

PREFACE

We, the authors, met in the summer of 2006 while attending a Marxism and Racism workshop at the University of Glasgow. One of us (CK) was just completing a two-year research fellowship with the Departments of Sociology at Glasgow and Bristol, an England-Scotland comparative study of the relationship between racism, nationalism, and Muslim inclusion/exclusion. The fellowship had followed from doctoral work at Glasgow on the antiracist state. The other (RDT) was at Glasgow as an Adam Smith Foundation visiting fellow with the Department of Sociology and had just published *Savage State* and *After Race*. Despite having lived our lives on different continents—CK born and raised in Glasgow and RDT in East Los Angeles—we connected intellectually and on the basis of our shared antiracist activism and internationalist perspective.

Theory-wise we were both tired of irresolvable debates around race versus class, not that we didn't hold strong and strident positions. Rather, there was a sense in which moving forward had become almost impossible both theoretically and politically. We were both equally exasperated with post-Marxism, postmodernism, and the cultural turn, in that although each ism brought insight, we felt stuck in a critical impasse, a present without release. This was the negative that connected us. The positive was our mutual respect for Left radical theory. At the time we were reading Ernst Bloch and Cornelius Castoriadis—writers

who were in many ways on the fringe. We admired Frantz Fanon and C. R. L. James—activists who each possessed a keen critical sense, tapping into the pulse of the moment in order to offer ways *in* and *out* of the present. It was a sense of possibility that attracted us to their canon. It is easy to criticize but much more difficult to offer a future sense, and we wanted this possibility to infuse our collaboration. We were both drawn to comparative method and empirically saw commonalities between the treatment of Muslims and Arabs in the United Kingdom and the United States, but more cryptically, the recent War on Terror, its effect on Arab migrants in Europe, and the “browning of America” drew our attention to how each could offer insight into the other. We agreed that it was important to situate this treatment historically from a class perspective but not the sterile positivist “class” of social science. It was essential that we reintroduce the subjective in class analysis as drawn out by scholars such as Georg Lukács, Franz Jakubowski, and E. P. Thompson and that we imagine the racist and antiracist state theoretically within the subjective relations of class. As should become clear, we move outside the traditional canon of classical Marxism while remaining committed to democratic transformation inspired by traditions of heterodox political economy.

Race Defaced is a critical comparative analysis of different modalities of racism and antiracism in Britain and the United States from the nineteenth century to the current period, situating their development and unfolding within the emancipatory political movements of the modern capitalist world order. As well as providing a critical appraisal of the main theoretical debates in the field, we aim to initiate new lines of analysis and incorporate the interrogation of racism and antiracism in the contemporary context of socioeconomic and cultural change. Our historical focus includes both theoretical and political substantive streams. A key feature of our approach is to unpack the respective influence of *anti-emancipatory* thought on contemporary political and theoretical approaches to “race relations” on both sides of the Atlantic.

Race Defaced posits that there is a consensus of thought across the so-called political spectrum (from radical to conservative) underpinned by the contemporary acceptance of the impossibility of human emancipation—*paradigms of pessimism*. This “End of History” development affects negatively the academic and political treatment of racism, which places “problem” and “solution” beyond human hands. A problematic emerges that traps the critical subject of emancipation, rendering us helpless. From the theory that modernity equals racism

to studies that set out to criticize an apparently unified mission of hegemonic white unity, we are left without foundation for a radical project. While debate on class, capital, and labor continues to have meaning today in an era of growing capitalist inequality and insecurity, we subvert orthodox debate in order to intervene in what we see as a political climate distinguishable from the context that gave rise to the original critiques. The result is no simple repetition of well-trodden arguments. *Race Defaced* is a heretical intervention aimed at both conservative *and* radical orthodoxies.

The book not only goes beyond the black/white paradigm of racism, but it casts doubt on the prevailing ethnicities approach that generally seeks in response to make visible the oppression of hitherto silenced groups. Our intention is to examine how the presence and absence of emancipatory vision shapes macro- and micro-level approaches to racialized populations and how it determines their position in the British and US “racial hierarchy,” as well as shapes forms of antiracist policy. While we treat with analytical specificity the patterns of conflict, subversion, and racialized discourses among increasingly large American and British ethnic minority populations, we do so not to recover silenced histories but to place ethnic fractionization at the center of how capitalist social relations are orientated at present. Our aim is to present a cogent and critical interpretation of how the political economy of class can create new spaces of hope and democratic alternatives. The focus of the book is on the United States and Britain, but we offer analytical links with other parts of Western Europe to highlight our study of the British and US comparisons.

