Teaching "Race" with a Gendered Edge

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Edited by Brigitte Hipfl and Kristín Loftsdóttir

Teaching “Race” with a Gendered Edge

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Edited by Brigitte Hipfl and Kristín Loftsdóttir

Teaching "Race" with a Gendered Edge

Teaching with Gender. European Women's Studies in International and Interdisciplinary Classrooms

A book series by ATGENDER

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Teaching "Race" with a Gendered Edge—Introduction

Kristín Loftsdóttir and Brigitte Hipfl

This collection of essays responds to the need to approach questions of race and racism from a feminist perspective, focussing on the intersections of race, class and gender. Only a thorough exploration of these intersections can open up a deeper understanding of racism against particular groups that have emerged in the European historical context and point to ways of intervening in the racial practices of the present. Within various public discourses and debates in wider society, racism is often spoken about as having nothing to do with Europe or those classified as "white".[1] When speaking about racism, we are well advised to remember what feminist theory has taught us—we should critically examine and reflect on our own position when we speak. Racism is a part of European history and therefore a part of the present. Approaching racism this way also draws attention to the ongoing importance of racial categorisations for structural relationships between different parts of the world.

The aim of the book is to provide an accessible companion to those teaching gender and/or racism. It seeks to make students and teachers critically acknowledge racism as an important component in understanding gender, in addition to elaborating how it also works the other way around; we cannot speak of racism without taking gender into account. As teachers and students we learn and teach within different environments and contexts. Hence, we are hoping that the book can be useful in a variety of situations both within Europe and beyond. The book can be seen as a resource for those teaching gender and/or racism to groups of students from different countries with different ethnic or national backgrounds, so that they can share their experiences and elaborate on the examples discussed in this book.

Within a national context the book helps to stimulate students to critically investigate a nation's own specific history regarding race and racism. Each chapter ends with a section on implications for teaching, where assignments and questions elaborate on the issues raised in the chapter and provide ideas as to how the book can be used as a teaching resource. The chapters in the book are, furthermore, written in clear and accessible language in the hope of making it

[1] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (London, New York: Verso, 1993).

useful not only for students, but also for others interested in these issues, such as policy makers and journalists. As such the book is also a source of information to those who want to learn more about the intersection of race and gender.

Racism and gender—historical background

The anthropologist Ashley Montague stated several decades ago that the belief in separate races was one of man's most dangerous myths.[2] In the present, this myth still seems to be a part of a "common sense" for many—the idea that human beings are naturally divided into different races, even though simultaneously many accept that it is wrong to discriminate because of race.[3] As we stress here—by referring to the historical appearance of racist classifications as a part of colonialism and imperialism—there is nothing "natural" or self-evident in classifying people into racial categories. Human beings do not come in limited colours as the classification into racial types assumes.

The classification of individuals into different races has been and is being used to legitimise certain power relations at a particular time within a specific historical context. As such, the division of people into different races has no biological validity, only intense social consequences. Also, a close look at the history of racism and its current expressions reveals what we will discuss later in connection with intersectionality, namely that ideas of "race" cannot easily be separated from gender or from class, nationalism, and sexuality.

Thus problematising and deconstructing race as a natural category of difference is particularly important in teaching about racism. From our experiences in the classroom, it can be surprising, liberating and challenging for many students to unlearn what they thought they knew about diversity and race. We are well aware that teaching and deconstructing race does not change automatically the structural inequalities that are constitutive in the reproduction of racist society today. But the approach enables students to critically reflect on race, gender and inequalities as entangled in particular histories.

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[2] See discussion in Kamala Visweswaran, "Race and the Culture of Anthropology," *American Anthropologist* 100 (1998): 70–83, and in Eugenia Shanklin, "Profession of the Color Blind: Sociocultural Anthropology and Racism in the 21st Century," *American Anthropologist* 100 (1998): 670.

[3] Faye Harrison, "Unraveling 'Race' for the Twenty-First Century," in *Exotic No More: Anthropology on the Front Lines,* ed. Jeremy MacClancy, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 145–146.

Let us start with the English term "race", which is a relatively recent term only appearing for the first time in the sixteenth century. In many other European languages, "race" appeared at a similar time, even though the term was not used systematically until much later. Most scholars use the term racism for particular views that dominated during the last two centuries, even though classifications based on skin colour certainly existed in Europe prior to the nineteenth century. These earlier forms are often referred to as proto-racism.[4] The Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus, known for creating a comprehensive system for classifying all plants and animals, was one of the first to classify humans into different racial types in 1735, whereby he sought to connect different temperaments with outward appearance.[5]

The idea of human diversity as being naturally divided up into different races was highly gendered and sexualised. Within Europe there is a long tradition of posing nature and culture as a binary opposition (often referring to Cartesian dualism, which involves a dualistic distinction of mind and matter, subject and object), devaluing what was categorised as nature, seeing it as something that should be mastered by the use of reason and technology. According to philosopher Francis Bacon (1561–1626), nature (which he referred to as "she") should be exploited and manipulated to serve "man's" needs. Bacon's use of "she" and "man" is no coincidence, but indicates his views of women's inferior status and their association with Nature. During this time, both women and those defined as non-white were in general seen as closer to Nature, and consequently as emotional and irrational. As discussed by Londa Schiebinger in her research on the early history of anatomy in the eighteenth century, both women and individuals with darker skin colour were seen as exotic by European anatomists and scientists who were predominantly "white" males. The intersection between gender and race in these ideas becomes obvious when we look at the significance that was given to the difference between "white" European men and all others, both men and women.[6] By associating African males with Nature, they were both feminised as existing

[4] Leith Mullings, "Interrogating Racism: Toward an Antiracist Anthropology," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (2005): 671.
[5] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).
[6] Londa Schiebinger, "The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23, 4 (1990): 390–391.

in the same realm as European women, and also hyper-sexualised, seen as unable to control their sexual desire. In the mid-nineteenth century, racism became institutionalised and given a scientific legitimacy, backed up by ideas of human evolution, as well as by a firm belief in scientific progress as the key to future human well-being. A whole range of different classifications of human races and sub-races emerged during this time. In these classifications physical characteristics and more subjective traits were seen as essential in creating boundaries between them. Often these were cultural or social traits. The number of racial groups and subgroups, and how exactly to define what constituted a particular race, was generally conceptualised as a problem that would be solved with the further advance of science.

Sarah Baartman, a Khoikhoi woman from Africa, who was brought to England in 1810 and was exhibited as "Hottentot Venus" because of her protruding buttocks (a feature of Khoikhoi women), is a clear example of the nineteenth-century practice of putting on display what was considered to be different and deviant from the norm. The "black" female body had become a signifier of primitiveness and excessive sexuality, and Sarah Baartman's difference was represented as a pathological form of otherness.[7] After her death, Sarah Baartman was examined by researchers of the Natural History Museum in Paris and her genitalia and brains were preserved in formalin.[8]

The stronger hold of racism seems to be embedded within the ideas of nationalism that also emerged between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. These ideas were often based on a harsh distinction between "us" and "other" and combined with a strong belief in the purity of collective nationalism. In nineteenth-century national projects, women's bodies were often seen as symbolising the different European nations, "white" women being national symbols,[9] even though they were excluded from direct power and full citizenship.[10]

In the early twentieth century, a whole generation of people came of age in Europe who did not generally question the basic racist hypothesis that

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[7] Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).
[8] Rosemarie Buikema, "The Arena of Imaginings: Sarah Bartmann and the Ethics of Representation," in *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture,* eds. Rosemarie Buikema and Iris van der Tuin (New York: Routledge, 2007), 75.
[9] Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997).
[10] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), 354–355.

humans could be divided into racial types.[11] Here we can see how a racial ideology becomes integrated in "common sense" and works as a way of understanding and relating to the world. Racialised ideas were not only gendered, but were also deeply interwoven with ideas of class and nationalism.[12]

After the Second World War, the horrific consequences of the racist and eugenic ideologies of earlier decades were all too clear with the mass murder of individuals that were seen as "unfit" or inferior in some sense, such as those identified as Jews, Roma or handicapped. The social Darwinism that had highlighted race as the main category of distinction fell into disrespect. While acts of racism and discrimination are generally prohibited by various legal conventions, racism has become more diverse in terms of visibility, ranging from "subtle, hidden subtexts to flagrant acts of hate speech".[13]

Within this new environment, "culture" is often used in similar ways as "race" had been before. "Culture" becomes an explanation for the marginal positions of certain groups, as a legitimisation for their objectification and homogenisation, which is often projected in a similar way as biological references were before. Such arguments are frequently reflected in the language of nationalism and ethnicity.[14] Concepts such as "neo-racism",[15] "colour-blind racism"[16] and "racism without race"[17] aim to capture how biological inferiority is avoided as an explanation for inequalities, even though racism continues in new forms and expressions by referring to culture or religion.

Colonial legacies and migration

Imperialism and colonialism also were inseparable from the invention of race in the European context. Colonialism can be seen as having taken place in two phases: the first one starting in 1492 with Columbus' arrival in North America and with Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands as the main colonisers;

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[11] Michael Pickering, *Stereotyping: The Politics of Representation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 125.
[12] Ibid., 144.
[13] Harrison, "Unraveling 'Race'," 150.
[14] Etienne Balibar, "Class Racism," in *Race, Nation and Class: Ambiguous Identities,* eds. E. Balibar and I. Wallerstein (London: Verso, 1991).
[15] Ibid.
[16] Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006).
[17] Harrison, "Unraveling 'Race'."

and the second one starting later in 1885 with the colonialisation of Africa, where France and Britain were the principal actors. The first phase coincides with the slave trade and its massive forced migration, and also with the establishment of settler colonies in the Americas.[18] Fredrick Cooper[19] observes that empires were at first not differentiated very clearly from other forms of rule—all of them were based on the fact that certain people saw themselves as superior to others, claiming the right to rule regardless of whether these others were seen as culturally distinct or not. However, from the late eighteenth century, Cooper points out, ideas of citizenship required decisions of whom to exclude and why, leading to "sexual policing" of colonisers and colonised. We also have to keep in mind that colonialism involved the massive displacement of people in other parts of the world such as Australia and Northern America, with the slaughter of aboriginals populating these parts of the world and the eventual creation of settler-societies by individuals of European origin.[20]

In her book, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest,* Anne McClintock explores the complex ways in which gender dynamics were fundamental to the workings of imperialism. Undoubtedly European men were "the most direct agents of empire",[21] while colonial women were placed ambiguously. As wives of colonial officers or farmers, as teachers or nurses, they both served the empire and were in positions of power over colonised women and men. Yet, they were also de-privileged and disadvantaged by the gendered relations and laws that were in place. Colonised women, however, were invariably disadvantaged since they had to cope not only with the gendered hierarchies imposed on them by their own men, but also with the ways they had been positioned by colonial men and women.

When a growing number of colonies became independent, migration started from the former colonised countries to the western part of Europe. In the 1970s, unemployment increased within Europe with the oil crisis leading to the downturn of the world economy. As Charles Westin points out, these developments turned out to provide a fruitful environment for right-

[18] Philip W. Porter and Eric S. Sheppard, *A World of Difference: Society, Nature and Development* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), 307–312.
[19] Fredrik Cooper, "Postcolonial People: A Commentary," in *Europe's Invisible Migrants,* ed. Andrea Smith (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), 169–183.
[20] See for example Annie E. Coombes, ed., *Rethinking Settler Colonialism: History and Memory in Australia, Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand and South Africa* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).
[21] McClintock, *Imperial Leather,* 5.

wing groups and nationalistic organisations that were hostile toward immigration from former colonies or other parts of the world.[22] However, already with decolonisation various legal reforms were initiated to keep the former colonised subjects from settling within Europe. For example, Westin indicates that the Commonwealth Immigration Act was enacted in Britain in 1962 with the objective of preventing former colonial subjects from gaining the right to settle permanently in the UK. This was even the case for those holding British passports.[23] As Westin points out, the term "ethnicity" became a euphemism for "race" when referring to migrants from the former colonies. By the 1990s, racist violence had increased in all of Western Europe with extreme nationalistic parties gaining more currency in political debates.[24] These practices of racism and discrimination have not only focused on non-European populations but also on European ones, such as those identified as Jews, Roma, Muslims, migrants and asylum seekers.[25] For example, Romani people have recently become the target of racism and ethnic cleansing legitimised by the government in Italy.

Migration from former European colonies did also involve Europeans who had settled in or migrated to the colonies within the context of colonialisation, often referred to as repatriates.[26] It has been estimated that during a period of over 35 years after the Second World War, five to seven million individuals returned to Europe from the colonies. This was a heterogeneous group of people with different individual colonial histories, involving for example French from Algeria, Dutch from the Dutch East Indies and Portuguese from West and East Africa.[27]

When it comes to the representation of migrants, a study by Jessika ter Wal[28] examining the news in the 15 member states of the European Union

[22] Charles Westin, "Identity and Inter-Ethnic Relations," in *Identity Processes and Dynamics in Multi-Ethnic Europe,* eds. Charles Westin José Bastos, Janine Dahinden and Pedro Góis (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 24.
[23] Ibid., 21.
[24] Ibid., 24.
[25] Harrison, "Unraveling 'Race'," 153.
[26] See the continuous problematisation of the term by Andrea Smith, "Introduction: Europe's Invisible Migrants," in *Europe's Invisible Migrants,* ed. Andrea Smith (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003), 9–31.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Jessika ter Wal, "European Day of Media Monitoring: Quantitative Analysis of Daily Press and TV Contents in the 15 EU Member States." (Utrecht: European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, ERCMER, 2004).

in 2004, reveals a stereotypical image with migrants either being overrepresented in crime news or (in fewer cases) treated as celebrities. The association of the migrant with criminality is based on the fact that from the 1960s to the 1990s, the migrant was coded as male—see, for example, the discussion of the portrayal of the "guest worker" in Germany and Switzerland in Wenk and Krebs.[29] Female migrants were not featured during these years, yet this changed dramatically when women wearing the head-scarf or veil (read as signs for being Muslim, Islamic) became a focus of the media. Muslim women have been represented as subordinated by "Oriental patriarchy" and needing to be emancipated towards Western values and way of life.[30] This is an example of cultural racism with Western women being elevated above the subordinated Muslim women as "already emancipated".[31] Similarly, the criminal acts of male migrants with a different cultural background (not only Muslim) are often represented as sanctioned by the cultural heritage of the immigrants, whereas the criminality on non-immigrant males usually is explained by individual social and psychological circumstances.[32]

Many scholars have especially drawn attention to the growing prejudice against Muslims after the terrorist attacks on the USA on September 11, 2001. As phrased by Anne-Marie Fortier, religion, after September 11, 2001 became a "privileged marker of racial and absolute difference".[33] Matti Bunzl speaks of Islamophobia as a phenomenon that aims to safeguard the "future of European civilization",[34] where Muslims are represented as a homogenous threat to Europe's existence. Pnina Werbner has demonstrated how both in France and Britain, a public debate about the "politics of intimacy and sexual mod-

[29] Silke Wenk and Rebecca Krebs, "Analysing the Migration of People and Images: Perspectives and Methods in the Field of Visual Culture." (Report, Integrated Research Methods in Gender and Migration Studies, 2007), http://www.york.ac.uk/res/researchintegration/Integrative_Research_ Methods.htm.
[30] See for example Gabriele Dietze, "Criticism of Occidentalism and Sexual Politics," in *Re/Positionierung. Critical Whiteness/Perspectives of Color,* eds. Arbeitsgruppe Re/Positionierung / Metanationale (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, 2009); Eva Reimers, "Representations of an Honour Killing. Intersections of Discourses in Culture, Gender, Equality, Social Class, and Nationality," *Feminist Media Studies* 7, 3 (2007): 239–255.
[31] Dietze, "Criticism of Occidentalism."
[32] Reimers, "Representations of an Honour Killing," 241.
[33] Ann-Marie Fortier, "Too Close for Comfort: Loving thy Neigbors and the Management of Multicultural Intimacies," *Environment and Planning* 25 (2007): 110.
[34] Matti Bunzl, "Between Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Some Thoughts on the New Europe," *American Ethnologist* 32, 4 (2005): 506.

esty" has taken the centre stage in public debates about "the problem" of Muslims who refuse to integrate.[35]

Problematising "white" Western feminism and whiteness

The work of "women of colour" has been essential in putting the focus on the links between race and gender. A seminal critique of Western (white) feminism as blind to race and ignoring the experiences of "black" and "third-world" women brought the question of what it means to be a woman under specific historical circumstances to the foreground. Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar claimed, in their article entitled "Challenging Imperial Feminism", that in spite of the "white" feminist movement being diverse with different political associations, what it has in common is *not* to "speak to the experiences of Black women and where it attempts to do so it is often from a racist perspective and reasoning".[36] Chandra T. Mohanty's article, "Under Western Eyes", similarly criticised "western feminists" for their construction of "the" "Third world woman" as a "singular monolithic subject".[37]

