Comparative Racialization: An Introduction

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IN THE FALL OF 2004, MEMBERS OF THE MLA COMMITTEE ON THE LITeratures of People of Color in the United States and Canada felt that it was time to assess the state of the study of race in literary studies as we approached the twenty-year anniversary of the publication of the seminal collection *"Race," Writing, and Difference* (1986), edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., which contained contributions from some of the most important scholars of race.[1] It may appear that studying race is now largely taken for granted in English departments and that we no longer need to place quotation marks around *race* to emphasize its constructedness. Many scholars, though, feel a deep sense of anxiety that the situation with regard to race may have been normativized and comfortably compartmentalized but not improved. Intellectual tokenism abounds, as do equivalences between phenotypes and fields of study, with notable exceptions in larger metropolitan universities.[2] For those of us outside English departments, the situation has barely improved. Each discipline has its unique historical baggage, and some are more able to discard their baggage than others, while some have been placed under greater pressure to change. But the truth of the matter is that some are just plain unwilling to acknowledge the significance of race even as they strive to update their disciplines and expand into new areas. In the extensive field of literary studies, it is premature to state that race has arrived, and it is not at all certain that the relation between race and critical theory, so central to the Gates volume, is settled. To a large extent, critical theory continues to see race as exterior to it, transcendent of the theorizations and lived experiences of race. Even though South Asia–based postcolonial theory has geared us to the study of colonialism and its consequent postcolonial complexities, it has also long held a strongly ambivalent relation to race studies.

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https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2008.123.5.1347 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Those of us working outside English departments have had to fight different kinds of conceptual and practical blind spots. Broadly speaking, cultural and political discourses undergirded by European republican ideology, especially in France, have posited the political and analytic lens of race as differentialist, divisive, and even illiberal, when in fact discrimination is rampant under the unacknowledged but highly operative sign of race.[3] For countries without the underpinning of republicanism, the silence on the question of race is even more deafening. Race is such an *American* issue! French-derived critical theory has continued, in the United States academy, to relegate race to the margins, and theories of race developed in ethnic studies and other disciplines continue not to be recognized as theory. It is not uncommon to hear the charge, for instance, that ethnic studies is not "rigorous enough." Literary scholars who work on race must therefore bear the burden of mediating and negotiating between critical theory and race, with all the work falling on their shoulders in an unequal distribution of labor.

The case of Asian studies may be distinct—"Asia" has never been the domain of theory—but that does not prevent scholars in the United States and Asia from distancing themselves from what they consider to be *American* approaches to race. The production of Asia as an object "area" for the extraction of strategically important information by cold war ideology dovetailed with recalcitrant orientalist scholarship in cofiguring Asian studies as the study of an area out there and far away. For some, studying Asia may be an escape from the uncomfortable racial realities of the United States, so that any mention of critical race issues elicits the knee-jerk charge of being "too political."[4] These Asianists seem intent on protecting the purity of Asian studies from the invasion of race-informed perspectives. Liberal Third Worldism disavows race and often hides its racial avoidance behind a political correctness that does not allow the object of fetish to be internally fractured.

Beyond the academy, the lived realities of racialized populations across the world have not necessarily improved. Racialized minority groups in the United States suffer atrociously high rates of infant mortality, incarceration, and violent death, and the American prison-industrial complex is predominantly a racial institution. The global migration of excolonized peoples, political refugees, and economic migrants has brought to the fore the inevitable confrontation between the metropole and the repressed of colonialism and capitalism, all structured by race. The "dark" colonial remainders refuse to go away even after presumed worldwide decolonization and instead have come "home" to the metropole, and the capitalist remainders of the international division of labor continue to haunt the happy narrative of globalization. Historical racisms against various racialized and ethnicized populations in countries scarcely touched by Western colonialism often mimic metropolitan models, as this mimeticism itself has also long existed as a product of colonial or semicolonial modernity. Racial policies of Japanese colonialism in Asia from the late nineteenth century through World War II, for instance, were not unlike those of Western colonialism, and many Chinese eugenicists and reformers from the early twentieth century suffered from permutations of what Vicente Rafael calls "white love."[5] Colonialism in old and new forms continues to structure many lives, and colonies themselves continue to exist. Living in settler colonies, furthermore, we often forget that we ourselves perpetuate colonialism's status quo and that postcoloniality is not possible for many indigenous populations.

On the one hand, the worldliness of literature in Edward Said's sense (*World*) has compelled many literary scholars of race to take material conditions of our world seriously, and many of them have turned to intellectual

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history, cultural studies, and other methods of inquiry in the materialist vein with an emphasis on the political economy of race. On the other hand, the sustained emergence of race critique in the social sciences and in humanistic disciplines such as philosophy and law has also changed the landscape of race studies over the last twenty years. For instance, the wide-ranging sociological text by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, the first edition of which was published in 1986, the same year as the Gates volume, offered a rich vocabulary of analytic terms for scholars in the humanities and the social sciences. Literary studies of race will ignore developments of race critique in other fields only at the risk of eroding the worldliness of literature. Hence, the explicitly cross-disciplinary effort of this special issue of *PMLA* reflects our own intellectual formation in the early twenty-first century.

Another distinction of the present effort is its scope. The more expansive historical and geographic perspective in this issue, without aiming to be comprehensive, is organized in terms of what I call the "colonial turn," beginning with the dawn of Western colonialism in the late fifteenth century, or the "long sixteenth century" (Wallerstein, "Construction" and "Rise"), a term that provided historical coherence to the globalization of racial thinking and racism and made it possible to think of the world as a totality, albeit one containing fractures, uneven terrains, and incommensurabilities. But to think the world in its totality is more to insist on the ineluctable consequences of Western colonialism and capitalism the world over than to call for homogenizing or teleologizing world history or predetermining the narratives of lived experiences of race. We must recognize the conjuncture of time and place in each instance of racialization without losing sight of the totality produced by the colonial turn that heralded race as a structuring principle. The analytics of this turn must therefore be paired with a chronotopic analysis, and this pairing has important implications for the project of comparative racialization. Because instances of racialization are situated in specific times and places, comparison between these instances may seem random or unrelated, but the colonial turn reveals potential and concrete relations among them. To think comparatively therefore is to think about the world where the colonial turn has left indelible marks—that is, to think the worldliness of race.