In Chapter 1 we clear a critical theoretical space through which the subject of emancipation can speak in the chapters that follow. We first demonstrate that World War II and the Holocaust set the parameters for how we have come to understand “race” and liberation, circumscribed by paradigms of pessimism. As examples, we draw out the limitations of Hannah Arendt’s antitotalitarian thesis and situate Theodor Adorno’s immanent critique within a perspective of Left defeat extended through the theory of the influential Authoritarian Personality thesis. Though we are critical of Zygmunt Bauman’s holocaust thesis, we draw on tenets of his earlier work in order to engage with Cornel West’s Tragic subject—the “prisoner of hope”—and David Theo Goldberg’s Foucauldian-inspired scientific subjectification so as to demonstrate their respective limitations as tools for understanding patterns of racism and inequality in the modern capitalist system. Our “Hopeful Subject” counters

their respective positions from a Marxism inspired by Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukács and an anarchism inspired by Cornelius Castoriadis. In addition to our conceptualization of the Hopeful Subject, we reverse the well-known idea of inequality rationalized, instead conceptualizing racial doctrine as the *irrationalization of equality* in the system of natural liberty that accompanies the emergence of the capitalist world order. In doing so we offer a dynamic definition of racial doctrine that departs significantly from standard conceptualizations of racism.

Chapter 2 maps the historical emergence of racial doctrine as a social force. We begin by situating racial doctrine embryonically within the counterrevolutionary discourses of the French revolutionary period, illustrating how the idea of “whiteness” was born on already shaky ground, taking shape through the conservative anti-emancipatory movements in Britain and the United States. The so-called “white race” was from the start dogged by a disunity that could not be remedied by processes of racial incorporation. Through historico-comparative UK–US analysis, we map how racial doctrine targeted a “coalition of the condemned” that linked minorities, the urban poor, and radical insurgency. We present case studies of radical agitation and opposition movements, such as the Irish in Britain and the United States (especially the San Patricios), in order to demonstrate how racialization dovetailed with the treatment of the Mexican in the United States and the “residium” in Britain. The irrationalization of equality took its full fruition in the designation of the formerly unequal as nonhumans, thought of as *facta*, objects, and dead-matter—what Marx conceptualized as the result of capitalist exploitation: the “capital monster.” The etiology of social relations was irrationalized, placed within the mystical realm of racialized emotion. This limit point of capitalist equality was expressed most forcefully in the imperialist expansion and rivalries (between putatively white nations) of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and domestically within the science of eugenics that incorporated the psychologization of race and its fruition in Manifest Destiny and the White Man’s Burden. We draw out how configurations of racialization, such as that of “the Mexican Mind,” were developed in the elite’s theory of racial revenge, specifically the idea of “oppression psychosis”—a nonstructural explanation that implicated the Jews, the Irish, blacks, and the urban poor as biopsychocultural problems of racial order, degenerates to be policed in the maintenance of white unity.

In Chapter 3 we draw out how the idea of biopsychocultural degeneracy came to influence Anglo-American responses to “race relations,” particularly in the acceptance of specific tenets of the “Oppression Psychosis” and “Authoritarian Personality” theses, which set the parameters for how race was to be understood post–World War II. The elites’ preoccupation with racial order, especially under the new rubric of the Cold War (the crumbling of the British Empire and the ascendance of the American superpower), came to fashion “race relations” policy. In Britain the focus was on the policing of migration from the New Commonwealth, and in the United States, it was on the civil rights movement, but in both domestic spheres, “whites” were also problematized as potential protagonists of racial disorder. Race relations policies became tools for the integration of biopsychocultural harmony between “whites” and “nonwhites,” in which the protagonists were to be subject to an array of policing mechanisms. This chapter demonstrates how the policing of the working class entailed the establishment of the “white victim” that depoliticized while recognizing—a ploy developed by Richard Nixon (paralleling the institutionalization of affirmative action)—but crystallizing in the respective New Right projects of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. We revisit the Tottenham and Brixton Riots of 1985 and the role of the local authorities in the establishment of multicultural policies since the mid-1980s in order to situate the racialized place of Muslims and new migrations in the new millennium. Contrary to most schools of thought, we argue that the destruction of the working class as a political force paralleled a redefinition of equality that displaced economics in favor of an “equality of mind.” It was under Reagan and Thatcher that multicultural policy was established as part of the mental economy that sought to massage the public sensibility, bringing it into line with the New Right dictum that “There Is No Alternative” to the market. In this respect, multicultural capitalism represented victory of the Right in the political battle and of the Left in the culture war.