The recognition of differences among women following this criticism had the effect that it was no longer seen as acceptable for "white" feminists to claim to be speaking for all women. By drawing on the positions of marginalised subjects like "black" women, "black" feminist scholarship pointed out that women's identities and experiences are formed by interplaying vectors of gender, race, class and sexuality, to mention just some of the most obvious ones. Kimberlé Crenshaw, a "black" legal scholar, introduced the term intersectionality to capture the discrimination of "black" women, which cannot be understood as a simple addition of sex and race but only through "the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of black women's experiences".[38] Crenshaw problematised the anti-discrimination law that recognises discrimination only based on race *or* gender, thus ignoring the simultaneity and entanglement of multiple axes of differentiation

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[35] Pnina Werbner, "Veiled Interventions in Pure Space: Honour, Shame and Embodied Struggles among Muslims in Britain and France," *Theory, Culture, Society* 24 (2007): 163.
[36] Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," *Feminist Review* 17 (1984): 4.
[37] Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30 (1988): 61–88.
[38] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1991): 1244.

and inequality. Previously, Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis[39] expressed a similar critique when they problematised, for example, the triple-oppression model as an additive model of oppression based on either/or dichotomous thinking. In the meantime, intersectionality with its focus on the intertwinedness of different axes of inequality like gender, race, ethnicity, class, dis/ability, sexual orientation, religion, age, education, and so on has become one of the most important analytical tools for feminist and anti-racist scholars.[40] As Nira Yuval-Davis, however, highlights in her critical evaluation of the term, we still have to be aware that different axes of differentiation gain significance within particular political and historical contexts.[41]

When trying to understand racism it is important to look not only at those who are discriminated against and those socially classified as non-white. It is important as well to study how the idea of "whiteness"—even though often invisible—is part of the idea of "colour" or "blackness". What was considered the norm—that is white and whiteness—for the longest time was not seen as explicitly marked, and hence not perceived as race. Studies of whiteness are a part of research on racial identity in general,[42] emphasising the more powerful positions or status roles connected with whiteness. Studies of whiteness importantly point out how power within society rests on the normalisation of the white body,[43] and how this needs to be understood as a form of racism that functions as a stabilisation of these power relations.[44] Whiteness becomes powerful because individuals socially classified as "white" can usually "afford" to forget their own skin colour and position of power.[45] The exploration of

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[39] Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis, "Contextualizing Feminism: Gender, Ethnic and Class Divisions," *Feminist Review* 15 (1983): 6275.
[40] Jennifer C. Nash, "re-thinking intersectionality," *Feminist Review* 89 (2008): 2–15. See also: Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Leslie McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *SIGNS* 3 (2005): 1771–1800; Nina Lykke, *A Guide to Intersectional Theory, Methodology, and Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).
[41] Nira Yuval-Davis. "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, 3 (2006): 193–209.
[42] John Jr. Hartigan, "Establishing the Fact of Whiteness," *American Anthropologist* 99, 3 (1997), 498.
[43] Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Hartigan, "Establishing the Fact of Whiteness," 495–505; Richard Dyer, *White* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).
[44] Vron Ware, "Otherworldly Knowledge: Toward a 'Language of Perspicuous Contrast'," in *Out of Whiteness: Color, Politics, and Culture,* by Vron Ware and Les Back (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 15–32.
[45] Kristín Loftsdóttir, "Never Forgetting? Gender and Racial-Ethnic Identity during Fieldwork" *Social Anthropology* 10, 3 (2003): 303–317.

whiteness as something that is socially constructed, which relies on and produces unequal power relationships, is one of the central aims of critical research on whiteness. This makes it possible to understand whiteness as a relational construct[46] within its specific historical and geographical locatedness.

What counts as "white" is not homogeneous but changes over time. There are also different shades of "white". In his research on the history of whiteness in the United States, Matthew Frye Jacobson,[47] for example, illustrates how the naturalisation law of 1790 bestowed citizenship only on "free white people", that is people with European heritage. From the mid-nineteenth century to the 1920s, a time characterised by an enormous flow of immigrants from Europe to North America and by so-called scientific racism, "white" was differentiated into different shades with the Anglo-Saxon seen as representing the most pure form. Later on, when African Americans started to move into cities, the different variations of white (Jews, Greeks, Irish, Italians, Poles) became fused together as Caucasian, thus helping to consolidate a black/white binary. As previously discussed, Irish people in the United States still often suffered the same racist stereotypes as African Americans, often being presented in the print media as dull, ignorant, overproducing and lazy.[48]

Spaces of/for change

Vron Ware and Les Back[49] emphasise that the main goal of writing about whiteness and race is not simply to describe and deconstruct it on paper, but to render it "obsolete as a system of discrimination among humans".[50] Sadly, there is quite a long way to go before this is accomplished, but it is also hopeful to look at spaces where we can find first signs of change. In order to move forward, we need to identify ways and spaces where this becomes possible.

At first sight, the recent turn to diversity as something that is "beyond race and gender"[51] could be seen as a step in that direction. In the UK, the

[46] Vron Ware and Les Back, "Introduction. Outside the Whale," in *Out of Whiteness: Color, Politics, and Culture* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1–14.
[47] Matthew F. Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).
[48] See for example Pickering, 2001.
[49] Ware and Back, "Introduction," 2.
[50] Ibid., 6.
[51] Sara Ahmed and Elaine Swan, "Introduction: Doing Diversity," *Policy Futures in Education* 4, 2 (2006): 98.

Race Relation Amendment Act of 2000 is an example of the new legislative frameworks that see equality as a duty for public organisations. The law no longer just focuses on racial discrimination but also on the necessity of public bodies to promote racial equality. However, as important a shift like this is, we also have to be aware of its pitfalls as Ahmed and Swan[52] point out. Firstly, there is a tendency that diversity replaces terms like anti-racism and equal opportunities that emerged from political movements, and thus address the structural and political dimensions involved. As Sara Ahmed summarises the critique, diversity "individuates difference, conceals inequalities and neutralises histories of antagonism and struggle".[53] Secondly, "diversity and equality are becoming part of performance and audit culture"[54] since the focus on the duty of organisations necessitates the production of diversity policies as well as the monitoring of how diversity is being done.[55] Thirdly, diversity is "increasingly used as a marketing device"[56] or as a way in which organisations present an image of themselves as performing diversity and equality.[57] However, the self-perception of "doing diversity" actually bears the danger of what Sara Ahmed describes as the "non-performativity of anti-racism". What she means by that is the fact that a declaration of commitment against racism often can paradoxically function as a "performance of racism".

In the context of a racialised regime of representations as explored by Stuart Hall[58] in his illuminating study on the "spectacle of the "other", there are a few rare cases where those being "othered" are able to appropriate the racialised regime. In his book, *Heavenly Bodies,* Richard Dyer presents Paul Robeson, a "black" celebrity in the first half of the twentieth century in the United States, who made his career by embodying "the epitome of what black people are like".[59] "Black" and "white" audiences alike adored his spontaneity, emotion and naturalness, although with different implications.[60]

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[52] Ibid., 98.
[53] Ibid., 96.
[54] Ibid., 97.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid., 98.
[57] Sara Ahmed, "The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism," *borderlands* 5, 3 (2005), http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol5no3_2006/ahmed_nonperform.htm.
[58] Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the 'Other'," in *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices,* ed. Stuart Hall (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage, 1997), 223–279.
[59] Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, BFI, 1986), 71.
[60] Ibid., 79.

Later, in the 1970s, placing "blacks" as heroes became a strategy in a series of films starting in the United States. This can be read as a counter-strategy to the racialised regime of representation, since with the "black" hero's triumph over "whites" the stereotypical representation of "blacks" becomes reversed.[61] However, reversing the stereotype still sustains the binary structure of racial stereotypes. Another strategy is re-signification, that is the substitution of negative connotations of black with positive ones like, for example, "black is beautiful". This approach acknowledges difference and challenges the binaries, but it does not overturn them. Hall[62] and other scholars like Judith Butler[63] suggest that the most promising strategy to change regimes of representation is to contest them from within. This strategy is based on the shifting, unstable character of meaning and works through "making strange" and de-familiarisation to interrupt the constant repetition of stereotypes and binaries.

Changes in the symbolic and discursive order do not automatically lead to the abolishment of practices of racisms. This is also the case with "politically correct" representations. What needs to be taken into account is the affective dimensions involved in dealing with issues of race and racism. Following Adrienne Rich's lead that "a movement for change lives in feelings, actions, and words"[64] in our search for signs of change, we turn towards the forms of conviviality and ordinary multi-culture as credited to the postcolonial metropolis by Paul Gilroy.[65] This is where he locates "emancipatory interruptions … defined by a liberating sense of the banality of intermixture".[66]

We can take Mica Nava's[67] exploration of what she calls "visceral cosmopolitanism" as an example of positive engagements with cultural and racial difference that also can give us hope for the emergence of new and more inclusive ways of living with difference in the vernacular. Focussing on gendered relations and cosmopolitanism as a structure of feeling in London, Nava tells a different story about race. It is a story of hospitality, sympathy and desire

[61] Hall, "The Spectacle of the 'Other'," 270.
[62] Ibid., 274.
[63] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
[64] Adrienne Rich, "Notes toward a Politics of Location (1984)," in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979–1985* (New York: Norton, 1986): 223.
[65] Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
[66] Ibid., 150.
[67] Mica Nava, *Visceral Cosmopolitanism: Gender, Culture and the Normalisation of Difference* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2007).

for cultural and racial others, which, as she points out, has "*always* coexisted with the most hostile manifestations of racialisations".[68] Nava looks at the historic specific situation in London in the beginning of the twentieth century where many romantic relationships developed between "white" English women and "black" American GIs in the years from 1942 and 1945. Guyanese author Ras Makonnen describes this as a situation that benefited "white" women and "coloured" men: "We recognised that the dedication of some of the (white) girls to our case was an expression of equal rights for women. One way of rejecting the oppression of men was to associate with blacks."[69] Nava's research demonstrates also how everyday practices are constitutive in establishing inclusion and feelings of belonging. However, everyday practices also produce exclusion and feelings of being out of place. Scholars like Audre Lorde[70] and Franz Fanon[71] illuminatingly describe the experience of being marked as an "other", and thus how race is made performatively through social practices. Both Lorde and Fanon have focused in their writing on the affects that do not bring bodies together, but rather work toward keeping them apart.[72] Audre Lorde describes her experience of sitting in a crowded subway as a child with her mother at Christmas time when a "white" woman sitting next to her stares at her and pulls her coat away. In trying to understand, Lorde first assumes that there is something like a roach the woman wants to get away from, before she realises that it is her that the "white" woman does not want to touch.

Besides the potentials of inclusive structures of feeling that can emerge under historic specific circumstances (like Nava's example of London in the first half of the twentieth century), the arts have a particularly important role to deconstruct race and open up spaces for new configurations. As Sandra Ponzanesi illustrates, for example, there are more and more European films that "entangle … representations of the 'other'",[73] and offer a redefinition of Europe by focussing on the politics of encounter. Above all, it is especially

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[68] Ibid., 7.
[69] Ras Makonnen quoted in Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 163.
[70] Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: The Crossing Press, 1984).
[71] Franz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986).
[72] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 63.
[73] Sandra Ponzanesi, "Europe in Motion: Migrant Cinema and the Politics of Encounter," *Social Identities* 17, 1 (2011): 88.

migrant, postcolonial writers who based on their in-betweenness and their resistance to hegemonic, unifying discourses re-articulate spaces.[74]

Last but not least, teaching has potentials to provide new perspectives and create spaces that allow for the recognition of differences, the intersections of race and gender and thus more inclusive ways of dealing with the intercultural social reality that defines most of contemporary Europe. This is where we see the main objective of the collection of essays in this book. It provides the resources needed for approaching race and gender from a feminist perspective in different pedagogical settings, from the classroom to various lifelong learning arrangements. With its focus on how race and racism is related to issues of gender and gender inequality, this volume pursues and specifies questions addressed in previous volumes in the series "Teaching with Gender", especially in *Teaching Empires* and *Teaching Intersectionality.*[75] The essays in this book are designed to help teachers and students, but also journalists and policy workers to gain insights into the theoretical developments that were most influential in critically approaching the entanglement of race and gender. The in-depth explorations of the evolution of racism in Europe and thus the historical formations of race and gender inequality will provide readers with ideas about how to critically examine their own national/regional context. Together the chapters offer a theoretical and analytical tool kit for analyses, reflection and critique, enabling readers to follow Vron Ware's and Les Back's suggestion that "the destination of a nonracial and nonracist world … demands a readiness to travel in hope, constantly on the alert for creatively subversive opportunities".[76]

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[74] See for example Sandra Ponzanesi and Daniela Merolla, *Migrant Cartographies: New Cultural and Literary Spaces in Post-Colonial Europe* (Lanham: Lexington, 2005); Esther Sánchez-Pardo, "Adrift on the Black Mediterranean Diaspora: African Migrant Writing in Spain," *Social Identities* 17, 1 (2011): 105–120; Manuela Coppola, "'Rented Spaces': Italian Postcolonial Literature," *Social Identities* 17, 1 (2011): 121–135.

[75] Mary Clancy and Andrea Pető, eds., *Teaching Empires: Gender and Transnational Citizenship in Europe* (Utrecht and Stockholm: ATHENA3, University of Utrecht and Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University, 2009); Martha Franken et al., eds., *Teaching Intersectionality: Putting Gender at the Centre* (Utrecht and Stockholm: ATHENA3, University of Utrecht and Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University, 2009).

[76] Ware and Back, "Introduction," 8.

The chapters in the book

The chapters in the book elaborate on specific issues touched on in this introduction and are structured into two parts: The first section, "Thematic Explorations", focuses on particular themes like representation of race and gender inequality, as well as everyday racism in educational institutions, whereas in the second section, "Expressions of Racism and Gender in National and Historical Contexts", the intersections of race and gender are explored in particular contexts. The chapters focussing on issues of race and racism in Italy, Poland, Denmark, France and Portugal demonstrate that when speaking of racism and gender, we have to consider global aspects of racism, while being aware of how these global aspects are expressed in particular localised and historical contexts. In addition to nations like Denmark, Portugal and France that were heavily involved in colonial practices, there is also a need to critically analyse more closely European nations that were without colonial possessions, including those marginalised within Europe, and how colonial and imperialistic practices and images were created or contested in such contexts.[77]

One of the central ways in which race and the meaning of race is culturally produced is through representations. Whether it is spoken or written words, images or music, these are the modes through which forms of knowledge and feelings, that is, discourses of race and gender as particular ways of speaking about race and gender are constituted and circulated. Scholars of race and feminism have been especially interested in the politics of representations, that is, in the consequences and effects of a particular regime of representation of race and gender in concrete historical situations. Sandra Ponzanesi elaborates in "Breaking the Canon? Critical Reflections on 'Other' Literary Traditions" how the literary canon is related to issues of race and gender. Taking Toni Morrison as an example, Ponzanesi illustrates how "women of colour" change the literary canon. However, as Ponzanesi argues, the opening of the canon from below has been supported and appropriated by economic interests, in particular by the institutionalisation of literary prizes. Awards and prestigious prizes can offer the authors enormous visibility (often by marketing them as exotic "others") while at the same time jeopardising their different, more radical positions. In "Monumental Dresses: Coming to

[77] Kristín Loftsdóttir, "Pure 'Manliness': The Colonial Project and Africa's Image in 19th Century Iceland," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 16 (2009): 271–293.

Terms with Racial Repression" Rosemarie Buikema discusses two art pieces by South African artists that address the gendered and raced relationships between victims and perpetrators that are at work in a context of patriarchal and racial oppression. Pointing towards the multilayeredness of oppression and the multilayeredness of victimhood, Buikema stresses the need for a politics of difference that addresses the intersection of race and gender inequality and opens up new forms of solidarity and justice.

Ellis Jonker directly deals with teaching race and gender at European universities in her chapter "Embodying Otherness while Teaching Race and Gender at White European Universities". She argues that we can get inspiration from teachers and academics that are resisting and undoing gendered racisms and illustrates this by focussing on her two role models, Dutch-Surinamese feminist professors Gloria Wekker and Philomena Essed. Based on personal interviews, observation of classes and a close reading of publications, Jonker discusses practices, principles and challenges of teaching race and gender in their entanglement.