The Matter of Comparison

"The black man is *comparaison*."[6] When Frantz Fanon wrote this enigmatic statement in chapter seven of *Peau noire, masques blancs* (*Black Skin, White Masks*), he meant two types of comparison, Adlerian and Antillean. In Alfred Adler's psychology of behavioral disorder, the ego is supposed to want to be always greater than the other to compensate for the injustice it has suffered and the inferiority it has been made to feel. Adlerian comparison juxtaposes the ego and the other, a two-term relation. The black man, who suffers an extreme case of this disorder, always compares himself to other blacks, inferiorizing them to the point of wishing for their "collapse," turning them into objects that are denied individuality and liberty, with the narcissism of "[m]e, me, me" hoisting up his painfully constructed superiority (186–87). The fact that *comparaison* can be both French and Creole and as a creolism is an adjective meaning "contemptuous" or "contemptible" further emphasizes the disdain the black man feels toward other blacks.[7] Comparison is an enactment of contempt. In Adlerian comparison, the governing fiction is therefore personal; it is about the comparison of one black man with other black men, the contempt of one black man for other black men.

The Antillean black man's comparison obsession adds a layer of complexity to the Adlerian model. For Fanon, the Antillean

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likely sees himself as white, so when he compares himself to other blacks, he does so "under the patronage of the white man." He judges other blacks with white eyes. Comparison therefore involves three terms here—the ego, the other, and the ideology of whiteness—and changes the governing fiction from the personal to the social. Fanon explains that the source of the black man's neurosis is not other black men but the colonial society that has educated the black man to see the world from white perspectives. This is why the black man's neurosis is not an individual but a social symptom, since the entire Antillean society is a "neurotic society, a *comparaison* society." This tripartite relation characterizes the Antillean comparison (185–91).

Fanon's astute movement from the individual to the social brings the social—what he earlier in the book calls "the lived experience of the black man" (89)—into psychoanalysis. Race is a psychological experience because it is a social one, thanks to the Antillean's ideological induction to whiteness through education or lived experience of space. As a concrete example, Fanon describes what it is like to walk down different streets in Fort-de-France, where one can determine which street is the "most *comparaison*," depending on the degree to which the black man feels "exposed"—that is, inferiorized by other blacks (186). The street and the classroom, like other spaces in the colony, embody the material social where the white-derived, contempt-filled comparative consciousness is produced and activated and then applied to other blacks.

Comparison, as Fanon conceptualized it, indexes the psychic and the social condition of being colonized. In the colony, the black man's contempt is directed toward other black men, while the subject himself lives the lie of his fictive whiteness, as do the other black men. But when the Antillean goes to the metropole, something dramatic happens. He becomes a negro. No longer in the majority and now having direct encounters with the actual white gaze—condescending, scornful, or phobic—the black man is forced to give up his narcissism. He becomes the object of contempt and comparison, not only by the white people but by himself, since he judges himself from white perspectives. For the negro, this metropolitan comparison and contempt are now directed at the self rather than at others.[8] The self becomes its own object.

I draw two points about comparison from this reading of Fanon. First, the differences between the dynamics of racialization in the colony and those in the metropole evince the particularity of each instance as place-based (the colony and the metropole) and time-specific (the before and after of arrival in the metropole), but in each instance, comparison is constitutive of the process of racialization. Second, the black man from the colony is the same man that goes to the metropole, which shows that the two processes of racialization are contiguous. This contiguity is not accidental but is a historical consequence of the colonial turn. Comparison between the colony and the metropole, this case shows, is about relationality, not relativism. If racialization is inherently comparative, a psychosocial and historical process, then we are working against the meaning of comparison as the arbitrary juxtaposition of two terms in difference and similarity, replacing it with comparison as the recognition and activation of relations that entail two or more terms. This second form of comparison brings submerged or displaced relationalities into view and reveals these relationalities as the starting point for a fuller understanding of racialization as a comparative process.

In the United States, the call to go beyond the black-white binary has motivated scholars to consider more nuanced relational models for comparative racialization. One useful example is Claire Jean Kim's notion of racial triangulation, which proposes that in the United States, there is a distinct triangulation process in the relation among blacks, Asian Americans, and

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2008.123.5.1347 Published online by Cambridge University Press

whites. In this triangulation, Asian Americans are granted "relative valorization" over blacks but suffer "civic ostracism" by the dominant white society. Kim argues that racialization does not take the form of a single hierarchy or of separate trajectories for different peoples of color but occurs in a "field of racial positions" and that these positions are also produced in relation to each other. The model minoritization of Asian Americans keeps black demands for racial justice at bay, and the civic ostracization of Asian Americans ensures that they will never gain equal footing with whites.[9]

Racial triangulation, in this usage, is an effective heuristic device to bring into view relationalities that conventional binary models obscure or displace. If one places three related terms under the pressure of triangulation, new insights emerge. The ethical question, however, pivots on the choice of what three terms to place under pressure, on the selective valorization of these three terms over others, and on the consequence of diminishing returns for interracial solidarities. The calls to go beyond the black-white binary in American race studies are more likely to result in new insights on Asian Americans and Latinas/os (Alcoff) than on other people of color, especially Native Americans. In other words, some terms may appear more readily triangulatable than others, while some may just disappear or fade into the background, as happens with the binary model. For instance, the call to transcend the binary has not brought the case of Native Americans into sustained triangulation; rather, a sanctioned ignorance persists regarding how issues of Native American rights, land, and cultural preservation must unsettle the framing and articulation of minority issues. Intellectual and political efforts to join the causes of indigenous peoples with those of minority groups have at best been anemic, just as the racial state intentionally stalls resolution of indigenous issues. The inadequacy of trying to fit ethnic studies rubrics onto Native American studies further undermines the desire and need for coalition.[10]

