

# I

## STATES OF RACIAL DISTINCTION

All the best signs . . . are not so different from all the worst.

Richard Ford, *The Sportswriter*, p. 265

The history of the human species, for all intents and purposes, can be told as the histories of human migration. It is the history – really, the histories – of movement and resting, regenerative settlement and renewed mobility. With emerging European exploration and expansion from the late fourteenth century on, it is also the history of miscegenation and cultural mixing, of increasing physical and cultural heterogeneity.

By contrast, the dominant view concerned with periodizing the history of growing demographic and cultural heterogeneity in the western hemisphere and among northern countries has reduced the dramatic nature of this heterogeneity to the second half of the twentieth century. Thus proliferating racial heterogeneity among populations and culturally is considered a function of growing global integration following World War II and its attendant shifts in colonial relations, those “winds of change” that swept not just through Africa but throughout colonized and colonizing worlds. These changes produced massive dislocations, prompted large-scale migrations, opened up borders and boundaries, transnationally and culturally, challenged prevailing hegemonies while simultaneously storming the bastions of haute culture. A compelling picture, perhaps, one obviously resonating with the drama of twentieth-century events, economic, political, cultural, and intellectual.

In good part, two reasons account for the dominance of this picture, related to the ways in which liberalism came to be the dominant social expression of modernity’s self-representation. The first is that

the self-representation of the West's sense of its political and moral progress was fashioned largely around its increasing openness towards – its “tolerance” (as it has been said) of – *religious* differences. These differences emerged for the most part *internal* to European sensibilities, representing family fights of sorts. In one sense, dramatic expansion of the British empire in the wake of the French Revolution was a self-conscious response to the perceived threat of French expansion, a global response to local threat, if some contemporary commentators had it right (Leckie 1808: 10; Majeed 1992: 7). Tolerance and its limits were fashioned for the most part, then, in respect of recognizable differences between those deemed the same, or more succinctly between those recognized at all. Racially configured others were invisible to the application of tolerance in large part until they insisted upon recognition in no longer deniable ways (Goldberg 2001b). The second reason for the dominance of this picture concerns the condescending consideration of external ethnoracial otherness at once promoting and prompted by the colonial condition. Heterogeneity here is externalized to the colonies, the assumption of homogeneity localized to the individuated European nation-state or to Western Europe more generally. Combined, these reasons entailed that tolerable difference was religious, that European states were in an ethnoracial sense internally homogeneous, that they tended to reproduce an internalized ethnoracial sameness. And ethnoracial heterogeneity identified with colonized societies tended to be externalized, to be distantiated if not denied altogether in thought and practice, at least until undeniable with the dying gasps of the classic colonial order.

This picture delimiting significant diversification to the period of the postcolonial, prevailing as it might be, is nevertheless parochial. It occludes the heterogeneity of past ages, the perhaps slower yet steady intermixing of peoples and interfacing of cultures that migrations in the longer view have always produced. Its framing has hidden from visibility the longstanding differences and distinctions flowing through the hearts of colonizing darkness, those capitals of colonial powers at the very height of their imperial spread. And so too it has made less than visible the significance of the notion of “hybridity” at different historical moments. In fact, it clouds over the reasons a notion of “hybridity” has been suffered as a challenge to the presumption of homogeneity, a point I elaborate below.

The restriction in the recognizability of heterogeneity, political and theoretical, is tied up with deep-seated presumptions about the modern state. The mis-recognition here is deeply related to the thick ways in which modern state formation has been racially fashioned, with the ways in which modern states have predicated themselves on racial differentiation, and on state-promoted and prompted racist exclusion and exploitation. Developments in theorizing the modern terms and principles of social relation and order, accordingly, are to be understood at basis only against the background history of demographic movements and the challenges they have posed. The emergence and roles of racial states by the same taken cannot be properly comprehended without conceiving them in terms of these movements and the newly emergent social conditions to which they are related.

Thus modern states, especially in their national articulation, ordered themselves not as heterogeneous spaces but in particular as racially and culturally homogeneous ones. G. F. Leckie was explicitly concerned in 1808 about the lack of a “uniform spirit that pervades our [British] provinces, and stamps them as much as circumstances will permit with an *homogenous* character” (Leckie 1808: 16, my emphasis). They have assumed themselves, falsely as a matter of fact, to be constituted upon the presumption, the insistence, of homogeneous group identity, repressively embodying sameness as a value. And so they have acted variously to guarantee, to (rein)force, materially what they have claimed (to be committed to) conceptually and axiologically. In this sense, homogeneity is to be viewed as heterogeneity in denial, or more deeply yet as the recognition of heterogeneity at once repressed. In order to see the implications of this for racial arrangements it will help to rehearse briefly the histories of emergence of modern state formation.