The second section of the book, where specific intersections of race and gender are explored in different European national contexts, starts with "Disappearing Act: The Forgotten History of Colonialism, Eugenics and Gendered Othering in Denmark" by Bolette Blaagaard and Rikke Andreassen. The two authors discuss the "forgotten" colonial heritage in Denmark and how this is related to the relations between race and gender. The erasure of colonialism from the national memory that also precipitates in a lack of teaching materials affects current discourses of "cultural" difference in Denmark. The Danish emphasis on freedom of expression, as manifested in the "cartoon controversies" of 2005–2006, gains strength from the forgetting of Danish colonial history and the Danish people's active involvement in Europe's intense racism.

In their chapter "Portugal and the Empire: Discourses and Practices on Race and Gender", Elsa Peralta and Simone Frangella show the importance of understanding the intersection of sexual practices and racism during imperialism and colonialism in Portugal. As their analysis illustrates, Portuguese imperialism involved various types of sexual relations where racism was a key component, even though sexual relationships were interpreted somewhat differently throughout the centuries. As they point out, when this history is then rewritten in the present nationalistic context, Portuguese colonialism is pre-

sented as characterised by racial and cultural equality, thus seen as morally superior when compared to other European systems.

Focussing on a law that passed French legislature in 2004 banning "religious symbols" in state-owned schools, Ebru Sungun and Erzsébet Barát show in their chapter "The French Ban on Headscarves: Rendering Racism Respectable" that girls wearing headscarves are constructed as being at odds with what is seen as fundamental values of European societies, such as modernity and equality. Their analysis points toward the complex meaning of the veil in French colonial history, where de-veiling was a part of France's "civilising" mission in Algeria.

In "Racial/Ethnic Otherness in Polish Public Discourse" Aleksandra Różalska explores the representation of the racial/ethnic "other" in political and media discourses in post-1989 Poland. Despite a commonly shared belief by the majority of Polish society that Poles are tolerant, the fear of the "other" as well as racial discrimination are manifest in public discourse. Rózalska contextualises the predominance of nationalistic rhetoric in Polish history with Poland constantly being under attack and particularly in the transition from a communist regime to a democratic system.

Manuela Coppola and Sonia Sabelli address in their chapter "Not a Country for Women, nor for Blacks: Teaching Race and Gender in Italy between Colonial Heritages and New Perspectives" the challenges to grapple with colonial legacy in relation to Italy, and how issues of race and gender in Italian school curricula can be introduced. Only recently, a lively academic debate has started on Italy's colonial past and the intersections of race and gender. Despite the fact that this debate is not yet reflected in curricula, Coppola and Sabelli present examples of "good practices" that can be seen as first steps toward a transformation of the Italian educational system and a redefinition of Italian identity.

On the one hand, the essays focussing on different national contexts illustrate the specificities of the intersections of race/racism and gender in the various countries. On the other hand, there are also similarities that cut across different national histories. We hope that all the contributions in this volume, the thematic explorations as well as the exemplary examinations of the intersections of race and gender in France, Portugal, Italy, Denmark and Poland, will motivate and inspire students to use the resources and tool kit offered to examine their own specific race and gender relations.

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PART I:

THEMATIC EXPLORATIONS

CHAPTER 1

Breaking the Canon? Critical Reflections on "Other" Literary Traditions

Sandra Ponzanesi

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the role of the literary canon as a crucial instrument and reference point in pedagogy and teaching about gender and race. The analysis of the construction, working and transformation of the canon, and the Western canon in particular, forms the ideal arena to teach and discuss how the intersection of race, ethnicity, nationality and language plays a role in processes of inclusion and exclusion, on theoretical, institutional and commercial levels. The main objective of the chapter is to rethink these issues by making an excursion into feminist practices in relation to the canon from its origin through to the feminist postcolonial interventions of the 1990s and onward, while accounting for the vexed relationship with commercial practices such as branding, awards and prizes. The garnering of prestigious literary prizes, such as the Nobel, Booker or Pulitzer prizes, can lend considerable visibility and coverage to previously excluded female and ethnic minority authors. Yet these very "inclusions" also jeopardise or whitewash some of the radical views of the writers involved by "blending" them into the canon or the mainstream. By taking Toni Morrison, the first Afro-American Nobel Prize winner and one of the first authors to depart from the literary canon as a unique example, the scope is to explore the politics of cultural production and to analyse how the mechanism behind publication, reception and canonisation influences teaching practices and the construction of knowledge. The analysis of how gender and race have been included and excluded from the official canon, and the mainstream curriculum, is therefore articulated in its aesthetic, political and commercial implications.

These debates reveal the opportunities and the significant consequences of changing the curriculum in increasingly multicultural classrooms and societies, and also make it possible to readdress the question of power difference in knowledge production even within already established multicultural curriculums. This is because, as Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park write,

even though on the one hand most of the field of postcolonial studies acknowledges the need and desirability of curriculums and academic programmes that are more sensitive to minorities' histories and cultures, they are, on the other hand, wary of the liberal humanist tendency in multiculturalism's discourse. "Too often", they write, "Third World women's texts (and by extension Third World women themselves) are objectified and exoticized, or utilized for the convention and quick edification of Western readers."[1] It is obvious that in the context of globalisation, where the flows of culture and capital extend beyond national and linguistic barriers, texts come to fulfil a function that is different from their function in the past. Seen either as representing entire cultures and national histories or as examples of postcolonial experimentalism, the result is that writings from different locations are often conflated into Third World sameness. As Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park further write: "Within the limitations of (often, undergraduate) classroom instruction, further, the dangers of an exclusively textualized understanding of the Third World, the suppression of the histories of colonialism and imperialism (complacent enjoyment of Western superiority) and cultural relativism (exemption from any moral discriminations or obligations to act), are real matters of concern."[2]

Postcolonial feminism and race-critical thinking should strive to form alliances in order to raise and maintain awareness, and to illuminate how these mechanisms are often sabotaged or boycotted by market forces and easily packaged multiculturalism. "If Third World women's texts are not to become simply objects of consumption in the pluralist intellectual marketplace," write Sunder Rajan and You-me Park, "the demands of teaching and studying postcolonial literatures must be made rigorous, the concept of (other) cultures needs to be subjected to critical and theoretical examination, and the positionality of the reader in the Western academy, as well as the multiple and complicated relationships between the West and the rest of the world, should be systematically foregrounded."[3]

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[1] Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park, "Postcolonial Feminism/Postcolonialism and Feminism," in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies,* ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (Oxford and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004), 56.
[2] Ibid., 56.
[3] Ibid., 56–57.

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine how teaching gender and race can take account of the dilemmas, pitfalls and shortcomings of multicultural curriculums while addressing the promises and perils of globalisation, through the marketing and consumption of diversity.

Towards an alternative canon: Multiculturalism and diversity

From its inception, the canon has not only been a form for preserving a culture's best work, to be treasured and disseminated in the classroom as part of national excellence, with iconic status, but also a form for preserving the beliefs and ideological values of a culture. However, the ideological implications of the canons have always been downplayed in favour of a rigorous account of the "best that has been thought and said in the world"[4] or "the existing monuments of [art] form and ideal order among themselves".[5]

The new critical movement that developed in the 1940s and 1950s followed this path and promoted a canon that preserved culture by elevating certain works of art on aesthetic and formal grounds. As Paul Lauter pointed out, this, in theory, did not mean that the canon had to be narrow but, in truth, works by women and ethnic minorities were considered lacking in terms of the New Critics' ideal of complexity, ambiguity, tension and irony.[6] In the various anthologies edited by the New Critics, authors who failed to create "masterpieces" were not included, and these authors gradually became less known and slowly dropped out of circulation altogether.

Feminists and critics in the 1970s observed that although the canon was supposed to represent masterpieces with *universal* aesthetic value, these works were almost exclusively written by white, middle-class males. Paul Lauter, Annette Kolodny[7] and many other critics began broadening the canon by including more works by women and by writers of diverse ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds.

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[4] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (Oxford: Project Gutenberg, 1869), 6.
[5] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1917), in *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920).
[6] Paul Lauter, *Canons and Contexts* (New York: Oxford, 1991).
[7] Annette Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630–1860.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

These arguments led to an opening up of the canon in the 1980s. The feminist contestation and contribution to the opening up of the canon has gone through a number of stages. From Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* on gynocritics, which looked at the nature of female creativity and the history, themes, genres of literature by women to Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* whose purpose was to reveal that power and domination are the real issues at stake in the process of recognition and canonisation, to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's influential *The Madwoman in the Attic,* which endeavoured to define a new genealogy by exploring the anxiety of female authorship, much of the canon-bending dealt, however, only with white middle-class Western women, and suddenly the canon was again stifling and exclusive.

In the 1990s, a considerable amount of work appeared on gender and difference, and on the importance of the simultaneity of identity formation based on gender, race and class along with sexual preferences, nationalities, religious beliefs, physical disability and so on. The first impact came from the black feminist movements in the United States, with the works of Hortense Spiller, Barbara Smith, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Patricia Hill Collins, Angela Davies and many others following the famous slogan, "Ain't I a Woman?", launched by Sojourner Truth in 1851.

This Bridge Called My Back, edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, is a showing-and-telling, a volume of reflections and poetic power. First published in 1983, this collection was an important addition to the steadily growing voice of the world's silenced people, especially women of colour. Opening up the canon of feminist criticism also meant opening up to voices of the Third World. Accounting for women outside the Western bulwark meant a total readjustment of the practice of feminist criticism.

As Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-me Park ask in the opening of this chapter: how should we deal with difference? Where, from a literary point of view, were the famous women writers from Africa, India or the Caribbean? How should they be evaluated again? And as Spivak wrote: what is emancipatory in one arena can be oppressive in another.[8] The translation of women's

[8] Gayatri Spivak, "The Politics of Translation," in *Outside the Teaching Machine* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 179–200.

works from vernacular languages into English (the vehicle for accessing a global readership) is rife with inconsistencies and misinterpretations.

The canon and the cultural industry

The following step in this analysis is to ascertain how the relationship between canon formation and the cultural industry has changed in recent decades, and to explore the impact this has had on teaching practices on gender and race. New global forces and, more specifically, the financial interests of powerful publishing houses and the accompanying carnival of international literary prizes are having a serious impact on the development of canon formation and all its variations.

My aim here is to show to what extent the awarding of prestigious literary prizes influences the entry of women writers, or women writers from racialised minorities, to the canon, and through the canon, to the classroom. It should be noted, however, that the garnering of prestigious prizes, such as the Nobel Prize, does not necessarily always secure literary canonisation and long-term influence (consider, for example, forgotten women laureates such as Sigrid Undset, 1928 or Selma Lagerlöf, 1906). Furthermore, many literary titans have never managed to enter the Nobel pantheon (James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, Simone de Beauvoir, Henry James, Silvia Plath and others). This subscribes to the whimsical and ambivalent nature and role of literary prizes and canonisation as such.

Nonetheless, the growing significance attached to literary awards and honours in recent decades (especially the Nobel, Booker, and Pulitzer prizes) has allowed serious literary fiction titles to become the subject of academic discussion.[9] The Man Booker Prize is a very prestigious, commercial and influential prize that is received every year with much publicity and that always manages to stir a controversy. As the wordle included here shows (see Figure 1.1) several winners have entered the literary pantheon, as the references to Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992) or Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008) demonstrate, while

[9] See for example Brian Feldman, *The Nobel Prize: A History of Genius, Controversy, and Prestige* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000) and Laura Carlson, Sean Creighton and Sheila Cunningham, eds., *Literary Laurels: A Reader's Guide to Award-Winning Fiction* (New York: Hillyard Industries, 1995).

Figure 1.1: Man Booker prize 2010: previous winners as a Wordle
(Originally published in Katy Stoddard, "Man Booker Prize 2010: All the Winners, and the 2010 Shortlist," *The Guardian.* October 12, 2010. http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2010/oct/12/man-booker-prize-2010; Courtesy of Katy Stoddard)

others have been forgotten and do not appear in the wordle at all. Bestselling or award-winning authors, especially from outside the Western canon, such as V. S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Derek Walcott, Chinua Achebe, Amitav Ghosh, Michael Ondaatje, Arundhati Roy, Zadie Smith, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Monica Ali, Zoë Wicomb, Andrea Levi (in short, the new glamour icons of multicultural writings) have won over the North American and European academia thanks to these prizes, by showing that in recent years market forces are increasingly guiding, while not yet dictating, the process of canon formation.[10] This recognition is particularly strong within postcolonial studies, an interdisciplinary field that has undergone spectacular expansion within

[10] See for example Richard Todd, *Consuming Fictions: The Booker Prize and Fiction in Britain Today* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996) and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

academic discourses in the past decade, and which focuses on the ideological implications of literary production and reception to shift the significance of "newness" away from Western norms. Yet the question of Third World women's text consumption in the global multicultural marketplace, as Sunder Rajan and You-me Park warn us, should be analysed rigorously and critically.

Race, gender and diversity in the canon: Toni Morrison

I will now clarify the two discourses discussed earlier in this chapter: the role of gender and race for canon formation, and the connection to the cultural industry in recognising but also exploiting these categories as tokens of diversity and exoticism. The case of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* raises many important political and literary issues concerning the place of women in the canon, the inclusion of minorities such as the Afro-American and the acquisition of this institutionalisation through the garnering of prestigious literary prizes, such as the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1988 and the Nobel Prize in 1993. Toni Morrison is not just a canonical author but also a literary critic who continually challenges the values of such awards, saying that black writers and their books should not just receive recognition but a recognition that does them justice.[11] As is often the case with the Nobel Prize, the winners are nominated and awarded the prize because they interpret or represent universal aspects of the human condition. In a press release from the Swedish Academy, Toni Morrison was labelled someone: "who, in novels characterized by visionary force and poetic import, gives life to an essential aspect of American reality. … Toni Morrison is a literary artist of the first rank. She delves into the language itself, a language she wants to liberate from the fetters of race. And she addresses us with the lustre of poetry."[12]

Morrison is the first black American and the eighth woman to be nominated for the prestigious award since its inception in 1901 (as of 2012, a total of 12 women have been nominated).[13] Morrison is the eleventh American

[11] Toni Morrison, "Nobel Lecture 2003," in *Toni Morrison, Critical and Theoretical Approaches,* ed. Nancy J. Peterson (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
[12] Swedish Academy press release. Retrieved on July 2, 2011 from http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1993/press.html.
[13] There have been 12 women laureates in literature since 1901: Herta Müller, 2009; Doris Lessing, 2007; Elfriede Jelinek, 2004; Wislawa Szymborska, 1996; Toni Morrison, 1993; Nadine Gordimer,

writer to win the prize. She said that winning as an American is very special but winning as a black American is a knockout. The glowing reception she received confirmed her role as a leading voice in African-American literature, and it was also a significant occasion for black women writers. At that stage she had already written six novels: *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992) and after her Nobel Prize, *Paradise* (1999), *Love* (2003) and *A Merci* (2008) along with a book on literary criticism, *Playing in the Dark* (1992). She was already an internationally renowned and well-established writer and critic, but somehow the Nobel Prize conferred a measure of universality, of expressing local, deeply-rooted historical events, such as slavery, through the experience and consciousness of dispossessed women in a resonant language that transforms myth and memory. Her magic vocabulary and haunting bodily inscriptions and absences fuse the tradition of oral storytelling with the more advanced technique of postmodernism based on erasure, ambivalence, repetition, pastiche, linguistic wordplay, the iteration and reiteration of words, phrases and passages, metanarratives, and open endings. While this linguistic and narrative variation is evocative of an oral literature that shapes and retraces various tellings of the same story, it also demonstrates a concern for the production and meaning of language.

Beloved

In *Beloved* Morrison spins an incredible story, woven around myths which create a sophisticated linguistic interplay: the crossing of genres and styles is parallel to the crossing of borders, the interplay between presence and absence, life and death. This is a story that rewrites American history and, at the same time, "it is not a story to pass on". This is the constant refrain throughout the book. The historically and geographically situated opening of the book: Cincinnati, Ohio, 1873, 124 Bluestone Road, ends up on the last page with: "It was not a story to pass on. … This is not a story to pass on. … By and by all trace is gone, and what is forgotten is not only the footprints but the water

1991; Nelly Sachs, 1966; Gabriela Mistral, 1945; Pearl Buck, 1938; Sigrid Undset, 1928; Grazia Deledda, 1926; Selma Lagerlöf, 1906. The Nobel Prize is therefore catching up for the lost time by rebalancing the percentage of women winners.