Scholars suggested that W. E. B. DuBois's famous "color-line" statement, first published in 1897 and then included in *The Souls of Black Folk* in 1903, marked the moment that redness disappeared from the American racial imagination (Conn), prompting Yael Ben-zvi to ask, not without a tint of sarcasm, "Where did red go?" Ben-zvi argues that Native Americans are viewed as the "vanishing ancestors" of white America through whom redness is made to disappear into whiteness, Native American culture and history becoming a property inherited by the white national community. The disappearance of redness coincided with the increased visibility of other colors in different historical periods—black, yellow, and brown; presently, Islamophobia is searching for a color and a race. Redness disappears as race; racialization of Native Americans now hinges on property relations and inheritance, not color. On the institutional front, the pressures on Native American studies programs to become more like ethnic studies effectively triangulates ethnic studies, Native American studies, and university administrations, not unlike the racial triangulation model above, where selective model minoritization pits one group against another. It is no wonder that ethnic studies is seen by some to pose "intellectual and organizational threats" to Native American studies (Champagne 34), making all the more significant the coalitional efforts among communities of scholars of color to establish the Association for Native American and Indigenous Studies, as Robert Warrior points out in this issue. The settler colonialism of Asians in Hawai'i vis-à-vis native Hawai'ians is another historical instance of triangulation among whites (*haoles*), Asians, and the indigenous people that requires sustained analysis, but studies on this subject remain limited (Fujikane; Trask).

Lest comparative racialization end up displacing yet another marginalized group and

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constructing yet another implicit hierarchy in a contradiction of insight and blindness, empowerment and disempowerment, it must at each instance be critical of its own assumptions and conclusions. Here we may turn to Fanon again, to his insistence on the specificity of a given situation of racialization and on the necessity to demarcate the boundary of this situation rigorously. Fanon has been credited as the first to theorize "racialization," in *Les damnés de la terre* (1961; *The Wretched of the Earth*), before the sociologist Michael Banton took the term up and gave it a detailed analysis in *The Idea of Race* (1977; Murji and Solomos 7). Fanon ties racialization to comparison in a sense different from what has been discussed above. What concerns Fanon is something he calls the *racialisation de la pensée* ("racialization of thought") on the part of the native intellectuals in Africa who replicate the European colonizer's tendency to think of Africa as a single unit. Even though they intend to use negritude and other positive constructions of Africanness to refute Eurocentric condemnation of Africa, their pattern of thinking mimics that of the colonizer; hence, their thought is racialized.

According to Fanon, this tendency to think of Africa as a single unit, whether cultural or political, and not as an aggregate of geopolitically specific nations and national cultures, led native intellectuals to a "dead end." The invention of "African" culture as a unified "cultural matrix" cannot overturn the presumed prestige of the colonizers' civilization and instead traps native intellectuals in a reactive, nontransformative act, which Fanon bitingly describes as mired in "terribly sterile clichés," engaging in a "banal quest for the exotic," or clinging to "a nucleus that is increasingly shriveled, increasingly inert, and increasingly hollow." This cultural matrix, an essentialized culturalism or culturalized essentialism recuperated through fossilized tradition, is cut off from the real events of the day and the need for concrete anticolonial political work that must occur on the national level. For culture to make a difference, it cannot be continental but must first and foremost be national. In opposition to essentialized tradition, national culture is a culture of becoming, created by the people who partake of it. Instead of perpetuating the racialization of thought, which is an inverted replication of colonial thinking, native intellectuals must take objective comparisons among the different nations and their histories in Africa seriously, so that they are not just comparing old "coins" or "sarcophagi" (145–80). Racialized thought produces useless comparisons that only reinforce the reification of culture and the alienation of native intellectuals from their people.

From racialization as a comparative psychosocial process to the need to decolonize thought by making useful comparisons and by thinking culture nationally and creatively, Fanon clearly links racialization to colonialism's project as simultaneously psychological, socioeconomic, and epistemological and proposes that decolonization has to be not only about politics but also about psychology and epistemology. Decolonization must therefore be a multidisciplinary, if not an interdisciplinary, project, since the beginning of racial thinking during the colonial turn marked the advent of disciplinarity in more than one sense of the word. The papers in this issue address the colonial turn in relation to the question of discipline, taking a long historical view that comments productively on the present in order to think creatively about the future, following in the footsteps of Fanon.

The Colonial Turn

The sociologist Michael Banton identifies racialization broadly, as a historical process "whereby a mode of categorization was developed, applied tentatively in European historical writing and then, more confidently, to the populations of the world" (18–19). The origin of racial discourse can be traced back to the

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dawn of European colonialism in the fifteenth century, the historical moment Wallerstein theorized as the beginning of the capitalist world system, a moment that heralded a process of globalization that has intensified over the centuries ("Rise"). Race becomes a concept around this time, and it emerges contemporaneously with Spanish and Portuguese colonialism in West Africa and the Americas (Goldberg, *Racist Culture* 21–24). The Spanish and Portuguese empires having been on the wane and overtaken by the French, German, and British empires by the eighteenth century, scholars tie the rise of the discourse of race more assuredly with Enlightenment thought. Emmanuel Eze's reader *Race and the Enlightenment* gathers excerpts of primary documents on race from the period, showing how Enlightenment thinkers justified racial hierarchy using arguments that could be characterized as belonging to such disciplines as natural history, climatology, evolutionary biology, ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of history, anthropology, and cultural geography. Katy Chiles, in responding to the tendency in late-eighteenth-century New England to rely on natural history to construct racial hierarchy, invokes two famous nonwhite Americans of the time—the Native American minister Samson Occom and the African American slave poet Phillis Wheatley. Simultaneous with the construction of racial hierarchy in terms of natural history, a process that Chiles astutely attributes to Enlightenment thought, racialized subjects reinscribed the meanings of redness and blackness and challenged the ontology of racial difference by cleverly deploying Christian monogenism and universalism. Before redness disappeared by the time of DuBois's color-line remark, it had been imposed and contested. Before blackness became beautiful, it was proof of God-given poetic genius.