### Cities and States

The transformation of medieval city-states into modern states brought increasing urban heterogeneity, even in racial terms. Taking root in the seventeenth century, there was a sharp shift in the conception of the state in political theory, employing new metaphors of space and time. The premodern, late medieval conception of the state, as represented by Machiavelli’s *Prince*, articulated an understanding of the

state as inward looking, enclosed, self-contained, delimited and limiting, restrictive, and ruled over ultimately by a single authority. Authored in the name of the Prince, the law was authorized by virtue of the authority vested in and assumed by the sovereign ruler, promoted and rationalized by a discourse of Divine Right. The Prince ruled over a localized and delimited domain, for the most part the walled space of a city-state.<sup>1</sup>

The modern conception of the state, by contrast, has been promoted as open and expansive with “naturalized” but permeable borders figured as much in conceptual as in material terms. Modern state boundaries were established as the shifting objects of cartographical mapping rather than physically fixed in place. As such, they necessitated greater centralized modes of administration and ordering. And increasingly they necessitated (self-) surveillance, or at least its suggestion. That the marks of state limits have to be established as much symbolically as physically (by barbed wire and border posts) or legally reinforces the point of permeability, of expansion and contraction, and so also of self-surveillance.<sup>2</sup>

The permeability of modern states is represented straightforwardly in the fact that colonizing capitals like Amsterdam and London began to see significant diversity in their populations as early as the seventeenth century. This visible and increasingly dramatic heterogeneity has been virtually ignored in mainstream historical studies. Well-regarded histories of these cities likewise tend to presume that their significant racial diversity only arrives with global integration following World War II (e.g., Kershen 1997). There is no doubt that these trends accelerated dramatically from the mid-twentieth century on, but to cast it thus is already to acknowledge that there were trends, relatively longstanding trends, already at play, however underplayed by comparison. Notions of hybridity, of physical and cultural mixing, took hold conceptually, in part, in relation to responses to the nineteenth-century tensions such heterogeneity supposedly effected, played out intellectually (in science, philosophy, anthropology) and politically (in law and policy). But of course there has been a relatively long history of European concerns about strangers and strangeness, expressed racially – which is also to say ambivalently and ambiguously – as modern slavery was initiated by the Portuguese and Spanish as early as the fifteenth century (cf. Bauman 1997; Bennett 1998). Racial mixing and hybridity accordingly constituted then, as it continues

to constitute in certain circles now, an object of fear and celebration, paranoia and persistence, repression and resistance, a point to which I will return later.

With the onset of modernity, the advent of vigorous transnational commerce, and the rising dominance of Dutch among European imperial and colonial powers, class structure in the Netherlands, and in Amsterdam particularly, assumed plurality and fluidity. This fluidity became especially manifest with the Netherlands consolidating as a nation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Dutch were "a people," if it makes sense to refer in the singular to the people of any nation-state in modernity, whose very constitution was a product of immigration, not least within Europe: Flemish and Huguenots fleeing religious intolerance, Sephardic Jews chased out by Catholic terror in Spain and Portugal, Ashkenazi Jews escaping from East European intolerance. Thus two-thirds of Amsterdam's 7,500 Jews at the close of the seventeenth century were Ashkenazi, and German domestic workers arrived in droves in the nineteenth century, many staying to marry Dutch men.

Starting in 1610, the Dutch acquired colonies throughout the seventeenth century. Yet the first inkling of the racially characterized diversification that would challenge the sense of singularity in Dutch society, as elsewhere, in the aftermath of classical colonialism centuries later threatened local tranquility in Zeeland in 1596. A Dutch privateer that had captured 130 slaves off a Portuguese slave ship delivered its hopeless African bounty to port. To their credit the Dutch at the time outlawed slavery (overturned less than a decade later once the profits and "benefits" of slave trading became evident), and the slaves were freed. Within a century the Dutch had become major players in the slave trade, shipping their "wares" from the West coast of Africa to the Caribbean and Brazil.

As the mark of revolutionary transformation began to sweep across Europe late in the eighteenth century, Amsterdam exhibited a sort of local heterogeneity, in classical terms more ethnic than racial in its constitution. By the eighteenth century fully 20 percent of those arrested in Amsterdam were of German background, though there was no indication that they were criminologically discriminated against (Schama 1997: 582). Amsterdam after all considered itself the model of political and cultural tolerance as much as it established itself as the initial center of "planetary modernity" (Dussel 1998).<sup>3</sup> Where there

were slaves they would have been house slaves, the occasional symbols of status and curiosity, a souvenir of sorts collected on long travels which might be shown off to family and friends and to impress business colleagues. I think here of Rembrandt's haunting painting of "Two Negroes" (1661), Rubens's four drawings of a "Negro figure," or Van Dyck's early seventeenth-century inclusion of a black woman servant ("The Discovery of Moses") or of a satyr ("Bacchanalia"). Some slaves there were locally, though most got shipped on, and too few people who could be said to be non-white or non-European to be more than objects of curious (in)difference and sometime derision.

It is remarkable thus that Simon Schama could write his masterful history of Dutch culture in "the golden age" without mentioning slavery or blacks. Indeed, Schama excludes any extended discussion of the importance of colonies to or influence of colonial culture on Dutch wealth, forms of desire, and the creation of a "bourgeois aristocracy," points made impressively by Ann Stoler (Stoler 1997).

If racial heterogeneity came slow to Dutch modernity, it touched London life early on. This is more remarkable in light of the fact that it has been downplayed or largely absent from the prevailing histories of that city. The earliest black people were thought to appear in "modern" London (at least on one account) in 1555 (Gerzina 1995), when five West Africans arrived to acquire the English language as a way to promote commerce – slave commerce, it seems. There is evidence though of the employment of black musicians in the English and Scottish courts nearly a century earlier, the appearance of North African pirates as far north as Scotland by the end of the fifteenth century, and two African friars in Edinburgh early in the sixteenth (Gundara and Duffield 1992: 15–18; Fryer 1984: 2).<sup>4</sup> The dramatic modern shift in disposition towards black people is signaled by the fact that at the close of that century Queen Elizabeth had passed an edict requiring all black people to leave England (Gerzina 1995: 3).