Figure 1.2: Film adaptation starring Oprah Winfrey as Sethe and Kimberly Elise as Denver
(Source: still *Beloved,* directed by Jonathan Demme, USA, 1998, 172 min. Disney Enterprises, Inc.)

too and what is down there. The rest is weather. Not the breath of the disremembered and unaccounted for, but wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather. Certainly no clamor for a kiss. Beloved."[14]

Toni Morrison's novel, *Beloved,* received international acclaim and entered the cultural industry not only by being conferred many prestigious international prizes but also by being adapted into a mainstream motion picture, produced by none other than Oprah Winfrey, who also stars in the film as Sethe (see Figure 1.2). Though the film was not a critical success it entered the Hollywood pantheon, and this guaranteed a further circulation and reprints of the novel. The film was partly unsuccessful given the tortuous nature of the novel, which can be considered a major challenge to any screenwriter, in this case Akosua Busia.

The novel is, in fact, one of the most complex, disturbing and beautiful works of postmodern literature, yet it is ideal for the classroom to teach about shifting ideas of gender, race and responsibility. The novel relies heavily on

[14] Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (London: Picador, 1988), 275.

flashbacks (Sethe's and Paul D's "rememories") to explain a dark story of slavery, love, death and retribution. The book is deeply emotional and raises weighty moral issues. Morrison's writing remaps American history but is not historical in the usual sense; it is not linear but circular, and it has mesmerising refrains and repetitions, like lullabies and myths which come to life. Beloved is not just the baby ghost that comes back to reclaim her mother who killed her to protect her from the inhumanity of slavery; it is also the metaphor for all the "sixty million and more" people who were enslaved and suffered (as mentioned in the epigraph to her book). She symbolises the individual and the collective, the deep unconscious and yet the political figure. Morrison wrote for the first time about slavery not in sociological terms but expressed the inner life of slaves, exploring their psyches, bringing to word the experience and consciousness of black women, mothers and daughters, real and magical. It is, therefore, not without reason that literary critic Barbara Christian compared Toni Morrison to Virginia Woolf in her article.[15] She compared them because they are both crucial to the question of canon formation: Woolf for the entry of women into the Western literary canon, and Morrison for opening up the canon to black Americans. Though their class background is completely different, they struggled to achieve expressive freedom, fighting the influence of their forefathers. Both experimented with language and invented unorthodox, novelistic characteristics, fighting literary conventions that had silenced the voice of women. For both, memory is a central aspect of inner life. They both solved the tension between inner and outer life, Woolf by using soliloquies (not exactly the stream of consciousness deployed by Joyce, which was too centred in a self that never embraced that which is outside self and beyond), and Morrison by using inner monologues, along with choruses, inner voices and ghosts becoming flesh, and flesh becoming absence. Both writers have a strong imagination, but Woolf attempted to capture the meaning of life in the moment, and Morrison through the rhythm of life.

Such a comparison is not only totally plausible but also highly insightful. Barbara Christian is a black woman, and so she is entitled to extend her critical horizon beyond any racist bias. Nonetheless, at the beginning of her career, Morrison was compared by Joan Bischoff to a "great" canonical author, Henry

[15] Barbara Christian, "Layered Rhythms: Virginia Woolf and Toni Morrison," *MFS, Modern Fiction Studies* 39, 3&4 (1993): 483–500.

James.[16] As Nancy Peterson writes, this move was calculated because by comparing Morrison to James, Bischoff justifies her object of study as someone who, though unfamiliar to the academics of the period, is deserving of their attention.[17] It also implied that Morrison's book spoke to more than just a black audience. Indeed, Bischoff goes on to invoke the problematic language of universalism to promote Morrison: "Though her characters' problems are conditioned by the black milieu of which she writes, her concerns are broader, universal ones."[18] Concerned that analogies between herself and various (white, male) canonical authors were tantamount to imposing the wrong tradition on her novels, Morrison would remark in an interview in 1983: "I am not like James Joyce, I am not like Thomas Hardy, I am not like Faulkner." Morrison asks for the development of a criticism rooted in black culture to make profoundly intricate readings of her novels and those of black women writers possible. This is the same claim made by women writers in general on the male canon. In short, she condemns praise or negative criticism based on criteria and paradigms that are not connected to Afro-American culture. One of the most heated discussions in the field deals with questions of authenticity and authority. It examines who practises black feminism (only black female feminists?) and the kind of analysis it entails (the study of black women's writing only? The study of race, gender and class in any text?). To argue that black feminist critics are the only ones attuned to the issues to be found in black women's writings is to risk lapsing into a problematic biologism or essentialism. But to argue that the identity of the critic is totally irrelevant would be to deny the particular insights that can come from the experience of living as a black woman. By comparing Woolf and Morrison, and by examining the contextual and material circumstances that distinguish them from one another along with the similar obstacles and goals shared along the axis of gender, leads to a reading in which gender, race and class are mutually illuminating.

The novel *Beloved* shows exactly how to overcome this critical dilemma: although it focuses on the internal consciousness of black women from a black

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[16] Joan Bischoff, "The Novels of Toni Morrison: Studies in Thwarted Sensitivity," *Studies in Black Literature* 6, 3 (1975): 21–23.
[17] Nancy J. Peterson, *Toni Morrison: Critical and Theoretical Approaches* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 3.
[18] Joan Bischoff quoted in Peterson, *Toni Morrison,* 3.

female perspective and at a certain time and place in history, it nevertheless expresses something larger than the text itself, an indefinability, a reach, an anxiety, a suffering, a form of pain that is common to other women and men in another time and another place. Identity is never fixed, but always dislocated, more present than absent. It is the hard task of the reader to make sense, or many senses, of what is read but also experienced through the rhythm of language. It is an experience, a sensation, that goes beyond the critical reflection and speaks right to the heart. Therefore *Beloved* eludes explanation, and the gap between response and interpretation persists. Morrison's techniques, themes and iteration induce a compelling confusion.

That magical confusion led to the novel's huge success and impact. The novel has the power to puzzle and destabilise, yet also to console and provide guidelines for understanding what has been and should never be again: "This is not a story to pass on." And yet it had to be passed on in order to reach that level of identity and identification that would allow the black community both to immortalise their history of pain and suffering and to celebrate memory as the most precious tool against forgetfulness and erasure.

Conclusion: Beyond the colour-line of the canon?

Since its inception, the canon has significantly changed in meaning, format and function. It has adapted to societal changes, and to new aesthetic dimensions that require a broadening of the paradigms of evaluation, appreciation and interpretation. Feminist theories, black studies, post-colonialism, queer studies and multiculturalism have had a marked impact on changing the flexibility of the canon, also by contesting its inherent mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Nowadays we can no longer speak of a single canon but of a multiple array of possible canons that do still attempt to guarantee a kind of visibility, coherence and also accessibility for both dominant and minority writers, either inside or outside the Western canon. The cultural industry has also become more imbricated with the appeal of literary products, which, in tandem with the role of literary prizes and their international appeal, has increased its imprint on the canon; it is no longer an ivory tower but more an intricate crossroads of genres, generations, genealogies and geographies. So, rather than having become obsolete and unwanted, the canon has reinvented itself to serve different purposes.

The institutionalisation of literary prizes (Nobel, Booker, Neustadt, and Pulitzer prizes, to name but a few) has favoured the inclusion of women writers in the canon, in particular women of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, this often relates to a tokenification and fetishisation of difference more than a real interest in different aesthetics and politics. Often marketed as exotic others, as in the case of Arundhati Roy (*The God of Small Things,* Booker Prize 1997), or selected as representing the voice of her own people through a universal language, such as Toni Morrison (*Beloved,* 1987, Pulitzer Prize, 1988, Nobel Prize 1993), literary prizes can lend considerable visibility and coverage while also jeopardising or whitewashing some of the radical views of the writers involved, by "blending" them into the canon or mainstream. The scope of this chapter has, therefore, been to explore the politics of cultural production and to analyse how the mechanisms behind publication, reception and canonisation function, and to examine the role of gender, race, ethnicity and nationalism therein. The debate on "objective judgment" versus the challenge of diversity has been addressed, in particular, with respect to how race can make or break the canon.

Implications for teaching

The chapter questions the process of canon formation with respect to issues of gender and race and explores how to make the link with the role of the global marketplace, which is increasingly influencing, though not yet dictating, the process of canon formation. It is obvious that the categories of gender and race figure prominently in all processes of inclusion and exclusion, of which the canon is an exemplary model. Though the definition of canon is slippery and over time is subject to shifts in perspectives, it is still one of the most useful reference tools for teaching. The canon not only constitutes the bases on which many school and university curriculums are structured, but it also organises the modalities through which knowledge and evaluation is incorporated by students, teachers and policymakers. As this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, the canon does not function in isolation, away from the rules of the marketplace. On the contrary, in recent decades it has come increasingly under the influence of commercial institutions, even in the form of prestige through awards, prizes and reviews. This means that the relevance of the canon for pedagogy has shifted from a pure reflection of

aesthetic value to become a more interlinked reflection on global practices and power differentials.

This chapter has attempted to show how gender and race have featured in these transitions, from the traditional canon to a more detailed analysis of how operations of inclusion and exclusion based on gender and race have entered the global market. Though gender and race were initially positioned as marginalising women and authors of colour, questions of otherness have now become an item of exchange in themselves. Being a female or black author is often marketed as an item of distinction and therefore difference is essentialised in order to be competitively promoted.

It is important to reflect on these issues in teachers' practices, not only to discuss issues of gender and race by reflecting on individual authors, but as a general discourse on practices of inclusion and exclusion which operate for individual authors and also at national and international levels. The undoing of mechanisms of power and politics must start in the classroom, by making students aware of patterns of dissymmetry not only at the level of representations (by analysing stereotypes on women, ethnic or marginalised people), but also by unravelling discursive practices that work towards the institutionalisation, canonisation and commercialisation of certain regimes of values and beliefs. These have deep roots in colonial relations, where notions of self and otherness were constructed by championing Europe as the cradle of civilisation and the colonies as laboratories for development, and where education, schooling and learning were pretty much based on this dissymmetrical operation: who was teaching "what" to whom. The chapter has shown that teaching and learning are interactive sites of knowledge that work both bottom up and top down. In order to understand the mechanisms of this exchange, gender and race have been analysed as exemplary categories that operate against processes of inclusion and exclusion.

Questions

1. This chapter highlights how the canon has worked through history as an apparatus of inclusion and exclusion where relations of power, based on gender and racial dissymmetries, are played out. After reading this chapter, what factors do you think make you as a reader critically aware of the ideological implications of the patriarchal and racialised apparatus of cultural production?

2. Do you think that there is an objective and impartial way of judging and assessing literary works on their literary merit or do you think that social and cultural contexts also play a role? In the latter case, what is the role that gender and race have to play?

3. After reading the case of Toni Morrison's *Beloved,* highlight the reasons for this novel's successful breakthrough at theoretical, institutional and commercial levels. Analyse why this novel is theoretically and aesthetically innovative, why it has attracted the interest of prize-giving committees and why it has become so widely distributed and well received.

4. Think about how gender and race, also in intersection with other categories, play a role in the process of canonisation of an author and how this is integrated in the multicultural curriculum. Is the multiculturalisation of the curriculum always positive and desirable? If not, why not?

Assignments

1. Elaborate on the function of the literary canon, both mainstream and alternative, and argue about the advantages and drawbacks of being part of the mainstream canon for writers of different gender and racial background.

2. The chapter focuses on the case of Toni Morrison, as an exemplary icon who bent the canon to open it up and include gender and racial diversity. Can you give other examples that have also fulfilled this function? Analyse and discuss how they managed to bend the canon in interaction with the cultural industry.

3. Can you think of any recent hype surrounding an author? Analyse the marketing campaign behind it, paying attention to how gender and race were used and addressed.

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CHAPTER 2:

Monumental Dresses: Coming to Terms with Racial Repression

Rosemarie Buikema

Phila Portia Ndwandwe was a high-placed South African freedom fighter who had been missing since 1988 and who turned out to have been murdered by the security police. She was the first victim whose remains were exhumed after information was provided by perpetrators appearing before the Amnesty Committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa. Phila Portia Ndwandwe had been trained in Quatro camps and had functioned as the acting commander of Natal Umkhonto activities from Swaziland. She was responsible for the infiltration of the African National Congress (ANC) cadres into Natal. After the unbanning of the ANC she did not return to her family. A number of stories started to circulate, explaining for instance that she had not gone missing but had become a police collaborator (an *askari*). However, as the whole nation could witness in the special TRC reports dedicated to the Amnesty Committee's exhumations and broadcasted by SABC-TV in 1997, and as we can read in the 1998 TRC report, security branch members had abducted her from Swaziland. This abduction happened with the help of two *askaris,* but she never became an *askari* herself.

The case of Ndwandwe is often referred to in the post-TRC literature as proof of the rightness of the truth before justice strategy. Without the Amnesty Committee, her story might not have been told, and Phila Ndwandwe might have been remembered, informed by speculations, as a police collaborator. The truth emerged because, in order to receive amnesty, some of the policemen involved in Phila Ndwandwe's disappearance appeared before the Amnesty Committee and told the story of her last days in prison. The security police members clearly stated that she had not been prepared to co-operate with the police. She explicitly did not want to turn into an *askari.* Consequently, as the policemen did not have admissible evidence to prosecute her and as they could not release her either, they killed her and buried her on the Elandskop farm. In the end, the exhumation of the remains of Phila Portia Ndwandwe took place in KwaZulu-Natal on 12 March 1997. On that occa-

sion, amnesty commissioner Richard Lyster noted that this was one of "the most poignant and saddest" of the exhumations. According to Lyster:

> She was held in a small concrete chamber on the edge of the small forest in which she was buried. According to information from those that killed her, she was held naked and interrogated in this chamber for some time before her death. When we exhumed her, she was on her back in a foetal position, because the grave had not been dug long enough, and had a single bullet wound to the top of her head, indicating that she had been kneeling or squatting when she was killed. Her pelvis was clothed in a plastic packet, fashioned into a pair of panties indicating an attempt to protect her modesty.[1]

The story of Phila Ndwandwe is only one of the numerous examples of the tensions between truth and justice which were central to the process of political transition in South Africa. While dealing with the nation's legacy of racial repression, the guiding question that preceded the holding of the TRC hearings was how something really new could be achieved. Legal vindication alone is not sufficient to pave the road towards a new community; that much is shown by the lessons of history.[2] But establishing insight into the truth just might achieve this. The attempt to clear the path and enable the coming of a new era eventually led to the decision to let truth prevail over justice. Not with an eye on neglecting justice, but rather with a clear focus on a higher ambition: deterring discord, aiming for forgiveness and reconciliation. It had always been the TRC's hope and aim that insight into the truth, the different kinds of truth, would eventually bring on reconciliation, because the belief was that something new could only flourish on the soil of reconciliation. The question of how something really new could be achieved therefore transformed into

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[1] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, Volume II, 1998.

[2] The joint treatment of the children and grandchildren of Dutch people who had collaborated with the German occupier (NSB) together with WWII victims turned out to be impossible even for the second and third generation at the Dutch Centrum '45, a clinic for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) resulting from WWII as well as from subsequent wars. The Netherlands did have a WWII tribunal, but no WWII truth commission. See also Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992); Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2002); Richard A. Wilson, "Justice and Legitimacy in the South African Transition," in *The Politics of Memory: Transitional Justice in Democratizing Societies,* ed. Alexandra Barahona de Brito, et al., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 190–218; Carli Coetzee and Sarah Nuttall, eds., *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998).

another question as the TRC process evolved: how can our attempt to articulate a collective memory steer clear of bringing on new dissent? The TRC thus not only offered redemptive political possibilities, but also announced the beginning of a new struggle over South Africa's past, present and future.

Sexual difference and transitional justice

This example from South Africa's recent history provides us with numerous leads for further reflection on how feminist theory offers a perspective on relating to the question of dealing with racial and sexual differences, or to phrase it differently, the question of how to come to terms with legacies of injustice in a globalising world. The case described above touches upon the phenomenon that life in a state of repression does not necessarily imply that a clear demarcation line between victims and perpetrators can be drawn in all circumstances. Different stories were circulating about Phila Ndwandwe. In 1988 she had been a victim of apartheid by definition; but had she then turned into a perpetrator by collaborating with the oppressor, that is, by becoming an *askari*? Victims do indeed sometimes turn into perpetrators, in a concatenation of repression. *Askaris* were feared within the ANC, and an individual suspected of being one might easily receive a death sentence. The state was unmistakably the main perpetrator, yet human rights were also violated in the ANC Quatro camps, particularly when party members were suspected of having defected to the enemy camp. Working through the legacy of oppression, including all the possible positions this involves, requires a complex and differentiated concept of victim and perpetrator. Victims can respond in different ways to their victim status. Dealing with past violations of human rights therefore calls for strategies that enable a consideration of the complexity, or multilayeredness, of oppression and victimhood.

