@gmx.net

**Nadine Anumba** is a PhD student in Sociology at the University of Hamburg, Germany. She earned her MA in English & American Studies and Intercultural Communication at Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany, and was a Fulbright grantee in the Comparative Ethnic Studies Department of Washington State University, USA. Her main research interests are in the areas of racism, race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and she has taught courses in American social and cultural studies. Her doctoral dissertation *Aids in Africa: Disease Construction in the Context of Racisms* is funded by the German National Academic Foundation. E-mail: NadineAnumba@googlemail.com

**Robert Bernasconi** is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Philosophy at the Pennsylvania State University. He works in Critical Philosophy of Race as well as nineteenth and twentieth century European philosophy. He is the author of *Heidegger in Question* (1993), *How to Read Sartre* (2006), and *Nature, Culture, and Race* (Södertörn Lecture, 2010), and the editor of *Race* (2001) and with Kristie Dotson of *Race, Hybridity, and Miscegenation* (2005). Contact details: Department of Philosophy, 240 Sparks, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802, USA. E-mail: rlb43@psu.edu

**Simone Beate Borgstede** studied Socioeconomics at Hamburg University of Economics and Politics, received her Master of Arts in Sociology from the University of Essex and completed her PhD at the History Department

of University College London. She is currently teaching at Leuphana University Lüneburg. Her research interests cover as diverse subjects as the historical analysis of racism, nationalism and empire and squatting as a social movement. She published *St. Pauli Hafensstraße, Hamburg, 1981-87: The Battle of Hearts and Minds* in: DAS ARGUMENT 289, 6/2010. Based on her dissertation, the monograph "*All is Race.*" Benjamin Disraeli on race, nation and empire is forthcoming in autumn 2011.

E-mail: simoneborgstede@gmx.de

**Micha Brumlik** was born in Switzerland in 1947, and relocated to Frankfurt am Main in 1952. He studied philosophy, pedagogics, sociology and psychology in Frankfurt and Jerusalem. Following this, he worked as an academic assistant for pedagogics at the University of Mainz, and was awarded his PhD in philosophy in Frankfurt with a thesis on Kant (1977). He took up a professorship in the pedagogics of deviance at the University of Hamburg in 1978, and worked as a professor of educational science with a focus on social pedagogics at the University of Heidelberg between 1981-2000. Since the year 2000 he has been holding a professorship for the theories of social and academic education at the University of Frankfurt am Main. During this time he was until 2005 director of the Fritz Bauer Institute (a Study and Documentation Centre for the history of the Holocaust and its effects). His research and publications focus on the areas of moral socialisation, the philosophy of social and academic education, as well as the Jewish philosophy of culture and religion. His most recent publications include, in addition to various articles, the following monographs: *Kritik des Zionismus*, Berlin 2006, *Sigmund Freud. Der Denker des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Weinheim 2006 and *Kurze Geschichte: Judentum*, Berlin 2009 as well as *Entstehung des Christentums*, Berlin 2010.

**Werner Goldschmidt** is Professor for Sociology Emeritus at the University of Hamburg. His main research and teaching interests are in Political Economy, Political Sociology and the History of Political Ideas. His most recent publications include: *Freiheit, Gleichheit, Solidarität. Beiträge zur Dialektik der Demokratie*. Edited together with Bettina Lösch and Jörg Reitzig, Frankfurt M. 2009; *Formen und Funktionen der 'Rückkehr des Staates' in die Wirtschaft*, in: Altvater, E. et al., *Die Rückkehr des Staates? Nach der Finanzkrise*, Hamburg 2010; and various articles on 'State/Forms of Governance', 'Politics/Political Philosophy', 'Capital/Capitalism', 'Dictatorship', 'Separation of Powers', 'Political Representation', all in: *Enzyklopädie Philosophie*, 2nd edition, H. J. Sandkühler (ed.), Hamburg 2010; *Zur Geschichte des politischen Denkens im 20. Jahrhundert*. A conversation with Frank Deppe, in: Z. No. 87, Frankfurt a. M. 2011.