The population of greater London, totaling just 200,000 in 1600, doubled in half a century, and spiraled to 575,000 by century's end. A century later yet the metropolis was just short of 1 million (900,000 by the census of 1801), bolstered by the flow predominantly from country to town, and later by Irish migration and Ashkenazi Jews "going and resting" (Josipovici 1993). The latter concentrated themselves in the East End upon fleeing persecution in Eastern and Central Europe. To a lesser degree there were flows also of Germans,

Dutch, and Portuguese. Census counts topped 4.5 million in 1881 and had risen staggeringly to 7 million just thirty years later (Porter 1995: 205). By the latter part of the eighteenth century, the number of black people in London – largely from the West Indies and Indian seamen working for the English East Indies Company – counted at least as much as 10,000 and quite possibly half more than that, a little over 1 percent of the population (Rude 1971: 6–8). Revealingly, as early as April 1721 one London daily was warning that “there is a great number of Blacks come daily into this city, so that ’tis thought in a short time, if they be not suppressed, the city will swarm with them” (quoted in Dabydeen 1992: 31).

Slaves were not uncommon in London also, largely brought back from the West Indies by British planters and mixing with black sailors, students, and musicians. As early as 1696 there appeared heart-breakingly cruel advertisements in the local press for the return of runaway slaves or the sale of black boys as young as eleven or twelve (Gerzina 1995: 5–8). By the end of the eighteenth century, as the abolitionist movement gained ground, these advertisements for the sale of slaves had largely disappeared, the emergent English culture of civility ordering commercial sensibilities regarding blacks (Lorimer 1992: 70). And by the mid- to later Enlightenment there was evidence also of wealthy black men parading undisturbed with white women on Oxford Street, accompanied nevertheless by bemoaning observations of mixed-race progeny, the first inklings possibly of more vociferous concerns to emerge regarding hybridity in the nineteenth century. Thus Philip Thicknesse writing in 1778 complained that “in every town, nay in almost every village, are to be seen a little race of mulattoes, mischievous as monkeys, and infinitely more dangerous” (quoted in Gerzina 1995: 22). Black women were much scarcer, usually brought to London by West Indian slavers bearing in tow their concubines veiled as servants. In larger measure though, David Dabydeen points out in *Hogarth’s Blacks* that even more than the demographic presence of black people, London was “visually black.” Signboards and business cards imprinted the emblem of a black man as the mark of commerce, the icon of blackness curiously serving as a measure of commercial success (Dabydeen 1987: 18). The growing appeal of this expanding racial exoticism is evidenced by the fact that by the middle of the nineteenth century Topsy wallpaper and dolls were the rage throughout fashionable London (Gerzina 1995: 25).

It is telling, then, that both Gareth Steadman Jones (1971) and Roy Porter (1995) can write justly influential histories of London – of Victorian class relations in the former case, a more broadly social history in the latter – without so much as a single mention of blacks or of the influence of colonial commerce and administration of the slave trade upon the life of that capital of finance. Similarly, Steadman Jones’s co-edited book with David Feldman (Feldman and Steadman Jones 1989) on the history of metropolitan London is concerned with a wide range of London’s demographic and cultural diversity, detailing the importance to London life and “identities” (the title of a section in the book) of Irish and Jews, women and the working classes. Yet perhaps most impressively it has no expressed word whatsoever about black people either narrowly construed as people of African descent or more broadly including Asians. Telling all the more because in a sense the writing of class in nineteenth-century London was at once the writing of race: working-class formation, gender, and blackness were deeply articulated with each other in conceptual and material terms and expression (Gilman 1990).

This exclusionary silence and invisibility are more remarkable in light of the fact not only that by the 1770s London-owned slave ships were transporting close to 10,000 slaves a year in the triangular trade, not nearly as large as Liverpool or Bristol admittedly, but significant nonetheless (Fryer 1984: 36). The silence is more deeply troubling, the influence of Africans on London public performance and musical culture notwithstanding, given the centrality of London in financing the slave trade (by mid-eighteenth century London was handling three-quarters of all sugar imported into Britain). The slave trade was crucial not only to London’s economy but to its political life. Many influential politicians were caught up in one way or another in the benefits of slave trading, and West Indian absentee plantation proprietors were able quite easily to buy seats in the House of Commons, a practice that became, well, common. So strong, highly organized, and well-heeled was the West Indies lobby that the abolitionist movement found itself facing significant resistance at the end of the “enlightened century” (Fryer 1984: 44–50).

Arguably, the emergence of a “bourgeois aristocracy” and the liberalism on which it predicated itself and which it served to solidify structured the fabric of British society in the first part of the nineteenth century. By contrast, these forces consolidated in the Netherlands

only towards the end of that century. This is reflected most clearly in the temporal gap between the two regarding their respective abolitionist movements and moments. In turn, bourgeois civility came to be fashioned in each society through the dual movement of importing and alienating racially fashioned sensibilities in and from their respective colonies. Victorian bourgeois liberalism, curtaining off its viciousness behind the veneer of mannered polite racism, could be sewn into the fabric of British society only in virtue of a repressively policed restriction on mixed sexuality and progeny abroad. This is not to deny their existence in British colonial conditions, only to emphasize the repressed and repressive conditions of Victorian racial desire. Here the vocal concerns with pollution, hybridity, and degeneration were complemented by fears of moral fall thought to follow from the licentiousness of cross-racial desire. Dutch resolve concerning such questions seemed significantly more ambiguous and ambivalent, relative colonial license underpinning comparative metropolitan closure. Tied to different dominant religious traditions, consequently bourgeois liberalism took hold in metropolitan Holland later and somewhat more tenuously than it did in Britain (Stoler 1995: esp. 125–36).