In feminist and postcolonial theories this is an all too familiar problem. Oppression and internalised oppression are complex processes to work through. Often the biggest obstacle to lasting change is the lack of a new structure, a new language of address, which can be utilised once the yoke of oppression has been cast off. When the representatives of an oppressed or marginalised grouping begin to partake in the public space, how do they manage, for example, to transform the public space in such a way that their own particularity can be realised? For decades so-called equality thinkers as well

as difference thinkers in the field of feminist theory have tried to steer the course of social and academic change by focussing both on the terrain of formalising equal rights—something that is indispensable and of ongoing necessity—and on that of adequate symbolical representation. On the one hand, it was important to ensure justice on the level of numerical representation in political reality (equality thinkers); on the other hand, the very texture of this political reality had to be analysed for the way it is intrinsically interwoven with the repression of alterity (difference thinkers). For the time being, the latter continues to be the case, because our symbolical order is governed by the law of sameness, to cite the leading philosopher of difference, Luce Irigaray. This holds for the oppressed and oppressor alike. Irigaray argues that we are molded by a tradition of thought that teaches us to order the world in terms of opposites, whereby one pole is defined in terms of the other.[3] Irigaray uses her concept of the operative law of sameness to expose the ingrained tradition of thinking the one in terms of the other, of conceptualising black as non-white, woman as not-man, lesbian as non-heterosexual, poor as not-rich, the other as not the self. Each opposition therefore implies hegemony, norm, structural unity, and thinking in terms of sameness. In Irigaray's analysis that sameness translates into so-called phallologocentrism, that is, thinking in terms of an ostensibly disembodied, but implicitly masculine rationalism. She holds therefore that structural change in society can only be achieved by abandoning sameness thinking and developing an alternative. We should learn to think in terms of difference. This involves driving a wedge, for instance, into the ingrained dialectic of masculine and feminine, and also into that of perpetrator and victim, of oppressor and oppressed. In other words, as long as the dialectic of sameness determines the definition of the problematic, allowing the dominant term to define the marginalised one, the emergence of anything new is precluded.

As I will illustrate below, this also affects the manner in which a concept of justice is created after a period of repression. When we apply Irigaray's premises, predicated on sexual difference, to attempts at establishing new ways of doing justice, the conclusion is that as long as an economy of classic justice—based on the barter of punishment for crime—dictates where we

[3] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985).

should look for a solution, no new structure can come into being. The economy of barter justice implies a level of equality; it implies sameness, tit for tat—and it does not involve acknowledging the essentially different. The paradigm of sexual difference entails that a new situation can only arise if victim and perpetrator relate to one another in essentially new ways. It is this principle that has been put into motion by those who set up the South African TRC. That essentially different position could become more firmly established through an acknowledgement that differences between perpetrators and victims are unbridgeable in light of their different historical backgrounds. That chasm of difference cannot be yoked by the punitive system. At the same time, however, a contiguity between victims and perpetrators may be revealed if we differentiate along categories and consider individual stories; it then turns out that there are different classes of crime, victim, and perpetrator. This is not to say that those who really did commit the murder of Phila Ndwandwe could just as quickly receive the gift of forgiveness in exchange for the truth and the acknowledgement of difference. It does mean, however, that the disclosure of the specific story of victim and perpetrator creates opportunities for making a new language suitable for designating sameness as well as differences within the category of various classes of perpetrators and victims. Such a new language comes into being with those who are paradigmatically related, either to the perpetrators, for instance because they shared the same privileges during apartheid and/or did not actively resist the regime, or to the victims, if only for reasons of materially lagging behind. The process of articulating and mediating similarities and differences within a social category is exactly the strategy Irigaray has in mind with her politics of difference. Driving a wedge into entrenched oppositions and differentiating between them bleeds forth from the law of sameness and exhibits the need for a vocabulary for putting on the agenda the differences within. Only if an oppressed group is capable of doing so can liberation and participation in the public sphere be realised with some success. The established power relations then are not simply reversed but will acquire a new form of appearance.

The woman who kept silent

It will be evident that the domain of transitional justice, that is, of creating a novel and other notion of justice, needs to be informed by other disciplines—disciplines that employ a concept of the powers of imagination, most notably the arts. Characteristic for the process of political transition in South Africa is that the potential role of art in constituting the new and multilayered South Africa was acknowledged in academic circles from the start. It is generally recognised that the task of giving memory a home, of placing it within the visible domain, cannot rest solely on the publication of the testimonies of victims and perpetrators in the TRC report.[4] To paraphrase South African author André Brink:[5] One might even say that unless the enquiries of the TRC are extended, complicated, and intensified in the imaginings of literature and the visual arts, South African society cannot sufficiently come to terms with its past in order to face the future. Even from his perspective as a judge of the Constitutional Court, Albie Sachs recently called on people to take seriously the potential of art to add complexity and depth to politics, arguing that it should be granted a proper position in the public debate on the new South Africa. For that reason and as if to underline the interaction of justice and the arts, Sachs bought a tribute to no one less than Phila Ndwandwe, which is the installation of Judith Mason, now on permanent exhibition in the main hall of South Africa's Constitutional Court.[6]

The core of the installation consists of a dress made of blue plastic bags. Along the skirt's hemline the following text is written in calligraphy:

> Sister, a plastic bag may not be the whole armour of God, but you were wrestling with flesh and blood, and against powers, against the rulers of darkness, against

[4] See also Rory Bester, "Trauma and Truth," in *Experiments with Truth,* ed. Okwui Enwezor, et al., (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2002), 155–173; Annie E. Coombes, *History after Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003); Jill Bennet, *Empathic Vision: Affect Trauma and Contemporary Art* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); Mark Sanders, *Ambiguities of Witnessing: Law and Literature in the Time of a truth Commission* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007); Rosemarie Buikema, "Crossing the Borders of Identity Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 16, 4 (2009): 309–323; and Rosemary Jolly, *Cultured Violence: Narrative, Social Suffering, and Engendering Human Rights in Contemporary South Africa* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010).

[5] André Brink, "Stories of History: Reimagining the Past in Post-apartheid Narrative," in *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa,* ed. Sarah Nuttall and Carli Coetzee (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998), 29–43.

[6] See Albie Sachs, "Apartheid's 'sterile spaces' need arts," *Sunday Argus,* October 17, 2010; and "Support the arts in places apartheid tried to make sterile—Sachs," *Sunday Independent,* October 17, 2010.

> spiritual wickedness in sordid places. Your weapons were your silence and a piece of rubbish. Finding that bag and wearing it until you were disinterred is such a frugal, common-sensical, house-wifey thing to do, an ordinary act … At some level you shamed your captors, and they did not compound their abuse by stripping you a second time. Yet they killed you. We only know your story because a sniggering man remembered how brave you were. Memorials to your courage are everywhere; they blow about in the streets and drift on the tide and cling to thorn-bushes. This dress is made from some of them. Hamba kahle. Umkhonto.

The dress not only symbolically makes up for Phila Ndwandwe's forced nakedness but it also commemorates her struggle, the grand gesture of keeping silent while being pressed to betray one's comrades. The dress thus both restores Ndwandwe's dignity and her agency. This dress negotiates between the seen and the unseen, the said and the unsaid, the known and the unknown. The exhumations most literally brought hidden truths to the surface in such a way that this surface will never be the same. In that vein, the dress performs a sense of redemptive truth as well as a sense of restorative justice for both the perpetrators (or those who suffer from identifications with this position) and the victims. In this context, the very materiality of the plastic dress opens up possibilities to think about the historically raced and gendered space of South Africa in a different way for both the oppressor and the oppressed. The blue plastic shopping bag, which really is omnipresent in South Africa, is paradigmatically related to the blue plastic bag that at least minimally warranted Phila Ndwandwe's dignity as well as her agency. The present and the past, the personal and the political, truth and justice acquire a specific form through the reuse of a plastic shopping bag as a dress.

Figure 2.1: Judith Mason. *The Man who Sang and the Woman who kept Silent* (1998) Sculpture from triptych-central panel. (Courtesy of the artist)

Concurrently, transition or transformation is a process of reiteration and recycling, of remembering history, but in such a way that the repetition recognises the differences within and thus gradually reforms and rebends traditional forms and relationships: between the oppressor and the oppressed, between the different sorts of oppressors, within the grey area of *askaris* and beneficiaries. In that vein, this work of art, the monumental dress made of plastic for Phila Ndwandwe, constitutes an attempt at the embodiment of the process of transitional justice, the visualisation of a new collective skin while recognising the differences within. Recognising and dealing with difference thus becomes a process that, no matter how slow its pace, consciously and unconsciously inscribes itself ever more securely into the cultural memory of postcolonial, post-apartheid society, as on every occasion a different memory is triggered by just any arbitrary flimsy plastic shopping bag. Every simple South African blue plastic shopping bag has become a mnemonic trace, a gesture of restorative justice, through its reuse in the dress by Judith Mason and through its connection to the Constitutional Court.

Thus, a decade after the presentation of the TRC report, it is generally recognised that the becoming post-apartheid of South Africa cannot rest solely on the publication of the testimonies in the TRC report. This indispensable instrument has been only the beginning of a transition still to be completed. It is now up to the arts to inhabit the open spaces between testimonies both public and individual; and up to policymakers to be receptive to the politics of arts.

The poetics of scrap

The reuse of a plastic shopping bag in the installation by Judith Mason has a very specific and special significance, as we have now seen. However, the multilayered performance of the past as well as the future by deploying recycled material is a core theme in the works of other South African sculptors too. In part, this has to do with economic reasons, but more importantly, found materials have a history which can be layered into the new work. The choice of materials in South African art is therefore thoroughly enlaced with the artwork's political effect.[7] We could call this the poetics of scrap. Recently I have

[7] See also Sue Williamson, *South African Art Now* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009); Okwui Enwezor and Chika Okeke-Agulu, eds., *Contemporary African Art since 1980* (Bologna:

paid attention to the effects of Willy Bester's use of scrap materials, such as industrial rubbish, parts of medical cabinets, spades, children's shoes, or old anti-apartheid signs. As I demonstrated regarding his famous Sarah Bartmann statue, the way in which he deploys his material should be seen as pictorial research as well as a build-up of geopolitical and intertextual depth that could not be achieved by using new materials. Through his use of scrap material he successfully deconstructs the gendered and raced history of colonial South Africa.[8]

A good example of the way in which South African artists are creating the new by means of rebending the old in the particular context of the post-TRC era, is a very powerful piece in the oeuvre of Nandipha Mntambo, a young sculptor born in Swaziland and working in Cape Town. The piece is another significant example of the aesthetical and political power of used material, but the context of her work also points at the memory of gender-specific human rights violations under apartheid in general and at another dimension to the story of Ndwandwe in particular.

Mntambo is known for her sculptural costumes made of cowhide. Cowhide is not exactly the same as scrap or waste material, but it shares the feature of having served elsewhere, of bearing a history. The symbolism of hide and the historical significance of cows made cowhide the material of her choice. Cows are historically associated with affluence and prosperity in agrarian societies in sub-Saharan Africa. Those families who could afford it used to bury their dead wrapped in cowhide. Traditionally only men were allowed to dye and cure the hides. In some African contexts, cows are still the accepted currency that a prospective groom must offer his bride's family in the age-old practice of bride-price *(lobola).* At the same time, those practices are criticised in Mntambo's sculptures, because women are deprived of agency and reduced to the level of possessions. The equation of women and trade, women and

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Damiani, 2009); Salah M. Hassan and Olu Oguibe, eds., *Authentic/Ex-Centric: Conceptualism in Contemporary African Art* (Ithaca, NY: Forum for African Arts, 2001); Sarah Nuttall, ed., *Beautiful Ugly: African and Diaspora Aesthetics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).

[8] Rosemarie Buikema, "The Arena of Imaginings: Sarah Bartmann and the Ethics of Representation," in *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture,* ed. Rosemarie Buikema and Iris van der Tuin (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 70–85. See also for the materiality of South African art Nuttall, *Beautiful Ugly;* John Peffer, *Art and the End of Apartheid* (Minneapolis and London: Minnesota University Press, 2009); Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu, *Contemporary African Art;* Nii O. Quarcoopome, ed., *Through African Eyes: The European in African Art, 1500 to Present* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 2009); and Williamson, *South African Art Now.*

passivity, but still also the representation of women as agents are thus forefronted in the use of hide for Mntambo's sculptures. As she points out herself: "This material memory that seems to live within the skin cells of the animals I use means that the medium itself can be seen as one that physically engages the concept of recollection, both on a cellular and physical level."[9] Dressing the cow hide is an essential part of the way she works. Mntambo describes how she literally has to work her way through layers of fat, which need to be removed. She then shapes the cured skins on casts of her own body and those of women close to her. The end result is a set of hairy life-size women, who are not necessarily or unequivocally repulsive. Instead, it is a fascinating performance of all kind of boundary blurrings. The animal skin allows her to shape morphing structures that are part human and part animal, part alive and part dead, part grotesquely revolting and part sensually enticing. The fragments of female form may elicit repulsion not only because of their hairiness but also because of the particular smell and the touch of the material. However, it is repulsion intended to evoke the residue of life and the actual presence of the corporeal rather than the female body as victim, damaged, abused or abject, as Mntambo states in the *Ingabisa* catalogue. The literal and symbolical references to digging, memory and forgetting, victimhood and agency, thus thematically and formally link Mntambo's art to the political context of South Africa in general. A political context which has everything to do with the sense of unease, the ambivalence, the two-ness, provoked by the smell and the shapes of the animal skin. But, as I mentioned earlier, there is one particular piece which deserves to be highlighted here, since the general engineerings of trauma and memory seem to echo Ndwandwe's story as referred to in the TRC report and Mason's dress.

Indlovukati (2007) is a single pale coloured skin which sensuously delineates the back and buttocks of an absent woman. This dress-like statue made of smelly hairy cowhide is floating in the exhibition space just like *The woman who kept silent,* Mason's famous dress installation. The form of the absent, ghostlike body here is that of a kneeling woman. As the TRC report taught us, Phila Ndwandwe was kneeling or squatting when she was killed. Against that background this dress called *Indlovukati* seems to be made to cover Phila Ndwandwe's humiliated falling body. The particular shape of the

[9] Catalogue statement for the *Ingabisa* exhibition at Michael Stevenson (2007).

animal skin is here occupying the space in between the living and the dead in a very significant way. At the same time, "indlovukati" is Nguni for "mother of the king". Further investigation into the meaning of this title reveals that the name of Ndwandwe refers to a Swazi clan which has known a famous indlovukati called Nukase Ndwandwe (1890–1957).

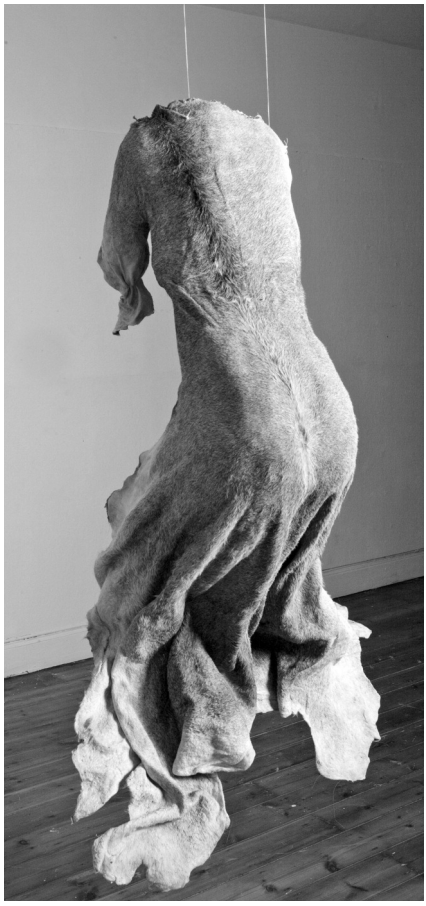

Figure 2.2: Nandipha Mntambo. *Indlovukati* (2007) Cowhide, resin, polyester mesh, waxed cord. 153 × 89 × 70cm. (Courtesy of Michael Stevenson Gallery)

This woman played an active role in the religious and social welfare of Swaziland. In general, the indlovukati and her son function at the head of the political hierarchy. These connotations, evoked by the title of this floating dress, commemorate another aspect of the story of Phila Ndwandwe, an aspect which also adds to the iconic value of her vicissitudes. One of the appealing facets in Ndwandwe's story is the fact that she was not only a freedom fighter suspected of collaborating with the police, but also a mother and a lover. ANC historiography describes her as the woman breastfeeding her baby in one arm and keeping a gun in the other. When she did not return in 1990, her parents reported her as being missing to the TRC. Only after the Amnesty hearings did those parents learn about the existence of their grandson Thabang. On the occasion of the reburial of Phila Ndwandwe's remains—a few weeks after the exhumations—the ANC posthumously awarded her a medal for bravery and asked her son Thabang to accept it. The jury report of the order of Mendi for bravery reads: "Demonstrating bravery and valour and for sacrificing her life for her comrades in the cause for a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society."