David Theo Goldberg and Charles Mills, in previous publications and in this issue, offer trenchant critiques of European philosophy from classical liberalism and Enlightenment thought to contemporary American pragmatism and neoliberalism as having contributed to producing historically specific forms of racial thinking. For Goldberg, classical liberalism's utilitarian justification for colonialism, fictive construction of morality, narrow and self-serving definition of rationality, selective granting of rights, and production of the "savage" formed a well-rationalized and thorough set of arguments justifying racisms of that time and after (*Racist Culture* 14–40). For Mills, the political theory of social contract as elaborated by Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, and Kant, from the mid–seventeenth century to roughly the end of the eighteenth century, is fundamentally informed by racial thinking. It propagates a white-supremacist political subjectivity, epistemology, and understanding and practice of morality; it is supported by European colonialism, American genocide, and the exploitation of slave labor—that is, by violence and economic exploitation, as well as ideological domination. The theory races nonwhite individuals into subpersons and races nonwhite spaces into spaces of ignorance and immorality; in sum, it produces white-supremacist values. Moral and ethical philosophy has a racial underside, and the philosophers, suffering from a "moral cognitive dysfunction," exercise a sanctioned ignorance through evasion and self-deception (95). The social contract, according to Mills, is therefore the racial contract, by which Enlightenment humanism determines who qualifies as human (*Racial Contract*).

In his contribution to this issue, Mills extends his critique to the work of John Rawls and gives the liberal tradition another name: "racial liberalism." He notes that liberal philosophy's insistence on the ideal form of social contract has always ignored the material and social experience of the racialized. Whether left-wing or right-wing, racial liberalism does not deem it imperative to question its own racial unconscious. This unconscious passes as raceless and colorless, hence deracialization

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for Mills paradoxically requires "color[ing] in the blanks." Goldberg, in this issue, agrees with Mills that the supremacy of color-blind discourse in our neoliberal present is a form of displacement, in which racism has not disappeared but is supposed to have outlasted its usefulness as a category, to have outlived its meanings, and to have lost its social purchase. Omi and Winant historicized the rise of color-blind ideology as part of the long neoconservative reaction to the gains of the civil rights movements in the United States, a reaction aided by liberals, including Bill Clinton (*Racial Formation*). Goldberg exposed that the neoliberal theory of rational choice would presume that even racism is economically rational, the choice one makes as a self-interested social actor (*Racist Culture* 136–38). Rational-choice theory may be the contemporary mode of extreme utilitarianism, another offspring of classical liberalism and Enlightenment thought.[11]

Arif Dirlik's article in this issue takes a long historical view and argues that colonial modernity has flawlessly transitioned into what he calls "global modernity" with the unprecedented expansion of capitalism, the neoliberalization of the economy, and the retreat of socialism. He notes, like Goldberg and Mills, that the first instance of the globalization of racism was occasioned by colonialism and related events such as the spread of social Darwinism and the rise of nationalism, events that led not only to colonial racism but also to self-racialization. The current phase of globalization throws up new racisms—what Goldberg, Omi, Winant, Étienne Balibar, and many others have variously called "colorblind racism," "racism without races," "raceless racism," or "racisms without racism"[12]—just as self-racialization continues to produce new forms of culturalisms or essentialisms, though with what Dirlik calls "different attributes under different circumstances."

In this issue, Harry Garuba also addresses this dialectic of coherence, spawned by the colonial turn, and divergence, produced locally. In Fanonian terms, he describes how modernity produced race in Africa and how it essentialized both race and Africa. This self-racialized cultural essentialism as a postcolonial reaction to colonialism parallels another tendency to historicize—to think Africa not as a unit but as an aggregate of historically specific units. Garuba calls this "race as translated and mapped on locality," in which history and geography line up chronotopically. Dirlik and Garuba both remind us that we cannot lose sight of the power dynamics of colonialism and globalization and the coherence those dynamics lend to racial thinking all across the world, including the globalization of racism and the proclivity to self-racialize. They also alert us to the imperative of attending to different place-based practices and constructions of race and racism in specific coordinates of geopolitical location and historical time. Race as a form of global thinking is historically and geographically overdetermined; a dialectic of coherence and divergence therefore informs this overdetermination.

Bakhtin's notion of chronotope provides a way for us to emphasize how each conjunction of time and place specifically produces race and the experience of racialization without losing sight of neoliberal globalization's capacity to perpetuate and reactivate universalizing colonial content, that everywhere and in every instance an asymmetry of power structures racialization. If we say that the chronotope of racialization in the United States today shows the ascendancy of neoliberal color-blind racism, rendering the racial project of the civil rights movements obsolete, we must also factor in the new expansion of space into our consciousness and our social worlds—an expansion we call cyberspace. Supposedly unmoored from time and place, cyberrace on the Internet, as Lisa Nakamura writes in this issue, has not become a postracial utopia where everyone can pass as anyone but is in fact structured by its intimate configuration with

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the racial formation of the "outernet," the field of the social. Race in the outernet may be socially constructed but race in the Internet is "user-generated," and racialization has also become a "digital process." The mediatization of racialization, from different genres of visual media to cyberspace, necessitates a new analysis of form, just as a different mode and relation of production analysis was necessary for each new medium invented. Human labor is extracted and deployed in a different form, hence the need for a new kind of production analysis, but the real surprise here may be the persistence of the dominant political economy of race, an economy structured by colonialism and its consequences.