Two points are worth emphasizing here. First, the obvious lesson of this tale of two cities is that the heterogeneous mix of populations making up the capitals of colonial empires has largely been downplayed, and indeed until quite recently all but ignored. Second, relatedly but more deeply, the occlusion of blacks from the representational historical record of this urban diversity indicates by extension that blacks for the most part were rendered invisible in the daily political life of those cities. This can be seen in sharp contrast to the persistent, one might say insistent, concern with colonized black people deemed administratively problematic by the colonizers.

It is significant then, both as a mark of urban life and of historical scholarship, that accounts of blacks in Britain and the Netherlands (Scobie 1972; Fryer 1984, 1988; Gundara and Duffield 1992; Blakely 1993; Gerzina 1995; West 1996; and Arthur Japin's historical novel, Japin 1997) are exceptional. They are (regarded as) outside of – not properly belonging to – standard historical accounts of those societies, and take this exclusion as their almost exclusive motivating or inspirational focus. Nor is this an excising from the historical record of the traces only of a black Atlantic and its effects, for one finds the silences concerning a “black Mediterranean” equally if not more resounding.

Southern Europe is cut off from African “contamination” both by the Mediterranean, a sea almost never thought of as having an African coastline, and relatedly by the vast white sands of the Saharan desert. The North African coast accordingly is taken more readily “to belong” to the Middle East than it is referenced as a “supra-Saharan Africa.” Thus, the historical exceptionalism at work here, it should be clear, is not a product principally of self-determining “minority” separation, an infantilizing celebration of ethnic self-identification. Rather, it is a product primarily of that initial ignoring, the rendering invisible, of peoples designated black so that representational exceptionalism, an emphatic foregrounding focus, becomes the only possibility for writing strangers and outsiders, black people in particular, back into the historical record.

A prevailing problematic of modernity, representative at least in that strand of modernism elaborated through the nineteenth-century positivity of science, has concerned control of both natural and social conditions. But beneath this, perhaps as a Hobbesian-like motivation, lay anxiety – about the unknown, about that which could not be controlled, concerning natural forces beyond control. Heterogeneity may be read as challenge or threat, opportunity or potential problem. For modernity generally, and in the nineteenth century in particular, heterogeneity was interpreted very much in the latter vein, taken to inject into the safety and stability of the known, predictable, and controllable worlds elements of the unknown, the unpredictable, the uncontrollable. For heterogeneity introduces the threat and unmanageability of the unknown, of the diverse, and the uncontainability of that unknown.<sup>5</sup>

Race is imposed upon otherness, the attempt to account for it, to know it, to control it. So to begin with in modernity what is invested with racial meaning, what becomes increasingly racially conceived, is the threat, the external, the unknown, the outside. It is only through the racial configuration of the external, of the other, by implication, that the internal – the self – becomes (and at first by implication, silently) racially defined also. But paradoxically, once racially configured with modernity that threat becomes magnified, especially fraught, because in being named racially in a sense it is named *as* threat. In being so named the threat is reified, rendered real, realized. Race, especially as scientifically understood, appears then to inject control (or at least to claim it), to furnish comprehension (and perhaps

comprehensibility) where it otherwise is clearly absent, or to reestablish determination in the face of threatened indeterminacy. The racial conception of the state becomes the racial definition of the apparatus, the projects, the institutions for managing this threat, for keeping it out or ultimately containing it – but also (and again paradoxically) for keeping it *going*.

In the wake of abolition of slave trading throughout the British empire in 1807, and of slavery altogether in 1834, black people seemed freer to come and go from Britain than they had been, although their movement was not always unrestricted. This trend was more obvious in Britain than in Holland owing to the greater global spread of Britain's empire in the nineteenth century, its heavier engagement in the slave trade, the public prominence of the abolitionist movement in comparison to conditions in the Netherlands, as well as to the fact that colonial slavery continued under the Dutch until the middle of 1863. It is in light of this expedited movement that black presence in Britain especially became more obvious, that mixed-race populations began to become more apparent (as they did too in wake of the Civil War in the United States), and to be focused upon more readily as anomalous. The remarkable increase in flows – of populations to and from colonies, of commodities and raw materials, indeed of miscegenation and its offspring – prompted heightened population heterogeneity and cultural bricolage. Coupled with fears and anxieties, challenges to established orders, and manifest changes in prevailing socioscientific interpretation of human differentiation, there emerged concerns, theoretical and political, articulated in terms of the concept of “hybridity.”

### Hybridity and Homogeneity

Theoretically, the concern with “hybridism” – the static substantivizing of the term indicative of the worry – was a product of the nineteenth-century theoretical shift from mono- to polygenism. If races are separate species, as polygenists claimed definitionally, mating of their members should not produce offspring at all (Nott 1843). “Mixed-race” or “hybrid” offspring were the product of miscegenation, a product significant only on presumption of more or less fixed racial categories. Nominated “mulatto” or “mestizo” variously in the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries, “mixed-race people” increased as a result of greater cross-racial contact, not least following abolition of slavery, migrations in the wake of colonial commerce, and the promise of reconstructed societies. These trends were widespread, in a sense global, given the scope of the colonial mode of production. They marked Britain and the Continent marginally, but the United States, the Afro-Caribbean, and Latin America significantly enough to warrant specific census categories, as well as Southern Africa and the East Indies.