Against the background of those historical events, *Indlovukati,* the mother of the king, shapes the absent body as well as the body to come. The

effect of this artefact, working through the history of Phila Ndwandwe as well of that of other women living under multiple oppressive conditions, is that Phila Ndwandwe's individual story is provided with a gender- and race-specific context. Her individual vicissitudes are deepened and complexified in such a way that they get to perform the multilayered past and are able to contribute to the articulation of alternative practices of doing justice.

The dress sculpted out of cowhide, working through layers of matter, layers of history, has come to simultaneously perform absence and presence in a very significant way. This hairy dress has a history and a future. It performs the need to fight and the need to be protected. The glossy fur of the hide betrays traumatic and smelly origins; its new shape, however, can be inhabited, apart from by Phila Ndwandwe's story, by the stories and bodies of other named and as yet unnamed heroines. It is a gesture, an index of a community of the living and the dead. It performs the need to fight and the need to be protected. In that sense *Indlovukati,* Mntambo's dress, is undoing the victim-perpetrator dichotomy while underlining Irigaray's device of articulating the differences within, shaping new genealogies among women in order to be able to design other forms of solidarity and justice. Just as long as the story of subaltern voices needs to be visualised, told and retold.

Implications for teaching: Working with exemplary case studies

The approach in this chapter is very much based on the didactic principles we deploy in the introductory course in Gender and Ethnicity as it is taught within Utrecht University's Gender Studies programme. In this course we signal that gender studies has become a fully-fledged academic discipline, and we describe the transformations spawned by gender studies in the study of culture as a process of reconsidering, subverting, and rearranging what was and what is.

Constituting a new phase in the discipline, the textbooks we compiled for this course are also a form of documentation.[10] The different ways of writing the history of women and of gender studies as a discipline are classified,

[10] Rosemarie Buikema and Anneke Smelik, *Women's Studies and Culture. A Feminist Introduction* (London: Zed Books, 1995); Rosemarie Buikema and Iris van der Tuin, eds., *Doing Gender in Media, Art, and Culture* (London: Routledge 2009).

documented, and addressed. As the latter term indicates, the idea of a dialogue or debate involved in our historiographical method departs from the notion of a present "in conversation" with previous versions of the past. The trails of the past serve to delineate the paths for the future. Or as Sarah Ahmed said: "Perhaps when we think about the question of feminist futures, we need to attend to the legacies of feminist pasts, in order to think through the very question of what it would mean to have a world where feminism, as a politics of transformation, is no longer necessary."[11]

This process of reconstruction and constitution, of retelling and looking ahead is a core theme in the course and illustrated in the textbook we use by the deployment of the figure of a heroine, a woman warrior, as it were. In each session of the course, this figure serves as a prism of gender studies research in dealing with stories by and about heroines which have been circulating for some time in traditional disciplines involved in the study of culture. In other words, we point out that the story of each heroine has dwelt in different contexts, changing ever so slightly. The genealogy of those stories is traced and retold. These heroines, both the well-known and the lesser known, are put on the map again and we subsequently initiate a debate with (or about) fellow scholars in the same way as I have done in this chapter for *Teaching "Race" with a Gendered Edge.* I put the reception of the story of Phila Ndwandwe into dialogue with the work of Luce Irigaray in order to be able to illustrate a broader theoretical debate within gender and critical legal studies, namely how to deal with the legacies of oppression in times of political transition. This is a question that has become more urgent than ever, as developments all over the globe illustrate. Specific emphasis always has to be put on the multilayeredness of oppression as for example the conflicting interests of the fights against patriarchal and racial repression might illustrate (see also the questions below). Moreover, in this chapter I inserted the debate on medium-specific ways of performing and dealing with legacies of injustice to illustrate my claim that art as the singular encounter of content and form has intricate possibilities to deal with complex political issues.

[11] Sara Ahmed, "Feminist Futures," in *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*, ed. Mary Eagleton (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 236.

Narratives of women (heroines) do not necessarily yield a gender and race sensitive story. In this chapter I sought to show that selecting a woman as an object for research offers an opportunity for feminist analysis, but such a selection does not self-evidently warrant feminist outcomes. The first step in gender studies research usually consists of making women present who have been forgotten or inadequately described, but even so this might lead to gender insensitive and/or sexist analyses of these heroines. As a sample of the potential of gender and race sensitive analysis, the chapter intended to demonstrate that this is all about *what kind of questions* a heroine is being asked, and *what theories about gender and justice* are being used.

Questions

1. The case study which this chapter deals with raises a lot of questions concerning the relationship between truth and justice. Try to elaborate on the possible relationships of truth and justice in a context of past violations of human rights, while starting to elaborate on the concepts of truth and justice as such. Try to differentiate several forms of truth (narrative truth, forensic truth, redemptive truth for instance) and several forms of justice (restorative justice, legal justice, transitional justice and so on).

2. In this chapter I argue that in a context of patriarchal and racial oppression the relationship between victims and perpetrators in most cases inevitably is both a gendered and a raced one. This means that we cannot think of new forms of justice without taking the feminist and postcolonial debates into account. Continue the exercise started in question 1 and insert gender and race as analytical tools while examining the relationship between truth and justice.

3. The next step analysing the intersections between gender and race could be elaborated on in a yet unwritten chapter on Phila Ndwandwe's life in the Quatro camps. In 1996 Thenjiwe Mtintso, an MK commander in Uganda during the 1980s and now Deputy Secretary of the ANC, spoke of the expectation in ANC camps that female comrades would provide sex for male comrades. Novelist Zoë Wicomb wrote in 1990: "In South Africa the orthodox position whilst celebrating the activism of women, is that

the gender issue ought to be subsumed by the national liberation struggle. … I can think of no reason why black patriarchy should not be challenged alongside the fight against Apartheid."[12]

a. Do you agree with Zoë Wicomb or can you think of reasons why black patriarchy should not be challenged alongside the fight against racism?
b. Try to elaborate on the intra-actions of gender and race in the case of sexism within the racially oppressed category. Use this chapter's analysis of the work of Nandipha Mntambo to illustrate your point.

Assignments

1. In this chapter I presented two examples of the way in which the visual arts contextualised, deepened and complexified an individual story. The arts have the ability to reiterate historical facts in such a way that the repetition provides new meanings out of well-known facts. Essential to that artistic practice is the use of scrap materials.

   Another South African feminist artist who works with scrap material is Penny Siopis: "In my recent work I use 'found' objects including found film. I am particularly interested in the things people leave behind by force of circumstance: things which embody very specific memories and experiences yet have wider social and cultural resonances. These objects are complex subjective traces of emotional investment not always easy to express. Being found and often made and treasured for intimate and private reasons, these objects are emblematic of a merging of private and public worlds."[13] Siopis is also another South African artist who commented on her country's politics of gender and race. Try to find images of her work and analyse the selected artefacts in terms of the way in which the used materials blur the boundaries between useful and useless, worthwhile and worthless, private and public, arts and politics.

2. The plot of Zoë Wicomb's novel *David's Story* (2001) centres around the history of Dulce September, a female freedom fighter and MK commander

[12] Zoë Wicomb, "To Hear the Variety of Discourses," *Current Writing* 2 (1990): 35–44, 69.
[13] Enwezor and Okeke-Agulu, *Contemporary African Art,* 37.

whose body is, as Dorothy Driver[14] puts it, in sexual service to the struggle. Try to get hold of the book and read it as yet another way of dealing with female icons as part of the transitional process and as a means of constituting a new and multilayered national identity.

3. Try to find different examples of the intra-action of artefacts and the shaping up of political transitions either in Europe or beyond. Pay particular attention to the medium-specificity of the artefacts.

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[14] Dorothy Driver, afterword to *David's Story,* by Zoë Wicomb, The Women Writing Africa Series (New York: The Feminist Press SUNY, 2001), 215–271.

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CHAPTER 3:

Embodying Otherness While Teaching Race and Gender at White European Universities

Ellis Jonker

Introduction

Talking about race and thinking through race is puzzling, quite apart from our beliefs, life histories, family heritages, cultural orientations, academic disciplines, and political standpoints. Paradoxically, one can claim both talking about race and not talking about race is racist.[1] Two Surinamese-Dutch feminist professors, originally trained as anthropologists at Amsterdam University, Gloria Wekker (1950) and Philomena Essed (1955), made critical discourse on race and racism the core of their academic teaching and writing.[2] In this chapter I share the inspiration I get from studying their educational biographies and teaching practices to empower my own teaching practice in gender plus studies at the Department of Education of Groningen University.[3] Embodying otherness in Dutch or any other European universities—themselves overwhelmingly white bulwarks—both professors have to work against being seen as "space invaders", "killjoy feminists" or token blacks.[4] By taking a look at the interconnections between their teaching practices, written work and educational biographies, we can gain a deeper understanding of gendered racisms in the white European academy, pushing ourselves to find ways to

Many thanks to Gloria Wekker and Philomena Essed for their warm-hearted sharing of thoughts on life and teaching and permission to join their classes.

[1] Nina Eliasoph, "'Everyday Racism' in a Culture of Political Avoidance: Civil Society, Speech, and Taboo," *Social Problems* 46 (1999): 486.

[2] Philomena Essed is Professor of Critical Race, Gender and Leadership Studies for the PhD Program in Leadership and Change in the Professions at Antioch University, Yellow Springs, Ohio, US. She is an affiliated researcher of the Graduate Gender Program of the Institute of Media and Culture Studies, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Gloria Wekker is Professor of Gender and Ethnicity Studies for the Graduate Gender Program of the Institute of Media and Culture Studies and the Director of GEM, Centre of Expertise on Gender, Ethnicity and Multiculturality, both located at Utrecht University, the Netherlands.

[3] "Gender plus" studies is my shorthand for gender studies that have moved on to practise intersectional thinking.

[4] Nirmal Puwar, *Space Invaders. Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place* (Oxford: Berg, 2004); Sara Ahmed, "Embodying Diversity: Problems and Paradoxes for Black Feminists," *Race Ethnicity and Education* 12 (2009): 49.

resist and undo them. This is important because of the persistent under-representation of students and faculty of colour and of women in higher ranks at universities in the Netherlands and other European countries.[5]

Thinking through race *with* gender, class and sexuality, as intersectional theory urges us to do, complicates our endeavour to make sense of contemporary global racial conditions and their consequences in a post-civil rights, post-apartheid and postcolonial world.[6] It challenges us to renew fundamentally the ways in which we are taught to think, speak and write about ourselves, difference and sameness, (non)belonging, equity and social justice.

According to Durkheim, formal education serves to bind people to systems of race, gender and class inequality, while at the same time impressing the skills, subjectivities and disciplines that undergird modern nation-states, capitalist labour formation and, one could add nowadays, globalising consumerism. In this historical context, schools and universities in Europe are, like elsewhere in the globalising world, places of mixed blessing and contradictory resources. Through the knowledge and skills they offer, they are sites of potential liberation and raised awareness, but, at the same time, they are also sites of subordination and oppression. The classroom is a racialised and gendered location of cultural production and identity formation, where we learn to understand the world around us, to assess who can belong and who never truly will, who rules and who does not. At a more personal level, by attending school we can become somebody, an educated, respected person. Or rather learn to see ourselves as a failure, not up to standards. Schools hurt those who do not fit in easily or those who are perceived to embody otherness.[7] Teachers have the formidable task to be aware of the promises and dangers of the schooling project to which they are often deeply committed. Unfortunately, teachers often shun this task, being part of the privileged white middle classes themselves.

The chapter consists of three more parts. First, I introduce highlights of the educational biographies of Wekker and Essed, which illuminate their

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[5] Philomena Essed, "Ethnicity and Diversity in Dutch Academia," *Social Identities* 5 (1999): 211–225; Nouria Ouali, *Black, Migrants and Ethnic Minority Women Scientists Position in Research and Academic Careers in Europe* (Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2007).

[6] Howard Winant, "Race and Racism: Towards a Global Future. Discussion Article," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29 (2006): 986.

[7] Ellis Jonker, "School Hurts: Refrains of Hurt and Hopelessness in Stories about Dropping Out at a Vocational School for Care Work," *International Journal of Education and Work* 19 (2006): 121–140.

academic routes and passions. This part is based on interviews with both professors.[8] Secondly, I discuss the principles of teaching race and gender in university classrooms that Essed and Wekker practiced over the years in the Netherlands, doing so based on a combination of classroom observations (2008–2010), interviews and a close reading of their written work. I conclude with remarks about what I learned from my role models about ways to enhance teaching practices at white European universities. These lessons can be worthwhile for those of us who, like Essed and Wekker, challenge being perceived as embodying otherness on the basis of skin colour and/or gender as well as those of us who struggle to be "responsibly white" and/or male at the locations where we teach and learn.[9] In the process of reading this chapter, I invite readers to examine their own histories of becoming educated people, as (auto)biographical knowledge helps make sense of the questions posed and the answers considered worthwhile both in and outside the classroom.

Becoming educated in (post)colonial European society

Gloria arrived in the Netherlands in 1951 by boat, as the youngest of the Wekker family. Her father, a police officer in Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana (now Suriname), was on a six-month study leave. At the end of the six months, her parents decided to stay in the Netherlands, as they wanted their children to attend university. The first years were tough. Living conditions were poor, compared to the luxury the family were used to in Paramaribo. Gloria recalled the sharpest social distinction of those early post-war years of their stay in Amsterdam was not between black and white, but between Protestant and Catholic. "There were very few children of colour or black children around those days, in our neighbourhood. It was no issue at all. People used to call us names now and then, like *poepchinezen* [≈ Chinese shitheads] and niggers. My parents told us not to mind them: 'You are the most beautiful and bright children in the entire world.'"[10]

After finishing secondary school, a Catholic girls' school where she was the only student of colour, she went to Normal, Illinois for a year, as an Amer-

[8] I did extensive interviews with Gloria Wekker and Philomena Essed in 2008 and 2009 concerning their lives and work. All three interviews are in Dutch, fully transcribed and close read by the author.
[9] Karyn McKinney, *Being White: Stories of Race and Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 193.
[10] Quote from interview, April 25, 2009.

ican Field Service student. It changed her life as well as her outlook on life profoundly. "I became a part of history, over there. And I grew very colour conscious."[11] Students of colour at school were a small minority. Gloria befriended Linda, one of the few other black girls. Together, they went to sit in the front rows reserved for black people listening to Jesse Jackson speak. It was the high tide of the black liberation and black power movement. She recalled how taking part in the prom made her aware of the American experience of race, gender and sexuality and their entanglement.

> I had no clue of things concerning race. It so happened that I needed to be invited to the prom by a black boy. There were few boys, so it was already problematic. The school director could not have me, the exchange student from abroad, not being invited to the prom. So he ordered a white boy to ask me. My god! What an enormous disciplining practice it was, in terms of colour and heterosexuality! I could not take it all in at once. I wanted to understand how it all worked, so, [laughing] that's what I started doing for the rest of my life![12]

Unlike Gloria, Philomena Essed went to schools with a more mixed student body. Born in the Netherlands, she spent her youth by turn in Suriname and the Netherlands. Her father was a paediatrician. He had patients of "all classes and colours". Her parents' circle of friends was a "mixture" as well. In the interview, Philomena recalled she had a great time at school. "I grew up with girlfriends of all kinds of ancestry, I always had girlfriends across borders."[13] Like the Wekker family, the Essed family was well off. It evoked a longing to live a "less consumptious lifestyle".[14] Philomena thought that by becoming an anthropologist she could live the ideal of simplicity. Life took a different course, though, when she immersed herself in the women's movement shortly after starting to study anthropology in Amsterdam. "I haunted the women's bookstore. I bought everything. And then there was the big We-question. Who are we women? Some theories did not match my experiences …"[15]

In big strokes, Philomena sketches how one thing led to another. She remembered doing a small research project with fellow students on student

[11] Quote from interview, November 16, 2008.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Quote from interview, June 3, 2009.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

mothers, thinking the combination of motherhood and study would be an impossible one. To their astonishment, they found the mothers planned their studies very efficiently, much better than they did themselves. The project made her enthusiastic about the method of open interviewing. Thereafter, she combined theory with stories based on interviews in numerous research projects. A small research project on discrimination, part of a course by Dutch linguist Teun van Dijk, pioneer in the field of critical discourse analysis of race, convinced her of the importance of continuing to research prejudice and racism in the Netherlands. In order to do that, she first studied the history and contemporary practices of American racism and then interviewed highly educated women of colour in the Netherlands and the United States. "I wanted the comparison, since in the States they had the language and the concepts that I lacked here. That was my first book."[16]

In the interview, Philomena implicitly referred to her groundbreaking book on everyday racism published in 1984, in which she coined this illuminating concept and laid the groundwork for theorising gendered racisms.[17] Her work met with worldwide acclaim among critical scholars. Throughout the interview, she talked about her achievements in a modest way. She did not call attention to the resistance and at times hostile personal attacks her work on Dutch racisms evoked among mostly white male academics and journalists in the Netherlands.[18] It led to what she recently called, in a Kitchen Table Seminar at Aletta (Institute for Women's History), her rather "unusual career", which took her to live and work in the United States.[19] In the Netherlands, she was honoured for her dedication to expose and fight discrimination with a knighthood from Queen Beatrix in April 2011.