Garuba's Africa is either "highly racialized" (South Africa) or "less racialized" (Nigeria) depending on a country's specific colonial history, and so each racialization process takes a regional or national form. The recent violence in South Africa committed against immigrants from neighboring countries is a color-blind or colorless racism that is different from the white-dominant color-blind racism in the United States. To emphasize the embeddedness of each racialization process in the particularity of the given social, Goldberg uses the term "regionalization": the European situation is "racial Europeanization" rather than "European racialization," and the American situation is "racial Americanization" rather than "American racialization" ("Racial Europeanization"). As I see it, the terms "racial Americanization" and "American racialization" or, for that matter, "racial Nigerianization" and "Nigerian racialization" imply different, but not necessarily mutually exclusive, relationalities. While "racial Nigerianization" seems to mean that racialization is the product of European colonialism and takes regional forms as it travels and modulates, "Nigerian racialization" may be faulted for suggesting that racialization takes ontologically different forms in different regions. While the former is in line with the discussion so far, it is arguable that racism broadly defined, as by Albert Memmi, as heterophobia, has existed for millennia. One needs to have a language that, without falling back on civilizational discourse or cultural essentialism, can analyze the pre-fifteenth-century forms of racialization of the Indian untouchables, the Japanese *burakumin* (descendants of outcast groups, whom Fowler discusses in this issue), the Korean *nobi* ("slave"), and the Greek slave, to name just a few. The historical moment that I have been calling the colonial turn may lie in the distinction between "Nigerian racialization" and "racial Nigerianization."

Comparison between the so-called American differentialism and French republicanism evokes a theory of ceaseless creolization and a poetics of relation à la Édouard Glissant in Françoise Lionnet's essay in this issue. Seemingly from different routes and different histories, a new similarity between the supposedly different attitudes toward race in the United States and in France has emerged. Color blindness now passes for universalism in the United States, while it has been the dominant mode in France; in both cases, it is white-centric. While French universalism has for centuries disavowed race as an analytic and social category under the aegis of republican liberalism, the post-civil-rights American ideology of color blindness mimics the same disavowal under the sign of neoliberalism. French universalism does not know how to deal with ex-colonized peoples who have migrated to the metropole in large numbers since the end of colonialism, while American color blindness has decided not to deal with race after having done so or having at least tried to do so for a long time. Lionnet contends that as the difference between these two forms of color blindness disappears, new forms of subjectivity need to be imagined through a process of total creolization, in which there is no sublated remainder and in which a fundamental cross-cultural openness exists in unending relationality. Balibar elsewhere uses similar

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2008.123.5.1347 Published online by Cambridge University Press

perspectives to build a model of diasporic subjectivity for the new Europe, because universalism based on the nation and its model of national citizenship has failed to offer satisfactory solutions to the issue of new immigrants and new minority groups in Europe ("Toward a Diasporic Citizen").

From long historical views to more specific examples, we move from the late eighteenth century in Chiles's essay to late-nineteenth-century Porfirian Mexico in Joshua Lund's article. Specificity is not parochialism in the field of relations for Lund; rather, specificity is the rigor one employs to combat superficial generalizations and the risk one takes of being ghettoized or dismissed as area-focused and nonuniversal. Lund reads the specifically articulated *colonización* efforts the Mexican inheritors of European liberalism make to incorporate the indigenous people into the national project as an illustration of liberalism's limits. Even as the liberal state constructed the indigenous communities to be at the core of the idea of Mexican national identity, to make them "modern" meant to shift their communal mode of production to the capitalist mode of production and to turn the indigenous people into units of "productive" labor. The marriage between liberalism and capitalism absorbs redness into the Mexican nation through a particular discourse of race and modernization. Locke's industry thesis—the Indians were "idle" (not industrious, or rational) because they did not exploit the value of the land by cultivating it and should evacuate in favor of industrious folk—had already served as the normative explanation for the conquest of Native Americans (Mills 67), so this *more* liberal version in late-nineteenth-century Mexico shows the persistence of this reasoning. The globalization of capitalism is also the globalization of liberalism's industry thesis, fully racialized.

In the late-nineteenth-century Philippines, just before their independence from Spain and before they became an American territory, novelist José Rizal wrote two groundbreaking novels in the colonial language (Spanish) most Filipinos could not read and paid for his revolutionary ideas with his life. As Adam Lifshey tells us, this was the time when *filipinos* meant descendants of the Spanish born in the Philippines, *yankees* meant either Latin Americans or hemispheric *americanos*, and *indios* meant indigenous peoples. A Spanish colony outside Latin America, the Philippines as a national project were touched by the colonial turn, but through mixed and unexpected trajectories. Racial and national imagination runs through untidy paths, surprising mediations, and a complex interplay of heterogeneities in the waning days of a *colonización* project different from that of Porfirian Mexico.