Mixed-race presence offered an obvious challenge to polygenic presumption. If, as polygenesis presumed, races are species, and species are defined by capacity to reproduce only among species members, the existence of mixed-race (or cross-species) offspring suggests failure to meet a crucial condition of the theory. Nevertheless, existence of hybrid offspring prompted revisions in polygenic theory rather than its initial abandonment. The first revision was to insist that hybrids themselves would be infertile; later that more “distant” groups are much more likely to be infertile than more “proximate” ones (Broca 1860/1950; cf. Young 1995: 18). When counter-evidence quickly emerged, predictions were revised to the longer-term view that hybrid offspring eventually – over a number of (unspecified) generations – would degenerate and ultimately die out (Knox 1862; cf. Broca 1860/1950). The failure of this prediction to materialize coincided more or less with the demise of polygenic theory in the face of Darwinian evolution, on one hand, and Darwinist-prompted eugenics, on the other.

Scientific hybridity thus failed theoretically (that is, on scientific criteria). In the wake of Darwin there began a shift – long, slow, and incomplete – away from strictly scientific technologies of race and racism towards more culturalist articulations. Where science continued to contribute to racial thinking it was now less direct, less focused straightforwardly on advancing racial science for its own sake. From the close of the nineteenth century scientific thinking about race became more applied, and curiously more intricately tied up with state technologies of governance. The invocation of scientific technologies developed with a more general purpose in mind – for their own sake or with other object(ive)s at issue – and were adopted or adapted to address questions of race, as in the application of IQ testing. The prevalence of eugenics in the first few decades of the twentieth century may be considered accordingly the tail end of “pure”

racial science, scientific racism's more or less last spree. It should be emphasized nevertheless that it was an extension granted new life by the assumption of eugenics in state policy initiatives regarding intelligence testing, immigration restrictions, and in the final analysis genocide. The techniques available from applied racial science, or more precisely from applied science to racial application, suited insidious state missions, mandates, and manipulations all too well.

Those who considered the nineteenth century, and scientific racism in particular, the apex of racist expression have thought the applied turn a shift away also from racist expression as such, a revealing of racism's intellectual vacuity, its essential irrationality, in the wake of racism's failure to exhibit scientific legitimacy. But such an interpretation is misleading. For as the longer-term legacy of Darwin may have signaled a shift from the viability of a scientifically sustained sense of race and racist expression, culturalist and class-centered expressions of racist exclusion began to dominate. The dire political implications that came to be associated with biologically driven racism in the hands of state apparatuses prompted a shift to more palatable popular forms of racial expression. Along with this shift away from physicalist-based notions, the concept of hybridity began in turn increasingly to assume reified culturalist expression (cf. Young 1995: 6). Thus at century's turn Kipling ironically has a Russian speaking in French to a Frenchman refer to "the monstrous hybridism of East and West" in characterizing the effects of British imperialism upon India. Here Kipling reflects the popularly paranoid concern over the degenerating pollution of cultural mixing, as earlier sexual mixing had been considered to result in physical degeneracy (Kipling 1901/1913: 382).

So, in the nineteenth century the concept of hybridity came to represent dominant concerns that white or European-based purity, power, and privilege would be polluted, and in being polluted diluted. If whites were supposedly superior intellectually and culturally to those not white, then on amalgamationist assumptions the mixing of those non-white with white generative capacity *ex hypothesi* would imperil the power of the latter, would result in their degeneration. Hybridity thus assumed the conceptual expression of anxiety, of white people's paranoia, signaling the ultimate powerlessness of the powerful. Powerlessness precisely in that hybridity poses a challenge to the guardians of purity, power, and privilege, a challenge channeled through desire: the libidinal pull of sexual desire, the lure of forbidden fruit, in

the one instance; the exciting, energizing magnet of cultural renewal, and so an implicit judgment concerning the static predisposition of “the pure,” in the other. In the faultlines and cracks in power those conceived as racially powerless come to assume a power they are denied by definition.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the case of South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century, that colonially produced hybrid of Africa (a mix of at least ten broad ethnocultural groups), Asia (Indians, Malaysians, Chinese), and Europe (British and Dutch principally, but East European Jews, Italians, Greeks, and Portuguese also, all woven not quite indistinguishably into the invention of whiteness). Thus Afrikaner politicians readily invoked eugenics-inflected phrases concerning “virile” and “vigorous” blacks “flooding” city space, “swamping” whites who were in the minority, and threatening the safety of supposedly vulnerable white women. More than one election was won on the tailcoats of such rhetoric. In 1927 the Immorality Act (sic) was passed prohibiting miscegenation between whites and Africans. Attempts were later made to extend the legislation to prohibit all interracial sexual intercourse, including government commissions of inquiry regarding such legislation in the late 1930s. Yet the fuller restriction manifested only eventually in 1949 with the passing of the Mixed Marriages Act as a cornerstone in the systematic institutionalization of the apartheid state.

Similarly, the South African state revealed itself as the state of exclusively white making – a state of, for, and made (so it would claim) only by whites. It began moving in the mid-1950s against the perceived threat of cultural pollution, stamping out hip hybrid urban neighborhoods in Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town that just might prove enticing to white youth (cf. Dubow 1995: 180ff.). White urban youth growing up closely engaged with such neighborhoods, as I did, could be said to be their beneficiaries, the products in part of their cultural contribution (to music, cuisine, a dialect as much as a dialectic of resistance, a medium of political consciousness). The inhabitants contributed to the rich mix of South African culture in incalculable ways, and were direct victims of the state’s destructive mission, bearing the terrible brunt of the bulldozing mentality that left scars wide and deep across the landscape, cultural as much as geographical, psychological as much as demographic. One might say that all South Africans, like it or not, were dramatically diminished by these segregationist machinations,

black people of course bearing the burdens more directly, materially, and heavily than whites. At the same time, the reproduction of cemented state-regulated consent could never be complete, for its terms were always challenged in the examples of cultures, ways of life, expressions and representations more dynamic, exciting, and appealing than the state would admit, tolerate, or allow.