In Chapter 4 we explore how the end of the Cold War and the political defeat of the Left had a disarming effect on the Right. Third Way antiracism emerged with the Clinton and Blair administrations as a means of filling the meaning gap at History’s End in order to give political purpose and to remedy what was perceived to be the crumbling of racial order. In particular, we focus on the respective works of Amitai Etzioni and Anthony Giddens, demonstrating how a conservative logic rebrands hopelessness as an essential form of

human existence. The need to “manage” ethnic anxiety comes through in the evolution of immigration and citizenship legislation. The response to the Los Angeles riots following the assault on Rodney King (Clinton’s One America Race Initiative) and the Macpherson report into the police handling of London teenager Stephen Lawrence are analyzed in order to demonstrate how “equality” was therapized, bringing the mental economy under the cosmopolitan agenda of the Third Way. The core point of this approach was to break rigid allegiance to “the conservatism of Left or Right” and to any fundamentalist form of belief system that may hide within a multiculturalist framework. Key is the emergence and management of “hate crime” as a community policing strategy, which defines racism as determined by dangerous emotion. This took on renewed significance with 9/11 and the pairing of terror threat with immigration threat under George W. Bush and Tony Blair, and we illustrate how this dynamic unfolds in relation to the killing of Brazilian migrant Jean Charles de Menezes by police on the London Underground in 2005, Arizona governor Jan Brewer’s Safe Neighborhood Act in 2010, and the response of the Obama administration. We discuss how the mental economy continues to utilize key elements of the “Oppression Psychosis” and “Authoritarian Personality” theses, only now devoid of any possibility of solution or economic justice. Rather, current race relations policy seeks to avoid postracial disorder by managing the impact of “dangerous ethnic emotions.” In a world absent of alternatives, both “problem” and “solution” are defined according to the anti-emancipation logic of the End of History.

In Chapter 5 we return to theory in order to draw out why radical critique is currently unable to provide an emancipatory answer. On what basis can you, the reader, claim to be antiracist? Put another way, on what basis can it be argued that being antiracist is a good or right “thing” to be? In this chapter, we illustrate through an examination of Left critique and political strategy—how current academic treatments of racism and antiracism neglect these questions. Yet, we contend that this absence undermines projects that seek emancipation as their objective. More specifically, significant theoretical positions of the cultural turn, and more recently of “New Times,” that profess antiracism implicitly undermine and deny the possibility of human emancipation. A radicalese pervades the “antiracist” academy of the culturalites that obscures the pessimism of immanent critique celebrated as liberatory by Foucauldian

descendants of Althusser. By comparing theorists of the cultural turn such as Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, and David Theo Goldberg with Marxist sociologist of racism Robert Miles, this chapter uncovers how anti-enlightenment critiques underscore the collapse of a “Big P” Politics based on the perfectibility of the human subject. The silencing of a historical premise reflects the demise of emancipatory vision in current race theory—the absent prerequisite of social emancipation. Topics covered include Hegelianism and the demise, in theory and practice, of the working-class subject of emancipation; the influence of French thought in the articulation of new social movements analysis, particularly Foucault’s 1970s appropriation of the Black Panthers’ emancipatory prison struggle divested of its emancipatory force for the French context; and the unwitting theoretical rearticulation of this silencing 20 years later in the United States by theorists such as David Goldberg. We reappraise the so-called race versus class debate in the late 1970s and 1980s through a discussion of Stuart Hall’s work and the Paul Gilroy/Bob Miles critical interventions in this contentious period of the cultural turn.

In Chapter 6 we summon our empirical and interpretative research to advance an alternative critical understanding of contemporary racisms and racialized inequalities in Britain and the United States. We provide a counterpoint, from a Left perspective to the argument that we live under neoliberal capitalism. Instead, we argue that the contemporary social and political context is antiliberal and that this cannot be understood within a “neoliberal globalization” framework. Indeed, doing so reproduces the antihuman expression of capitalism turned in on itself. An understanding of the macro-political economy of cosmopolitan capitalism is central to this project, but unless it is linked to the ethical and moral dimensions of people’s everyday material and cultural experiences, it will offer little analytical value in our pursuit of a better future. We attempt to go beyond both anti-utopian and parochial debates on multiculturalism and inclusion with a proposal (which is our book) to redirect our political and intellectual analysis within a new language—a Politics of Possibility—that recognizes the exceptional nature of the Hopeful Subject.