Race has already had greater clarity in the United States than in the Philippines. By the time of the Harlem Renaissance, American capitalism entered a phase that Sonnet Retman renames "racial capitalism," which traded on race as a new commodity. When consumption is coded white and democratic and whiteness functions as property (as in Cherly Harris's famous argument), passing as white becomes an economic activity, and whiteness, for those who can pass, can be sold and acquired at determined values and prices. George Schuyler's protagonist in *Black No More* (1931) passes as white and can exploit the benefits of whiteness because he can clearly read its commodity value: being black, he literally experiences the value of whiteness when he passes as white. Philip Roth's black protagonist in *The Human Stain* (2000), as analyzed by Jennifer Glaser here, passes as a Jew to acquire class and prestige, but it turns out to be the wrong time: racial capitalism has changed into a new politics of multiculturalism in academia by the mid-1990s, the period in which Roth's novel is set, and passing as a Jewish academic comes with its own pitfalls. As Glaser argues, the whitening of Jewishness in late-twentieth-century America may have deprived Roth of his outsider sta-

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tus, which had previously afforded him a certain privilege and necessary alienation, and thus his protagonist's masquerade as a Jew exposes the author's own anxiety toward the new multicultural codification of Jewishness as white. There is by now a certain privilege in being nonwhite in academic politics, and the protagonist's "racial ventriloquism" ironically marks him as a man from the past. Racial hierarchy still exists, but the whitening of the Jew places the protagonist in an ambiguous position vis-à-vis whiteness and blackness. Not that being a person of color now has universal cachet, but the disappearance of Jewishness into whiteness has reshuffled the codes of value in the new racial capitalism.

Racial capitalism at the time of the Harlem Renaissance was inscribed yet in a different way for white American modernism, which was in exile in France, where the legacy of colonial racialization persisted. Queer desire enters, however, to interrupt the forgetting and the persistence of history and helps us reevaluate the racial content of Euro-American modernity from then to now. David Eng here synthesizes the axiological functions of colonialism, of the Enlightenment project, of the American empire, and of neoliberal humanism in the defensive production by the minoritized and the racialized of fixed identities and shows how queer articulations of desire may disrupt such historicism while being part and parcel of it. Sharon Holland's analysis in this issue of a short postmodern text that declares itself to be a novel, *Pamela: A Novel*, pivots on demands that the minority writer represent fixed identities interior to the ethnic collectivity. What if you are the queer subject who is exterior to the community, is viewed as "anathema" to its collective project, and refuses fixed, commodifiable identities? What happens to the writing of (auto)biography, the genre for ethnic representation fetishized by the market as well as by the writers themselves, when queerness necessarily exceeds such parameters? Likewise, Arlene R. Keizer in this issue describes Kara Walker's construction of a "slave plantation" in her art as a queering of "postmemory," the memory not experienced but inherited. Intermediated between art and literature by African American women artists and writers, the postmemory here is a kind of "projection, investment, and creation" of the memory of slavery different from pious recollection. Keizer's queer reading will probably not dispel the controversy surrounding Kara Walker's art, but the article certainly offers a different way of understanding the vicissitudes of postmemory.

When the time is post-9/11 and the place is the United States, we see the rise of Islamophobia, a not-so-new but newly radicalized racism. Religion has returned as a fundamental category of difference, taking on a content similar to race, Islamophobia looking to attach a vilifiable race to the immense racial, cultural, and national diversity of those who profess the Islamic faith. In this sense, Islamophobia as a pathology in search of a race may be the penultimate exemplification of how racialization is a social process that has nothing to do with biology and, in this case, even with phenotype. In addition to living race through class and gender, the new racialized Arab American minority, along with South Asian and other Muslims, lives race through religion. Arab Americans in the post-9/11 world have come from being considered white or almost white to being "colored," just at the moment when the whitening of Jews, the Irish, and Italians has largely achieved completion. Nouri Gana offers a short history of Arab and Muslim immigration to the United States in his introduction to the cluster of essays in this issue on Arab American literature, before turning his attention to how Islam is being written and rewritten in this literature. But it is not just Islam that is being rewritten, but an immense complex of issues that confront an invisible minority literary tradition that has existed for over one hundred years in North America. The strongest tension here may therefore be

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that between history and writing, between the violence of history and the desire for literature, in presumed or unexpected relations, to some complicit and to others contradictory or mutually exclusive. Religion, secularism, feminism, immigration, the question of whether to write in English or Arabic, riots, torture, war, violence, imposed and contested identities, hyphenation—these and other issues are uniquely calibrated in this literature, whose distinct chronotope marks 9/11 as the moment that divides the before and the after. The production of "terrorism" itself after 9/11 has become global, as the Chinese government rushed to designate the sovereignty-seeking Turkic Muslims of northwestern China "terrorists," not to mention European countries following the American lead.

The chronotopes of racialization—the interdependence of time and place in any instance of racialization—imply that places are inscribed with past, present, and possible future meanings. The legacies of Western colonialism and the ever-expanding reach of global capitalism condition the simultaneously globalizing and regionalizing processes of racialization. At the intersection between the globalization and the regionalization of racial thinking from the colonial turn to the present, we can perhaps best analyze the chronotope of a given instance of racialization as a moment in relation to history interarticulating with a location in relation to other locations. In this interarticulation, relations situated in time and place come to the fore and comparison as the excavating and activating of existing and hidden relations becomes a critical method.

Race and Discipline

As an outcome of the Enlightenment, the production of race as a discourse coincided with the production of new disciplines and with a finer taxonomy of disciplines. Kant was one of the most famous occasional anthropologists; in his various lectures and articles, especially those posthumously collected as *Physische Geographie* (*Physical Geography*), he presents racial categorization in terms of natural history and inscribes values to races from different geographic and climatic zones. While we associate Kant with the early phase of the discipline of anthropology, *discipline* in these works refers to the disciplining of indigenous people. In characterizing kinds of black people, for instance, he describes how "[t]he Moors, like all inhabitants of the hot zones have a thick skin; when one disciplines them, one cannot hit with sticks but rather whip with split canes, so that the blood finds a way out and does not suppurate under the skin" (61). The description of a physical characteristic (thick skin) transitions immediately to a description of how to discipline the bearer of this skin, as if one implies the other naturally or inevitably, indicating a consensus between author and reader, a community to which both belong. According to the author's pseudoscience, drawing blood is more considerate or even more humane for this skin type, so one must whip with sharp split canes. In one breath, Kant weds a physical characteristic to colonial labor exploitation and the right way of doing it—how to whip morally, so to speak. When Kant does justify this "discipline," he notes that the inhabitants of the hottest zones of the world are so "exceptionally lethargic" that "rule and force" are needed to mitigate their laziness (64). The equivalences Enlightenment philosophy establishes between industriousness, rationality, and virtue clearly operate here.