As negative critique, then, the concept of hybridity becomes an outward expression of the repressed, and in such expression assumes the power of the repressive itself. As the product of two differentiated elements, the hybrid is supposed to fuse them together, assuming features of each into a transformed "third" element. Historically, such elements have stood to each other in hierarchical relations of power, often underpinned if not produced or promoted by state power. As a critical concept, the hybrid thus is supposed to blunt power's point, to shift power's oppressive expression. It does so, however, only by assuming some of the hierarchical aspects of power. As some have pointed out, Homi Bhabha's "hybrid third space" in this respect is tinged with romanticism (see some of the contributions to Werbner and Modood 1997).

On the other side, the denial of hybridity, physiologically or culturally conceived, accordingly becomes the refusal of possibility to the mixed, the repression of heterogeneity, of conditions of possibility for hybridity to materialize. Consider, for instance, the "assault" on European languages maintained to manifest in creolization, and the authoritarian restriction of their use by colonial (and postcolonial) administrations (cf. Stoler 1995: 43). One sees here the threads of a threat hybridity represents to prevailing power, the threat of losing control faced by the colonizers in failing to understand a hybrid language in terms of which critical and resistant formulations might be fashioned, in a sense to their face. Insult added to injury. Hence the multitude of laws against racially defined immigration, miscegenation, cross-racial intercourse (sexual or cultural), racially conceived cultural expressions and practices identified with otherness (like Ebonics as a teaching medium).

There lies barely hidden here an apparent paradox: Precisely at the moment we find greater likelihood of de facto heterogeneity among and between population groups, however conceived or defined, the greater the denial through racial fixity and reification. Where a degree of racial homogeneity could be more or less safely assumed, at least

relatively speaking, as in early modern Britain and Holland, the less race seemed necessary as an explicit self-reference. Here race referred to the outside, the strange and exotic at a distance. The more heterogeneous such societies grew, the more racial definition came to mark their self-characterization.

In the face and wake of the colonial condition which helped to produce demographic heterogeneity, the question then becomes why race is invoked in a variety of denials to face off such heterogeneity. The genealogy of hybridity I have offered suggests something of a response, if not to resolving the paradox, then to why it should arise. On one hand, hybridity has been invoked to rationalize (away) and legitimate fears and anxieties that mobilized one side of the paradoxical equation: not least those concerning “species corruption” (White 1972: 14–15) and the associated threats of cultural and sexual miscegenation. On the other hand, hybridity has been pushed more recently as a celebration of the possibilities to which heterogeneity gives rise. Here, however, hybridity serves at once to exacerbate again the very fears, now in culturalist terms and precisely in those (formerly) colonizing societies once considering themselves more or less homogeneous, that the concept and the conditions it references were initially invoked to quell.

We may see this played out in racially marked states like the United States and Britain, the Netherlands and France, Canada and South Africa concerning language and dress, census categories and mixed-race recognition, and perhaps most extremely in immigration policy and opportunity. But one can find versions of this in the academy also, expressed in terms of disciplinarity and indeed epistemologically. I have suggested elsewhere that disciplines are to the academy, to intellectual pursuit, as borders are more broadly to nation-states (Goldberg 1994). The transgressive threats possible in multi- and trans-disciplinarity seem as unsettling to some locally as migration and trans-nationalism seem to the relatively privileged more globally, and for related sorts of reasons. Settled ideas, practices, and institutions are challenged as a result, sometimes at considerable existential cost. The threat is not just that some or other discipline might transform, but that it might turn out to be redundant and disappear completely, that the power and privilege it has secured may be lost. Hence the investment in a conserving resistance. Relatedly, epistemological hybridity suggests new forms of thinking, new categories of knowing

rather than resting (in)secure in settled ways of seeing and comprehending the world. As Bakhtin (1981: 344) suggests, authoritarian language – epistemologically, disciplinarily, politically – is necessarily anti-hybrid as it depends upon the singularity and static fixity of meaning, the insistence of the given and ordered, the silencing of voice(s) at odds with the authorial power, not least manifested in and by state institutions.

It bears pointing out here the inherently homogenizing logic of institutions. In their dominant logical form, institutions are predicated principally on instituting, operating, and (re)producing homogeneity. If the state minimally is a collection of institutions, manifesting and (re-)ordering itself necessarily in and through the logic of such institutional arrangement (I will be concerned later to thicken this picture dramatically), then one could say that the state inherently is the institutionalization of homogeneity. Liberal states like Britain, the Netherlands, Canada, and the US that claim to furnish the structures for heterogeneity to flourish in this sense actually promote contradictory aims, purposes that pull in competing directions. Hence the anachronistic language one hears of “managing diversity,” of “ordering difference,” of “unifying in difference.” The homogenizing imperative is revealed on both sides of these “hybrid” nomenclatures, for curiously the active expression is born in the restricting pursuit (managing, ordering, unifying), the passive in the reified substantivization – the rendering passive – of what one would have thought to be creative and energizing (diversity, difference). This homogenizing logic is internal to administration and governmentality. To run counter to it, even in an administrative capacity, is to run counter to administrative or govern-mental logic. The state – and nation-state especially, where nation here becomes the cultural reproduction of hegemonic consensus to state administrative mandates – is all about institutionally reproductive homogenization.<sup>6</sup>