**Malte Hinrichsen** has received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Socioeconomics, with special focus on political sociology, from the Department of Economics and Politics, University of Hamburg. He has just completed his dissertation for the Master of Arts in Cultural and Social History at the University of Essex in Colchester and holds a scholarship of the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation. His research interests include the sociological and historical analysis of racism, Thomas Jefferson's ambivalent policies of segregation and assimilation, and the representations of race in advertising and popular culture.

E-mail: malte.hinrichsen@googlemail.com

**Antje Kühnast** studied Socioeconomics at the Department of Economics and Politics, University of Hamburg, Germany, where she received her Bachelor of Honours Degree. At present she is finalising her PhD thesis in the History of Science on German physical anthropological racial theorising on Australian Aborigines during the nineteenth century at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia (School of History and Philosophy). Antje's research interests concern the social construction of racial difference, the history of ideas on race and human evolution and the theory and practice of sciences of race and scientific racism, particularly in physical anthropology. She has published "*In the Interest of Science and of the Colony*". *Truganini und die Legende von den aussterbenden Rassen*, in: Wulf D. Hund, ed., *Entfremdete Körper. Rassismus als Leichenschändung*, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 205-250.

Email: antje.kuehnast@gmail.com

**Lars Lambrecht** is a Professor emeritus at the division Socioeconomics – formerly HWP – of the faculty of Economic and Social Sciences of the University of Hamburg and deputy director of the Zentrum für Ökonomische und Soziologische Studien (ZÖSS) (Centre for Economic and Sociological Studies). He is currently writing a Biography of Karl Nauwerck.

**Charles W. Mills** is John Evans Professor of Moral and Intellectual Philosophy at Northwestern University. He works in the general area of oppositional political theory, and is the author of five books: *The Racial Contract* (1997), *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (1998), *From Class to Race: Essays in White Marxism and Black Radicalism* (2003), *Contract and Domination* (with Carole Pateman) (2007), and *Radical Theory, Caribbean Reality: Race, Class and Social Domination* (2010).

Contact details: Dept. of Philosophy, 1880 Campus Drive Kresge 2-335, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 60208, USA.

E-mail: c-mills@northwestern.edu

**Michael Pickering** is Professor of Media and Cultural Analysis in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University. He has published in cultural studies and the sociology of culture, media and communication studies, and social and cultural history. His recent books include *History, Experience and Cultural Studies* (1997); *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation* (2001); *Creativity, Communication and Cultural Value* (2004), co-written with Keith Negus; *Beyond a Joke: The Limits of Humour* (2005), co-edited with Sharon Lockyer; and *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain* (2008). He is currently working on a history of music in the workplace with Marek Korczynski and Emma Robertson, and a book on memory and imagination with Emily Keightley.

Contact details: Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leics LE11 3TU, UK.

Email: M.J.Pickering@lboro.ac.uk

**Sabine Ritter** is a lecturer at the Institute of Sociology at the University of Bremen (Germany). Before that she was a teaching fellow at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg and worked as a free editor. Her main research and teaching interests are the sociology and history of race, gender and the body. She studied Socioeconomics and Criminology at the University of Hamburg (BA in Socioeconomics, MA in Criminology), and, as a PhD student, was a member of Hamburg University's postgraduate research group "Deconstruction and Composition: Gender" in 2005 and 2006. Sabine Ritter completed her PhD-thesis "Facets of Sarah Baartman" in 2009. The study was published in 2010 with the LIT Verlag (*Facetten der Sarah Baartman: Repräsentationen und Rekonstruktionen der 'Hottentottenvenus'*). Previous works include '*Présenter les organes génitaux: Sarah Baartman und die Konstruktion der 'Hottentottenvenus'*', in: Wulf D. Hund, ed., *Entfremdete Körper. Rassismus und Leichenschändung*, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 117 - 163, and *Weibliche Devianz im Fin de Siècle: Lombrosos und Ferreros Konstruktion der 'donna delinquente'*. Münster etc. 2005. Contact details: Sabine Ritter, Institut für Soziologie, Universität Bremen, FB 8, Bibliothekstr. 1, 28359 Bremen, Germany.