Kant the anthropologist was simultaneous with Kant the philosopher, but his anthropology has been judged to be "unsystematic and incoherent" and, rightly, "prejudicial to the extreme." This prejudice throws doubt on his otherwise consistent championing of ethical universalism and cosmopolitan principles. When put under the pressure of his anthropological thinking, Kant's philosophical universalism becomes an "intensely discrimi-

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2008.123.5.1347 Published online by Cambridge University Press

natory code masquerading as the universal good" (Harvey 210–11; see also Eze, "Color"; Bernasconi). Even scholars who try to analyze Kant's racism in more complex ways admit the "undeniable ugliness of this aspect of his thought" (Hedrick 268). But this is not for want of universalism in Kant's anthropological work—Kant founded his universalism on a belief in monogenism and the indivisibility of the human species, according to which differences arise not among species but in the same (human) species; hence, differences are determined by geography and climate. In his entry in this issue, Balibar calls this "indivisibility of humanity" the "anthropological paradigm."

After the devastation of World War II, the anthropological paradigm, which professes what Balibar designates the "humanist imperative," came under attack from many directions, since it failed to generate a truly universal human community. Like Mills, who critiques the social contract as an ideal form of philosophy that is divorced from the lived realities of racialized peoples, Balibar describes anthropological humanism as a transcendental theory unconcerned with institutional and historical realities. Furthermore, the anthropological paradigm has been complicit with republican universalism in turning a blind eye to the social reality of race and focusing instead on transforming race into culture. Political philosophy, sociology, and other disciplines supplanted anthropology because they could better deal with the question of race in all its social and political realities, leaving the anthropological paradigm in a state of "decomposition." Balibar therefore proposes that rather than challenge the humanist notion of monogenism, we need to focus on how race becomes the means by which "internal exclusion" is practiced on the other in a given nation. How to expose the dark underside of Enlightenment thinking and its offspring while making them fulfill their promise of universal humanism continues to be a challenge today, a challenge that Fanon also considered worthy. A belief in a universal humanism where "genuine communication" is possible and universal freedom is achievable supported Fanon's analysis of the psychopathologies of colonialism (*Black Skin* [trans. Philcox] 206). His choice of disciplines in this endeavor included psychoanalysis, philosophy, and literature.

The disciplining of race was also at the foundation of philosophy and the two other disciplines that Fanon chose to incorporate into his decolonial efforts. Ranjana Khana has critiqued the racialized construction of the "dark continent," Celia Brickman the primitivizing of the natives, and Jacques Derrida the "apoliticism" and Eurocentrism of psychoanalysis. Others, like Edward Said, have analyzed literature's complicity with racial thinking, colonialism, and orientalism (*Orientalism*, *Culture*). In addition, photography, often in conjunction with anthropology, was a prominent colonial technology used to produce images of the natives to better manage them (Poole; Compomanes, in this issue), not unlike philosophy, history, law, education, and most other disciplines as we know them. Colonial racism and its modern-day variants were by all means a multidisciplinary effort.

Knowing the embeddedness of these disciplines in colonial ideology, the decolonial, postcolonial, or minority intellectual has two choices. One is to express endless anxiety over the racialization of thought through an infinite critique of the derivative nature of disciplines and their theories. For a time, several postcolonial scholars made this choice, and some of the most significant conceptual breakthroughs in postcolonial theory were arguably in this vein. Anthropology as the colonial discipline par excellence has for the past decades led a soul-searching critique of itself, with mixed results (Said, "Representing the Colonized"). Fanon would have called these "reactional" rather than "actional" measures (*Black Skin* [trans. Markmann] 222). The other choice is Fanon's: he appropriates and synthesizes disciplines,

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especially psychoanalysis, with great confidence and poise, as DuBois did with sociology. When scholars are so busy learning the disciplines that they have no time left to unlearn them, the confident use, revision, and extension of psychoanalysis by Fanon and sociology by DuBois offer inspiring lessons on how to race these disciplines and make them take race seriously. Max Weber considered DuBois the "most important sociological scholar in the Southern states in America," having noticed the centrality of race in American reality during his visit there in 1904, when he met with DuBois (Nelson and Gittleman 312). And we might say the same about Fanon in regard to psychoanalysis: the growing importance of his works half a century after their publication testifies to this.[13]

With Fanon and DuBois as inspiration, this special issue on comparative racialization is also an attempt to race the disciplines by involving as many conversations from different disciplinary locations as possible and by insisting that these conversations be not an option but a necessity. "Disciplinary boundaries allow counterevidence to belong to someone else's story," Susan Buck-Morss wrote (822); to keep the disciplines honest, we must cross their boundaries. The two special forums gathered here, one on *Racial Formation in the United States* and the other on *"Race," Writing, and Difference*, reflect on the legacy of two classic texts in the fields of sociology and literature. Three humanists consider Omi and Winant's text, originally published in 1986 and updated in 1994, and three others think through the Gates volume, published originally as two issues of *Critical Inquiry* in 1985 and 1986 and in book form in 1986. Omi, Winant, and Gates then respond to the critics' reflections. Roughly twenty years after the two texts were published, race studies appears to be ubiquitous in a variety of disciplines, but the fact that these two texts remain so relevant suggests that we have not gone far enough in racing our disciplines. Whether humanists agree with all their views or not, Omi and Winant brought humanists to sociology and occasion the humanists' anxiety (and guilt) over literature's limits regarding political action (Kim; Nguyen, in this issue), and they help foreground the capacity of the humanities to better analyze the contingencies of racial formation on psychic, affective, and aesthetic levels (Koshy, in this issue). Similarly, the reflections gathered here on *"Race," Writing, and Difference* allow us to see both the lasting importance of not jettisoning theory in African American humanistic studies (Griffin; Smith) and how a particular strand of theory, Yale deconstruction, may have obstructed the political work that African American literature can do (Lott).