On the other side, though, hybridity is conceived as about Becoming, about transformation and so the reiterative undoing of form (“the permanent revolution of forms,” as Young characterizes Homi Bhabha’s view), about flow and flux, a term that apparently “captures” the logic of history itself (cf. Young 1995: 25). As such, the substantivization of hybridity in the form of reifying resistance – in a movement, as a (more or less) self-consciously cohering intervention – at once homogenizes the heterogeneous, fixes the flux and flow, orders the

dis-orderly, renders more or less safe by “capturing” the transgressive expression of the hybrid. Here, at best, the critical conception of hybridity is reduced to the fusional or amalgamational; at worst, any possibility of hybridity is obliterated altogether.

So, like race, indeed, as a sometime proxy for it, hybridity in its ethnoracial connotation assumes a variety of forms. Initially biological in relation to demography, it may connote aesthetically, morally, obviously always politically in any of these senses, as well as in the less obvious epistemological one. Bakhtin reveals, in Young’s helpful terms, the “hybridity of hybridity” itself. As I hint at in the preceding paragraph, there are at least two ways in which hybridity may manifest: It may combine otherwise clashing categories, fusing their antithetical senses into new expression and form, the new here possibly assuming renewed homogeneity. Or it may express itself as self-consciously critical, as social unmasking, a studied commitment to undoing the necessary singularity of the authoritative voice, wherever and whenever expressed (a point turned to some effect by Bhabha in his critique of colonial power, though in romancing the resistive he overlooks the conservationist element inherent equally in any conception of the hybrid and the resistant) (Bakhtin 1981: 344ff.; Bhabha 1994; Young 1995: 20–8).

Colonialism, John Comaroff has made abundantly clear in a scintillating rethinking of the colonial state (Comaroff 1998), was about managing heterogeneity, dealing with difference through imposition and restriction, regulation and repression. Seemingly by contrast but in fact relatedly, colonizing states like Britain and the Netherlands proceeded on an assumption of internalized population homogeneity, of ethnoracial sameness and of externalizing difference. They were able to sustain at least a semblance of the charade by purporting nominally to keep the different out and at bay lest they undo by infecting the rationality of brotherhood, thus toppling reason’s rule. The creation and promotion of difference is the necessary condition of reproducing homogenized sameness; and (re-)producing homogeneity necessarily promotes the externalization of difference to produce its effect.

Implicit here is a distinction between two forms of regulation and imposition, the restrictive or exclusionary disciplining of difference and (one might say in the name of) the rule of sameness. The combining of racial hybridism with colonialism in the nineteenth century

was a “social-scientific” way of managing these related concerns: keeping the Other from polluting and diluting the Same by maintaining the former at arm’s length; but at once benefiting from the material and libidinal pleasures exploitation of colonized others made possible. Under the aegis of restricting hybridity physiologically and culturally, otherness, difference, and heterogeneity were reduced to racial management. In the early twenty-first century, by contrast, the regulative force of colonialism has broken down and the unsettling capacity of hybridity can no longer be kept (colonially) marginal by modern modes of control. Indeed, the heterogeneous and hybrid have come to occupy and challenge modernity’s centers. Under these altered conditions, hybridity’s unsettling capacity has been celebrated and embraced, but also fiercely resisted. Indeed, it has become a contested domain – epistemologically, disciplinarily, aesthetically, culturally, politically.

What I have been suggesting, nevertheless, is that in *both* expressions of racially imposed and racially self-conceived hybridity – the repressive and the resistive – there are always at least delimiting hints of the other. Thus it is not just that heterogeneity is or has been a challenge *or* threat, opportunity *or* potential problem. In the context of racial history, the history of racial theorizing, and the intimate co-definition of race with modern state definition and expression, it has always been both. And necessarily so. Perhaps a concept at once neutering and neutralizing the sexually provocative conditions that are a necessary underpinning of hybridity’s very conception cannot help but suffer the anxiety of its ambiguity in this way. It is the value invested in the concept in relation to the material historical contexts in which it is embedded accordingly that will determine hybridity’s critical capacity in specific space–time conditions: whether to be shunned or embraced, critically discarded or exploited. In either case, indeed in both given the dialectic at work, state management of racial conditions is crucial, either as medium of homogeneous promotion or the object of resistance.

Thus Anne McClintock’s general warning regarding historical agency and colonialism, in quiet criticism of Homi Bhabha, might serve also to warn against uncritical invocations of hybridity. Indeed, it serves as general warning to critical racial studies, most emphatically once race is understood in its various *states* of articulation. “Taking the question of historical agency seriously (‘How . . . is authority displaced?’),” she writes,

entails interrogating more than the ambivalences of form; it also entails interrogating the messy imprecisions of history, the embattled negotiations and strategies of the disempowered, the militarization of masculinity, the elision of women from political and economic power, the decisive foreclosures of ethnic violence and so on. Ambivalence may well be a critical aspect of subversion, but it is not a sufficient agent of colonial failure. (McClintock 1995: 66–7)

So though hybridity continues to be “scandalous,”<sup>7</sup> it is perhaps equally outrageous for an anti-essentialist intellectual politics that it has failed to take seriously the doubleness of hybrid consciousness: not just its in-betweenness but its “caught-betweenness,” and accordingly not just the ambivalence it produces but its almost inevitable duplicity. Thus it is never just its transgression that marks racially imposed and racially conceived hybridity as attractive but the type of scandal it stands for, time and place specifically, not least in the context of the history of racially thick and racially reproductive state projects. And this context specificity, as McClintock rightfully insists, is tied up with the specificities of material exclusions, repressions, and subjugations. In short, with the micro-details of racial power and privilege and their articulation with other forms through which the *state* of racial domination is worked.