Email: sritter@uni-bremen.de

**David R. Roediger** is Kendrick Babcock Chair of History at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Recent edited books include *Black on White: Black Writers on What It Means to Be White* (1998), Covington Hall's *Labor Struggles in the Deep South* (1999), W. E. B. Du Bois' *John Brown* (2001), *The Big Red Songbook* (2007), co-edited with Archie Green, Franklin Rosemont and Sal Salerno, *The Best History Essays of 2007* (2008), *Listening to Revolt: Selected Writings of George Rawick* (2010). Recent books include *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Mak-*

*ing of the American Working Class* (1991) with new editions in 1999 and in 2007, *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness: Essays on Race, Class and Politics* (1994); *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past* (2002), *Working Towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (2005), *History Against Misery* (2006), *How Race Survived U.S. History* (2008).). Contact details: David R. Roediger, Department of History, University of Illinois Urbana, IL 61801, USA.

Email: droedige@uiuc.edu

**Audrey Smedley** is Professor of Anthropology Emerita, SUNY-Binghamton and Virginia Commonwealth University and elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Her main publications include: *Women Creating Patrilineality* (2004) and *Race in North America: Origin and Evolution of a Worldview* (1993) for which she won the 1994 Outstanding Book Award of the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Human Rights in North America, revised editions (1999), (2007), (2011) She has been commissioned to write articles on "race" for 1995, and 21st century editions of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and has also prepared materials for other encyclopedias, including the Oxford Companion to United States History, and the Historical Guide to World Slavery, and Philosophy of Education. Audrey Smedley authored the official statement on "RACE" for the American Anthropological Society, and has been consultant, advisor and participant in the American National Public Television documentary series: "Race: the Power of an Illusion". She is the author of more than seventy articles published on varying topics.

**Gary Taylor** is George Matthew Edgar Professor of English, and Founder of the History of Text Technologies program, at Florida State University. He is the author of *Buying Whiteness: Race, Culture, and Identity from Columbus to Hip Hop* (2005) and *Castration: An Abbreviated History of Western Manhood* (2000), general editor of the "Signs of Race" series (Palgrave) and of the Oxford University Press editions of Shakespeare's *Complete Works* (1986, 2005) and Thomas Middleton's *Collected Works* (2007).

E-mail: gtaylor@fsu.edu

**Max Sebastián Hering Torres** is Associate Professor of History at the National University of Colombia, Bogotá. He received his Magister Artium (M.A.) in history and ethnology (minor) from the Ludwigs-Maximilians-Universität Munich and his Doctorate (Dr. phil.) in history from the University of Vienna, in 2000 and 2004, respectively. He has authored *Rassismus in der Vormoderne* (2006); and edited *Cuerpos Anómalos* (2008). His articles range through the European early modern and colonial history

of body, race, and blood. His current research deals with culture & power, abnormalities, sexualities, and racism in Latin-American history. Forthcoming are the co-edited books *El peso de la sangre* and *Aproximaciones a la Historia Cultural en Colombia*. More information is available at <http://www.docentes.unal.edu.co/msheringt/>  
E-mail: [msheringt@unal.edu.co](mailto:msheringt@unal.edu.co)

**Iris Wigger** is a lecturer in Sociology in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University. Before that she was a lecturer in the School of Sociology at University College Dublin and a Research Associate at the History Department of the University of Hamburg. Her research interests are in historical sociology and racism analysis, nationalism and imperialism, social theory and the history of ideas. Her current work focuses on representations of the Irish in nineteenth century British academia, and a new research project titled 'Making the Missing Link: Ape, Men and the Genesis of European Racism'. She is also working on a revised English version of her German book *The 'Black Horror on the Rhine' Intersections of 'Race', Nation, Gender and Class in 1920's Germany* (forthcoming with Palgrave). Her most recent publications include *Interlinked Discriminations. Race, Nation, Gender and Class and the 'Black Shame'*. (*Race & Class*, 2010), *The Interconnections of Discrimination. Gender, Class, Nation and Race and the 'Black Shame'*. (European Societies, 2009), and together with Katrin Klein, *Bruder Moor. Angelo Soliman und der Rassismus der Aufklärung*. [Brother Moor. Angelo Soliman and the Racism of the Enlightenment], in: Wulf D. Hund, ed., *Entfremdete Körper. Rassismus als Leichenschändung*, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 81-115.  
Contact details: Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, Leics LE11 3TU, UK.  
E-mail: [I.Wigger@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:I.Wigger@lboro.ac.uk)