The point here is not so much that theory is in and of itself problematic when it comes to analyzing race, racialized subjects, and racialization but that what matters is what one does with theory and what kind of theory is being elaborated. The works of Fanon and DuBois serve as eloquent examples of how disciplines can be raced to do the work of race studies and how race itself constitutes a kind of epistemology: it is a way of living in the world and a way of looking at the world. The racialized may have the epistemological privilege of the oppressed—they see racially based oppression more clearly than others—but the moment the entire society notices race and shares in this epistemology is when race itself has become theory. When Hegel was sensitized to the slave revolts in Saint-Domingue and incorporated this awareness into his dialectic of lordship and bondage, he was, for a flashing moment in 1805–06, the truly universal humanist that he could have been (Buck-Morss). This is the Hegel of *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807) that Fanon admires; and while Hegel did not explicitly refer to the slave revolts, Fanon does so at the end of *Black Skin, White Masks* (201). Fanon notices the moment when Hegel raced philosophy and seizes it to emphasize that the "absolute reciprocity" at the base of the Hege-

https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2008.123.5.1347 Published online by Cambridge University Press

lian dialectic is the foundation and hope for a truly universal humanism (191). To use race as theory or to race disciplines is to imagine a way of looking at the world from genuinely reciprocal perspectives, which is, ultimately, an ethical practice of comparison.

Notes

1. The active members of the committee during the 2004–05 year were Roberta Hill, Elaine Chang, Juana María Rodríguez, Silvio Torres-Saillant, Lawrence Jackson, Malea Powell, Agnes Lugo-Ortiz, Susana Chávez-Silverman, and myself. I am grateful for the committee's input on and support of this project throughout the process, including that provided by the new members who joined the committee in the two subsequent years, and I salute MLA staff directors David Goldberg and Doug Steward for their administrative and intellectual facilitation and insight. However, it goes without saying that I have the biggest claim on all shortcomings.

2. Arguably, African American studies has made more strides in combating tokenism and colorism than have studies of other ethnic groups.

3. The recent conservative backlash against immigrants in Switzerland unselfconsciously and explicitly turns on race as the ground of exclusion to articulate citizenship as a competitive process of authentification through differential access to authenticity.

4. I have had to deal with instances like this. I have been told by other Asianists, implicitly or point-blank, that I am a better scholar as an Asianist and that when I am an Asian Americanist I am too political. Being an Asianist is a much safer place to be, so to speak. The mark of race and the quick reaction to it are not unlike the mark of gender and the quick reaction to it, but in these instances, race is not examined or analyzed. One crucial question for me as a comparatist in recent years has therefore been how to negotiate the relation between area studies and ethnic studies, a terrain strewn with landmines but also with potentialities of insight for a different politics of knowledge.

5. Arguments have been made that Japanese imperialism was an impulse learned under the pressure of Western imperialism and that this early-twentieth-century empire can be considered "postcolonial." One of the leading mid-twentieth-century Japanese intellectuals, Takeuchi Yoshimi, was especially pained by the lack of self-reflexivity on the part of Japanese culture in what he saw as its slavish mimicry of Europe. He offered a postcolonial critique without forgiving Japanese imperialism or explaining it away.

6. The original French sentence is "Les nègres sont comparaison" (190). I have followed Richard Philcox's more recent translation, using "black man" rather than "negro" (as in the 1967 Markmann translation) for "nègre," because the French term is more or less neutral, similar in usage to "le noir" or "l'homme noir," used by Fanon elsewhere in the same book. Philcox notes in the postface to his translation of another Fanon text, *The Wretched of the Earth*, that he renders "nègre" as "black man" when the implication is neutral or positive, but when the derogatory meaning is implied, he translates the same term as "nigger." "Nègre" already implied both "a sting and an embrace" during Fanon's time (248). Direct quotations of Fanon are from the Philcox translations unless otherwise noted.

7. Philcox notes that while *comparaison* as used by Fanon here is Creole, the term retains the French sense of "comparison," as can be seen in such phrases as "la comparaison adlérienne" ("the Adlerian comparison") and "la comparaison antillaise" ("the Antillean comparison"). I maintain that both French and Creole meanings operate here.

8. What I call the "metropolitan comparison" in Fanon evokes DuBois's notion of double consciousness. Ross Posnock implies a relation of intellectual genealogy between Fanon and DuBois through Aimé Césaire, who was inspired by DuBois and who taught Fanon.

9. See Colleen Lye's contribution to this issue for a critique of this model as well as what she astutely calls the "analogical politics" of Afro-Asianism.

10. Champagne makes an impassioned case against the imposition of ethnic studies rubrics on Native studies since the issues, perspectives, and methods of each field diverge from those of the other. According to Champagne, this imposition will "facilitate the disappearance of Native studies viewpoints and contributions" (34).

11. Palumbo-Liu clarifies this connection when he maintains that rational-choice theory and American pragmatist philosophy share a logic of self-interest and exclusivity.

12. See, for instance, Balibar and Wallerstein.

13. The renewed interest in Fanon's intellectual project is witnessed by Philcox's new English translations of *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008); by a new biography of Fanon by Alice Cherki, recently translated into English (2006); and by the fact that all Fanon's works have been republished in France. I thank Françoise Lionnet for alerting me to these developments and for helping interpret some crucial passages in Fanon's texts.

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