Gloria's first research endeavours brought her to a mountain village in the South of France. As a teenager, like Philomena, she too wanted to become an anthropologist. While still in secondary school, she got inspired by reading

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Philomena Essed, *Alledaags racisme* (Amsterdam: Feministische Uitgeverij Sara, 1984); Essed, *Everyday Racism: Reports from Women of Two Cultures* (Claremont, CA: Hunter House, 1990); Essed, *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1991).

[18] Dutch journalist Hans Moll for example debunked Essed's dissertation in a leading Dutch newspaper, claiming the important topic of racism deserved more serious research endeavours than those of "pretentious muddleheads like Essed" (translation is provided by the author). Moll, "Het onvermogen van de anti-racistische wetenschap," *NRC,* 4 May 1991, retrieved from http://admin.nrcboeken.nl/recensie/het-onvermogen-van-de-anti-racistische-wetenschap.

[19] Kitchen Table Seminar, Aletta Institute for Women's History, Amsterdam, June 29, 2011.

Margaret Mead's work on the Arapesh and on sexuality in so-called primitive societies, which she had borrowed from the public library. In her French village, she was to study gendered socialisation patterns in kindergarten and she hated it ("My god. Boring!"). Her appearance, with a "huge Afro", led the villagers to believe she was doing drugs. Their prejudice did not help to make her feel more at ease, and the experience as a whole almost made her lose her appetite for the discipline of anthropology.

Like Philomena, Gloria got involved in the women's movement. In her master's thesis she discussed theories of matrifocality, associated with women of colour. "Passionate work", she stated proudly. It convinced her that black women as a "dominated neglected group" should get more attention. Getting to know a lot of women in the women's movement turned out to be both exhilarating and confusing. Gloria started dating women and fell in love. "That was really wonderful. But at the same time it was difficult, because to many Surinamese women I was not Surinamese, not black. So I had many girlfriends who were black, but none of them Surinamese. I was not Surinamese enough with regard to my consciousness, you know. And I did not speak Surinamese. So it was difficult and painful."[20]

Gloria wanted to write about Surinamese women, in particular about their same-sex desires and sexual relations, *mati* work. In the Netherlands, opportunities to study gender and race critically were non-existent at the time. So in 1987 she decided to do a PhD at UCLA. At first, she was disappointed. Of the two teachers she appreciated most, her mentors, the white Marxist anthropologist Karen Brodkin Sacks did not have work by any black feminist scholars on her course reading list. At Gloria's suggestion, she took on bell hooks. The other, the linguistic anthropologist Claudia Mitchell Kernan, did not do gender in her Afro-American studies. Gloria recalled working hard to build bridges between the two. Supervisors warned her against putting sexuality at the centre of anthropological research; it would make her vulnerable as a scholar and less eligible on the academic labour market. Gloria understood their apprehension in a different light. Due to colonial stereotypes of black women as sexual objects to be used at will, sex is not considered a respectable research topic, particularly for black (upper) middle-class feminist scholars.

[20] Quote from interview, November 16, 2008.

"Nice girls don't like sex, it still holds true. If you are middle-class and have upwardly mobile aspirations, you don't talk about sex, about what you like and what excites you."[21]

Gloria was not easily discouraged. Inspired by the work of Angela Davis on sexuality in Afro-American women's blues lyrics, she challenged the gendered labour divisions in anthropology that prescribed that men anthropologists study sex and sexuality from up close but that women anthropologists should stick to gender and hide their sexual preferences in the field. Based on intensive fieldwork in a ten-year period, she wrote her PhD on *mati* work and published a more extensive study of it, *The Politics of Passion,* 14 years later.[22]

Comparing their histories of becoming educated, respected women, ready to bring race and gender critical studies to Europe, it is clear that seeing impressive black feminist scholars like bell hooks at work in the US academy and reading their work was of vital importance to the careers and teaching practices of Philomena and Gloria. "I know how important it was to me to have my first black teacher. Wow! That was great! To watch her doing it. This is what I can become too!"[23]

Teaching about emotionally charged topics

Since they started teaching in the 1980s, Gloria and Philomena have questioned the assumed promises and benefits of dominant educational practices for all students and for minority students in particular. They are among the very few black women professors teaching at white European universities. Gloria was the first black female academic to hold a chair in Dutch academia. Not surprisingly, the title of her inaugural lecture pointed to the hard work she needed to put in to get there, *Nesten bouwen op een winderige plek. Denken over etniciteit en gender in Nederland (Building Nests in a Windy Place: Thinking about Gender and Ethnicity in the Netherlands)*. The title refers to lines of

[21] Quote from interview, November 16, 2008.
[22] Gloria Wekker, *"I am Gold Money" (I pass through all hands, but I do not lose my value). The Construction of Selves, Gender and Sexuality in a Female, Working-Class, Afro-Surinamese Setting* (PhD dissertation, University of California, 1992); Wekker, *The Politics of Passion: Women's Sexual Culture in the Afro-Surinamese Diaspora* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
[23] Quote from interview, November 16, 2008.

a poem by Afro-American poet Audre Lorde. Gloria identifies with Lorde's intersectional positionality, which propels one to carefully choose one's battles in a variety of arenas, trying at the same time to make oneself at home in unhomely places. According to Gloria, the challenge of creating a home in inhospitable and sometimes hostile places is shared by blacks, immigrants and refugees in Dutch society, and in the Dutch academy by anyone who is non-white and non-male. She might as well have added that this predicament holds true for refugees, immigrants and black people all over Europe. Ironically, Gloria directed her speech from the academic top, where the cold winds do blow, but where earned privileges offer some shelter too.

As outsiders-within, being perceived to embody otherness at the European academy, Philomena and Gloria were in a unique position to open up space to teach and write about gendered racisms in academia, the women's movement, European politics, and society in general. Ever since, they have been teaching about emotionally charged topics like racism, colonial legacies in the postcolonial present, and (hetero) sexism. In their courses they show how the entanglements of race and gender matter in discriminating, power-evasive and colour-blind discourses and practices. This was not always a pleasurable task, they recalled in the interviews, as white colleagues expected them to do so on the grounds of their embodiment. It can also make one feel lonely at times, Gloria confessed. "The way I teach, as with all the work I do, I am often ahead of my time, ahead in relation to what is going on in Dutch society. I'm used to that. At a personal level, though, I sometimes wonder how to keep myself strong. It is a lonely existence, despite the fact that I do have a couple of allies …"[24]

Gloria came a long way, from her first assignment at Utrecht University to lecturing on "black criticism", which to her represented "a complete dismissal of the whole body of black women's studies", to challenging the whiteness of Dutch and European women's studies.[25] With her Utrecht gender studies colleagues, she stimulated intersectional thinking and writing, resulting in the fine volume *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture* now used in their introductory courses. Her efforts to gain the support of the Utrecht University Board for a compulsory introductory course for all students on gender and

[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

ethnicity and the workings of multicultural society, a course that many renowned American universities offer, failed. "I often think our education still looks exactly like it did in the 1950s. We are in a lecture room with our backs towards society and with the curtains closed. And we have not asked ourselves: what do students, our future leaders, need to know about their society? Whatever profession they will choose, they are sure to meet with an extraordinarily ethnically mixed body of students or clients. And they don't get any classes or tools to deal with that. It's absurd!"[26]

Although the Board did not adopt her idea, she feels she accomplished a lot. "It is virtually impossible to do women's studies at Utrecht University without encountering gender and ethnicity together. That's quite something."[27] In the interview she stated more needs to be done on this score. She did not want to go into that though—it is too close to the bone. Another passionate venture Gloria undertakes is the promotion of Black Studies in Europe. This would open up space to study its counterpart, European whiteness and white supremacy, too. In the United States it would be much easier to get projects on black or African-American studies funded. "That's a real bottleneck here in Europe, to get it funded. It's a major thing I still want to do, to get that off the ground."[28]

Philomena initiated the first of eight annual workshops on "Women and Racism" at Amsterdam University in 1984, while working on her dissertation at CRES, the then-existing Centre for Race and Ethnic Studies at Amsterdam University. The interdisciplinary workshops provided a framework for making sense of the lived realities and discourses of race and ethnicity in the Netherlands. The first session of the first series was fraught with identity politics, as we can read in "Teaching in an Age of Diversity".[29] One participant expressed her desire to have "separate all-black sessions". The other black stu-

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid. Interestingly, the major network of European gender, women's and feminist studies, ATHENA (now ATGENDER), lacked support to host a working group on Black Europe (Black ATHENA) Gloria proposed. Thereupon, she withdrew from the network to only sideways contribute to it. It would be interesting to dive into the archives of ATHENA's proceedings to understand more of the debate concerning race matters. Strikingly, women of colour were almost absent from ATHENA meetings and working groups as far as I can tell for the period I was participating in it (2007–2011).
[29] Philomena Essed, *Diversity: Gender, Color and Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

dent did not like the idea. It made the atmosphere tense, causing unease among all present, especially among the six white students. "The white women present were looking around a bit scared, guiltily, and somewhat offended, as if they were thinking: We haven't said anything yet and are already rejected for being nonblack. Are we going to be scrutinized and accused of 'racism' when we say something 'wrong'?"[30]

According to Philomena a tense atmosphere in classes like this demonstrates structural conflict at work, which evokes fear, anger and guilt. Her way of dealing with this type of conflict in the classroom varies, depending on the context and the parties involved. In the interview, she stressed her approach differs from hooks' confrontational interventions, which she witnessed at Oberlin College, Ohio in the 1980s. She said she preferred indirect confrontation, because of the power differentials between teachers and students and the Dutch national context. "I won't accept someone acting disrespectfully in class. But I do not react by lecturing that person disrespectfully. I look for a way that enables all parties to emerge from the conflict with dignity."[31] This does not mean she avoids confrontation in the classroom altogether in order to keep things safe. Nevertheless, she feels it is important to "always leave a door open" for somebody "to rephrase" what is said, the way her mother taught her.[32]

Gloria has a similar view on dealing with sensitive topics and tense situations. She recalled in the interview that she saw hooks teach as well, sharply criticising a girl in public. "Too outrageous for words! My god. No, this … Never!" Gloria explained her different approach is both a matter of not daring and not wanting to be that sharp. "It's not my style; I don't want to make things that personal. I want to give people room to think that it does not apply to them, to give them a choice about how close to home they let things hit. I do not always avoid discussing more personal things, though. Like McIntosh's list of white privileges, this always gives rise to talk about what kind of examples they can come up with themselves."[33] Gloria admitted that as she gets older, she is less patient with "students talking nonsense" or expressing themselves in an "intentionally evasive" fashion. Whenever students give presentations that no one understands, she quickly intervenes and asks them to stop reading

[30] Ibid., 130.
[31] Quote from interview, June 3, 2009.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Quote from interview, November 16, 2008.

from their pages and start telling in their own words what it is all about. "That's the good thing about getting older and being more experienced, to trust one's gut feeling in the classroom to decide what to do."[34]

To Philomena, thinking internationally in teaching is crucial. Her goal is to encourage students to actively resist categorisation and reductionist ways of thinking.[35] To her this goal is linked to her biography: "Never in my life was I pigeonholed."[36] In her courses, she translates this principle in her choice of literature, which always consists of work by authors of various countries and different positionalities. Her basic teaching principle is that students come to class in order to learn and that the teacher should be open to learn as well. "Of course, a lot comes from one direction, but I do learn from things coming up in class. Like growing up in the Netherlands from a perspective that is unfamiliar to me, experiences I do not share, loyalties students feel, things in the literature I missed, students correcting me when I oversimplify … So it's continuous, the learning."[37]

In order to assess students' knowledge and understanding, both Gloria and Philomena use essay assignments instead of written exams. Both experimented with the concept of whiteness, to test its relevance in the Dutch and European context and explore its meaning to white and non-white students. When Gloria asked students of an introductory gender and ethnicity course in Utrecht to write about their identity and link it with the concept of intersectionality, she found to her disappointment white students finished quickly. "'I am white.' Done. 'A white young woman.'" Black, migrant and refugee women students took more time, particularly internationally adopted children of colour, who wrote pages full of hurt. They did not recognise themselves in the dominant Dutch vocabulary of emphasising difference with the labels *autochtoon* and *allochtoon,* but neither in the vocabulary Gloria offered them, of white, black, migrant and refugee people. It made her curious to know: how do adopted children of colour talk about themselves?

> It was shocking to me, to see quite a few of them write: "I may look brown, but I feel white inside." I do understand that they feel this way. Imagine, you come

[34] Ibid.
[35] See for Essed's position on reductionist thinking Essed, "Multi-Identifications and Transformations: Reaching Beyond Racial and Ethnic Reductionisms," *Social Identities* 7 (2001): 493–509.
[36] Quote from interview, June 3, 2009.
[37] Ibid.

> to the Netherlands as a baby to be raised in a white family who tells you no matter how you look, we still love you, it doesn't matter if you are purple, yellow or blue. Of course it works to make you dislike your colour. You don't want to be identified with black, migrant or refugee women or Moroccans, or worse, Surinamese, no, you don't feel part of that. At the same time, you are treated as a stranger in anonymous situations. That's a very painful situation. These children are not prepared for what they will encounter, as they get older. They do not have the tools to brace themselves against racism.[38]

To Gloria, the outcome of the assignment meant something interesting was going on, which called for deeper probing. It led to the research project on the life stories of internationally adoptees of colour.[39] "It's very important to me, education becoming research, and then ploughing research back into education. We have 200 students taking our introductory course, which is given twice a year. So, can you imagine, 400 students each year! And to some it's really an eye-opener to hear about these things. That's terrific!"[40]

Philomena wrote an article on the relevance of the concept whiteness in Europe with white Dutch human geographer Sandra Trienekens. They critically discuss the output of a course "Research and Dynamics of a Multicultural Society: Race, Migration and Refugees" that Philomena taught to an ethnically and nationally mixed group of students at Amsterdam University (2002–2004). Students had to address whether the notion of whiteness is relevant to their understanding of their life experiences and identity. The results were disappointing. In the essays, references to national and cultural belonging predominated, whereas the notion of race was largely unnamed and the systemic nature of everyday racism unaddressed. "This makes whiteness a difficult concept to be introduced in the European context", the authors concluded.[41]

While Philomena often foregrounds race and racism in her teaching, Gloria alternates in putting two or more vital identity markers and structural categories of difference at the centre simultaneously. In a guest lecture to students of the course "Experiencing Differences", part of Amsterdam University's

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[38] Quote from interview, November 16, 2008.
[39] Gloria Wekker et al., eds., *Je hebt een kleur, maar je bent Nederlands. Identiteitsformaties van Geadopteerden van Kleur* (Utrecht: Universiteit Utrecht, 2007).
[40] Quote from interview, November 16, 2008.
[41] Philomena Essed and Sandra Trienekens, "'Who Wants to Feel White?' Race, Dutch Culture and Contested Identities," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (2008): 68.

international MA program on Gender, Sexuality and Society, she emphasised the importance of dealing with the Big Four: gender, race, class and sexuality in teaching and research about differences that matter. "Some of my colleagues think we need to take into account more axes of difference and meaning. I say, if we can deal with the Big Four we are already in business."[42] The 35 participating international students were assigned to read two chapters of her *Politics of Passion* as a preparation for the class. The first chapter, introducing the fields of sexuality studies, women's same-sex love and oral history, is quite revealing, in particular the parts in which Gloria describes the intimate relationship she had with her key informant, Miss Julie Cummings, while living in a small house in her backyard. In the interview she acknowledged: "It is the most difficult text I ever wrote, and because of that also the most satisfying. When students read it, they are astonished: 'My god! I did not know somebody could write this way.' They think I wrote a kind of novel, while, at the same time, the piece contains many theoretical claims."[43]

In the post-graduate course "Intersectionality and its (Dis)contents" at Utrecht University College, which Gloria and Philomena co-taught in the spring semester of 2009, I saw both professors at work together. The purpose of the course was to introduce students to intersectionality as a concept, method and theory, and to invite them to identify and analyse how race, ethnicity, racism and whiteness impact their own lives in relation to gender, class and sexual orientation, and with what implications for their research. What struck me most was the friendly ease and patience with which Gloria and Philomena took turns and switched topics, repertoires and approaches, while engaging all of us present to share and reflect upon our thoughts, doubts and longings regarding our work and lived realities. In their teaching, they embody ways of teaching to transgress by teaching connectivity in shared learning.[44]

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[42] Quote from guest lecture, Amsterdam University, March 11, 2009. See for an example of Wekker's written work dealing with the Big Four while keeping gender at the centre her contribution to the Teaching Gender series: Wekker, "Into the Promised Land? The Feminization and Ethnicization of Poverty in the Netherlands," in *Teaching Intersectionality: Putting Gender at the Centre,* ed. Martha Franken et al. (Utrecht and Stockholm: ATHENA3, University of Utrecht and Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University, 2009), 65–77.