Ethnoracial, cultural, and national homogeneity is sustained throughout modernity accordingly not because it is the “natural condition,” the very assumption of singularity (“it”) rhetorically advocating as presumption what it requires repressive acts of material imposition to effect. Such homogeneity is achieved and reproduced, it ought to be emphasized, only through repression, through occlusion and erasure, restriction and denial, delimitation and domination. In the final analysis, such terms and conditions of reproduction are unsustainable without the order(ing) of the state. Here hybridity is conceivable only against the background assumption of racial terms, biologically or culturally comprehended.

It bears reiterating then that, while definitive of the modern condition, the racial state empirically is emphatically not singular. We should take care in not reducing the *racial* state to *the* racial state, a theoretical generality for the purposes of analysis to empirically singular expression. Besides the convenience of the phrase, there is no unique institutional entity that goes by the title of “the racial state.” It follows

that one can only draw generalizations about the form of states, of racial states, racially conceived and configured states, racism within and racist states, the specificities of which in fact require empirical elaboration. In a sense, the very notion of the *state* (and not just of *the* state, but of statehood per se) is conducive to theoretical reification in the singular. This is a singularity (and a tendency) nevertheless well worth resisting, intellectually as much as politically.

Race extends across modern conceptions of otherness, in some ways defining but certainly pervading them. The racial state, in the generic sense, purports to offer its proponents a way to account for the threat and unmanageability of the unknown, the diverse, the heterogeneous. It seeks to control not least by “knowing” them, by creating their “truth conditions.” It pursues thereby turning the heterogeneous into manageable – that is, at once managed – homogeneity. Modernity is commensurate thus with the racial configuration of the threat, the external, the unknown, the outside. And through this racial characterization of the external, of the other, by implication, the internal in the form of the self becomes (and at first silently) racially defined also. So too racial states assume class specific articulation and embody varying expressions of masculinized militarism, policed desire, and state security. The racial state, the state’s definition in racial terms, thus becomes the racial characterization of the apparatus, the projects, the institutions for managing this threat, for keeping it out or ultimately containing it.

So if race matters, it is in good part because the modern state has made it, because modern states more or less, more thickly or thinly, embody the racial condition. Modern states have taken shape, in part, in relation to their specific embodiment of racial conditions. In short, the modern state is the racial state, in one version or another.<sup>8</sup> The remainder of the book is given over to making good on these analytic projections, to adding content to the outline of the argument thus far delineated.

## NOTES

- 1 Medieval city-states in Europe, exercising considerable local authority, were complemented by a variety of looser and sprawling dynastic-based empires and principalities more or less related to larger monarchies,

- empires, or church-dominated domains (cf. Tilly and Blockmans 1994: esp. 12–17).
- 2 Bhikhu Parekh (2000: 179–80) suggests a contrary contrast between premodern and modern social formations, predicating premodern polities on a homogeneous “way of life” while defining modern states principally in terms of territorial integrity. I am suggesting that the recourse to territory as the basis of modern state definition does not *alone* provide as clear-cut a distinction from premodern polities, especially in the European case, as Parekh would have it.
  - 3 Revealingly, even though they could be citizens of the city, late in the eighteenth century Jews were prohibited from joining a guild in Amsterdam. The shopkeepers’ guild in the provincial town of Bois-le-Duc, now in Belgium, complained in 1775 that members were “undercut and disadvantaged ceaselessly by the illegal practices of aliens, particularly of the Jewish nation, who come and go, do not pay any taxes and carry stolen goods, from bankrupt estates into the city.” Jews were banned from urban citizenship in that city in 1777, in part as a response to these sentiments, though there is considerable evidence that Jewish inhabitants of Bois-le-Duc grew steadily despite the prohibition, and indeed, a few managed to join the shopkeepers’ guild without hiding but no doubt without stressing their Jewishness. These restrictions were dissolved, at least formally, in 1796 when the National Assembly admitted Jews to citizenship in the Batavian Republic, as individuals though not as a people, and restricted urban regulations from overriding national policy (Prak 1999: 22–3, 27).
  - 4 Fryer (1984: 1, 4) notes the presence of a “division of Moors” assigned by the Roman imperial army to defend Hadrian’s wall in the third century AD. He also offers evidence of a black trumpeter in the English court in London as early as 1507.
  - 5 The Romantic counter-tradition in modernity (and more recently post-modernity), it might be said, seeks to turn the perceived threat of heterogeneity into a celebrated virtue (cf. Outlaw 1996: 4–5).
  - 6 Not one to use the substantivizing form lightly – it is used much too readily – I think in this case (homogenization) the use is exactly what is called for.
  - 7 McClintock (1995: 299–328, esp. 300–2) never says why hybridity is scandalous, only why some presumably hybridly produced and constituted text in the specific historical contexts of post-apartheid South Africa is.
  - 8 In a series of conversations, Gerry Heng has convinced me that just as the seeds of modern state formation can be traced to the thirteenth century, so too can the fertilizer of racial tending in the entanglements of early modern nation and state manifestation. See Heng (2000) and Mariscal (1998).