[43] Quote from interview, April 25, 2009. In 2007 Gloria was awarded the Ruth Benedict Award by the Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists (SOLGA) for *The Politics of Passion.*

[44] They share this commitment with gender plus studies colleagues at Utrecht University and elsewhere in Europe, and with the "Teaching with Gender" series published by ATHENA. The phrases teaching to transgress and teaching community and connectivity relate to hooks' inspiring work on teaching, like bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

Implications for teaching

This text can be used in Women's and Gender Studies as well as in courses on migration, colonial history, postcoloniality and (intercultural) education. An inside look at the teaching practices and educational biographies of two inspiring black female professors in race and gender critical studies points to the importance of having role models on our way to becoming power conscious, culturally responsive and "inclusive" teachers and students. It also targets the three main challenges teachers face in raising intersectional consciousness among students to resist and undo gendered racisms inside the white European academy and beyond—an endeavour that becomes more urgent as racism and Islamophobia are on the rise across the European continent. Dealing with the Big Four simultaneously, understanding their entanglement in practices of celebration, humiliation and oppression without dropping either one of them in the classroom, is the major challenge. The second challenge is to examine which of the Big Four we easily drop while teaching and how this relates to our biographies, embodiments and positionalities. The third challenge is to uphold basic principles of feminist pedagogy in course design and performance with rising student-teacher ratios.

The teaching practices and principles Gloria Wekker and Philomena Essed uphold and embody—along with those of us in gender plus studies at European universities with similar convictions and passions—foster students' ability to think more critically about race, gender and their intersections. Whether white European students, as future professionals, will feel inspired by our teaching to actively "unlearn" and help undo white and male supremacy and relinquish unearned privilege, as McKinney suggests needs to be done, is a question that begs further reflection, action and debate. A transnational dialogue about the consequences of the presence of the first generation of black feminist professors for (feminist) pedagogical practice, intersectional thinking and students' engagement would be an interesting path to pursue.

Questions

1. Look around at your university and think about your teachers. Who could be your role model? Who inspires you to look beyond the textbooks and turn things you thought you knew upside down? Spend time with the most promising one, read her work, talk to her, maybe even interview her

to get more inspiration and confidence in your becoming an active, educated, respected, power, gender and colour conscious person yourself.

2. How are your routes, ambitions and passions regarding your studies related to your educational biography and family history? What do these relations tell about your understanding of intersectionality? How would any of this be relevant to your line of research? Answer these questions by writing your educational autobiography or work in pairs or in small groups to write each other's educational biographies. Include important parts of your family histories. Write a paragraph as to where, when and how race (including whiteness) came in. Read and compare the stories in a small group or make posters of them.

3. Does Nirmal Puwar's question "[W]hat happens when women and racialised minorities take up 'privileged' positions which have not been 'reserved' for them, for which they are not, in short, the somatic norm",[45] still make sense in your academic or work environment? If so, what are the terms of co-existence? Which issues are negotiated or silenced, and which issues cause disruption?

Assignments

1. The globalisation and standardisation of Western forms of mass formal schooling threaten to eclipse virtually all other means of the intergenerational transmission of culture, according to Levinson and Holland.[46] Look for practices of cultural transmission in literature, film, photography or daily life that might serve to counterbalance this disturbing statement. Collect and bring them to class to close read, analyse and discuss them intersectionally.

2. Collect and interpret pictures and text fragments from scholarly and popular media, in which professionals of your discipline are portrayed. What

[45] Puwar, *Space Invaders,* 1.
[46] Bradley Levinson, and Dorothy Holland, "The Cultural Production of the Educated Person. An Introduction," in *The Cultural Production of the Educated Person,* ed. Bradley A. Levinson, Douglas Foley and Dorothy Holland (Albany: State University of New York, 1996), 1–40.

explicit or implicit intersectional identities and identifications figure in these portraits and representations? Which are left out? How would the picture or text fragment change if you were to redesign or rewrite them from a power, gender and colour conscious perspective?

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PART II:

EXPRESSIONS OF RACISM AND GENDER IN NATIONAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

CHAPTER 4:

Disappearing Act: The Forgotten History of Colonialism, Eugenics and Gendered Othering in Denmark

Bolette Blaagaard and Rikke Andreassen

In a political era haunted by the return of nationalist agendas, regrettably Denmark emerges as a pioneer. As in many similar cases, this status has an historical and scientific trajectory. This chapter will point to two major events in Danish history—Danish colonialism and eugenics—which are continuously and actively forgotten through lack of information and education on the topic. We argue that this non-memory of Danish colonial and scientific history has severe implications for the current political climate, and that the lack of acknowledgment of the historical past contributes to a positive Danish national self-understanding and to approaches that are implicitly and explicitly gendered. The chapter illustrates how gender and race are inter-connected, and how the understanding of race has historically played into constructions of gender and vice versa.[1]

Denmark is a small country of less than six million inhabitants situated in the southern part of Scandinavia. Politically, Denmark has a strong tradition of governments that support the welfare state. Through the years Denmark has developed and sustained an all-embracing welfare state, which has secured the citizens of the state free health care, education and pensions among other things. Denmark is often cited as one of the first European countries to strengthen women's causes by granting women the right to vote in 1915, legalising pornography in 1969 (which was seen as a liberalisation of women's sexuality as well as of men's), legalising abortion in 1973 and providing affordable day care for children. Because of this track record, Denmark can be said to be an open-minded and tolerant society.[2] However, struggles for equal

[1] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color," *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* 2, 3 (1991/2006): 7–20; Rikke Andreassen and Anne Folke Henningsen, *Menneskeudstilling. Fremvisninger af eksotiske mennesker i Zoologisk Have og Tivoli* (Copenhagen: Tiderne Skifter, 2011).

[2] Anette Borchorst, Ann-Dorte Christensen, and Birte Siim, "Diskurser om køn, magt og politik i Skandinavien," in *Kønsmagt under forandring,* ed. Anette Borchorst (Gylling: Hans Reitzel, 2002), 247–267.

rights, sexual and reproductive rights have been won on the basis of sameness: that is, cultural, political and religious beliefs were expected to be the same for all women regardless of ethnicity, class, sexuality, personal preference and so forth, as were the personal and professional goals of women in Denmark. Equality had to do with being treated the same, as if the same, not equally among different beliefs, desires and ambitions. Recently, as different cultural, political and religious identifications have become more visible in Danish media, debates about how to accommodate differences are becoming pertinent and not least racialised. As Western societies are increasingly perceived as multicultural and globally connected, the premise of sameness is in need of rethinking.[3] This rethinking could take place not only in the media, but also in classrooms.

The Danish debates about difference and multiculturalism rarely make use of the term "race". Viewed as an old-fashioned term and connected to biological determinism, which has since been rejected, "race" is abandoned in favour of the term "ethnicity".[4] However, not all "ethnicities" are labelled "ethnic". The norm of Danish, "white" ethnicity is often un-named and is taken for granted as that which the "other" is measured against.[5] Hence, whiteness is an invisible but ubiquitous assumption in many of the Danish discourses on race and ethnicity.[6] Moreover, the category of "ethnicity" easily slips into the category of "religion".[7] Furthermore, contemporary racism in Denmark is often focused on the religious minority of Islam and on perceived cultural differences between Danes and the religious "other", while the colonial past and the discourse of eugenics are largely suppressed and forgotten.[8] However, we will show here that these histories are important to how racism is

[3] Birte Siim, *Medborgerskabets udfordringer—etniske minoritetskvinders politiske myndighed* (Aarhus: Magtudredningen, Aarhus Universitet, 2003).
[4] Rikke Andreassen, Anne Folke Henningsen, and Lene Myong Petersen, "Indledning," *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* 4, 8 (2008): 3–10.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Bolette Blaagaard, "European Whiteness: A Critical Approach," *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* 4, 8 (2008): 10–22.
[7] Tim Jensen, "Religion in the Newsrooms," in *Implications of the Sacred in (Post)Modern Media,* eds. Johanna Sumiala-Seppánen, Knut Lundby, and Raimo Salokangas (Gothenberg: Nordicom, 2006); Rikke Andreassen, *Der er et yndigt Land. Medier, minoriteter og danskhed* (Copenhagen: Tiderne Skifter, 2007); Blaagaard, "European Whiteness: A Critical Approach."
[8] Bolette Blaagaard, "The Flipside of My Passport: Myths of Origin and Genealogy of White Supremacy in the Mediated Social Genetic Imaginary," in *Complying With Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region,* eds. Suvi Keskinen, Salla Tuori, Sari Irni, and Diana Mulinari (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing 2009), 51–67.

experienced in Denmark today, and a renewed focus on them could start in classrooms.

The colonial relationship that never was

From the 13th century to the 20th century the Danish empire stretched from parts of present-day Estonia, to Norway,[9] Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Orkney and Shetland in the north to small areas and forts on the eastern coast of India.[10] Around 1670, Danes began to settle on the Caribbean island of St. Thomas and during the first half of the 18th century St. John (1718) and St. Croix (1733) fell under the Danish flag. In Africa, Denmark held a small colony on the Gold Coast (Ghana) for a while until it was sold to the United Kingdom in 1850. Up until the late 20th century, most scholarship about the Danish colonies has focused on trade.[11] As most European empires at the time, Denmark prospered from the triangular trade across the Atlantic. Ships from Denmark arrived in Africa from where enslaved people were taken and transported to the Caribbean, where they worked as slave labour to produce sugar and rum, and the ships then completed the triangle by returning to Denmark with the produced goods. More recent historical scholarship has framed colonial history in light of the cultural implications of colonialism[12] and the mediated representations of others in Danish discourses.[13] This more recent scholarship moreover tends to highlight gender as a particular focus and it shows the nuances of the racial relations in the colonies.

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[9] Greenland and the Faeroe Islands are still under Danish jurisdiction. Iceland gained independence after the Second World War. The relation between Denmark and Norway was a personal union.
[10] Ole Feldbæk, *Gyldendals bog om Danmarks historie* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal 2004) and "Den danske Asienhandel 1616–1807 VÆRDI OG VOLUMEN," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 15, 5 (1990): 2. This is by no means meant as an exhaustive review of Danish colonial relations. It is meant as a brief overview in order to situate Danish racism within the framework of Danish history.
[11] Ole Feldbæk, "Den danske Asienhandel 1616–1807 VÆRDI OG VOLUMEN," *Historisk Tidsskrift* 15, 5 (1990): 2; Erik Gøbel, "De danske mennesketransporter over Atlanten," in *Fra slaveri til frihed. Det dansk-vestindiske slavesamfund 1672–1848,* ed. Per Nielsen (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 2001).
[12] Gunvor Simonsen, "Skin Colour as a Tool of Regulation and Power in the Danish West Indies in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Caribbean History* 37, 2 (2003): 256–276; Louise Sebro, "Kreoliseringen af eurocaribierne i Dansk Vestindien—social relationer og selvopfattelse," *Fortid og Nutid* June (2005): 3–22; Pernille Ipsen, *Koko's Daughters: Interracial Marriage in a Slave Trading Post,* Doctoral dissertation (Copenhagen: Copenhagen University, 2008).
[13] Andreassen, *Der er et yndigt Land*; Blaagaard, "European Whiteness: A Critical Approach."

During the cartoon controversy of 2005–6, in which twelve cartoons depicting the Muslim prophet Mohammed were commissioned by the national Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* and which caused an international political crisis for Denmark, one commentator, Madsen, tried to explain the Danish collective mind, which, he argued, laid the foundation for the cartoon controversy and the Danish response to the outraged Muslims. He wrote that "the Danes do not feel guilty towards Africans because the Danes are white or because they are Europeans, simply because other white people or other Europeans abused African slaves".[14] According to Madsen, this lack of guilt could be construed as racist behaviour by foreigners uninformed about the Danish way of life, and therefore the cartoons were misunderstood by outsiders.[15] Madsen's argument reflects the (poor) general knowledge of Danish colonial history and, more importantly, it shows the implications of that ignorance. The ignorance is constructed through educational omissions. Through this lack of information and knowledge, it is possible to construct a relationship to others in which "'[r]ace' and 'racism' … simply [have] not been seen as relevant in the Nordic countries".[16] Marselis ventures that this might be due to "national self-conceptions of the Nordic countries as not having the 'burden of guilt', which is often associated with 'whiteness' in other contexts".[17] The fact that Denmark was the seventh largest slave-trading nation during colonial times, with the US in sixth place,[18] is invisible to most Danes. There are, for instance, no monuments commemorating and acknowledging slavery in Denmark, and Danish colonial history is not explicit mandatory curriculum in primary and secondary schools.[19] The Danish relationship to the former colonies and to the history of slavery and the slave trade is today characterised

[14] Anders Ellebaek Madsen, "En Karikatur af Danskerne," *Religion.dk*, http://www.religion.dk/artikel/47123: Synspunkt–En-karikatur-af-danskerne; "Danskerne føler sig ikke skyldige som hvide eller europæere over for afrikanere, bare fordi andre hvide mennesker eller andre europæere har mishandlet afrikanske slaver", translation is provided by Bolette Blaagaard.
[15] Bolette Blaagaard, "Remembering Nordic Colonialism," *KULT7* Special Issue, Nordic Colonial Mind, Spring (2010): 101–121.
[16] Randi Marselis, "Descendants of Slaves: The Articulation of Mixed Racial Ancestry in a Danish Television Documentary Series," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 11, 4 (2008): 463.
[17] Ibid., 463.
[18] Erik Gøbel, "De danske mennesketransporter over Atlanten," in *Fra slaveri til frihed. Det dansk-vestindiske slavesamfund 1672–1848,* ed. Per Nielsen (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 2001).
[19] http://www.eng.uvm.dk/Uddannelse/Primary%20and%20Lower%20Secondary%20Education/The%20Folkeskole/Subjects%20Curriculum.aspx.

by both non-memory and a national romantic reproduction of the past.[20] By non-memory we mean a way of actively, or passively, repressing historical factors including potential cultural memories.[21] As argued elsewhere,[22] this leaves the Danish beliefs in freedom of expression and humanitarian dialogue to theory, while it snubs the democratic practice behind those dogmas.

Identifying the difference-gene

Some scholars of (post)colonial histories and racial relations[23] argue that the African and Caribbean colonies functioned as training camps for what later developed into population control, eugenics, and eventually genocide, and thus they see a direct (though complicated) line running from the colonial expansionary policies to the fascist and Nazi movements of the 20th century. In Denmark, this continuity is moreover produced through a particular culture of memory[24] and non-memory expressed in the contemporary reproduction of children's books with colonial premises[25] and in the lack of educational curricula and omissions of colonial and eugenic practices in Denmark.

However, there would be plenty to teach: Denmark embraced eugenics early on and incorporated it into policies of population control.[26] The racist idea behind the quest to prove the white man's superiority with all means necessary is argued through a hierarchical structure, which sustained an idea of progress from "savagery" (i.e. as experienced by the Europeans travelling to the colonies and to the so-called New World) to "civilisation" (i.e. as people

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[20] Karen Fog Olwig, "Narrating Deglobalization: Danish Perceptions of a Lost Empire," *Global Networks* 3, 3 (2003): 207–222; Kim Su Rasmussen, *Hvad er Dansk Racisme?* http://www.minority-report.dk/ dansk/deltagere/kim_su_rasmussen.html (2004) (accessed May 9, 2011); Blaagaard, "Remembering Nordic Colonialism"; and "Whose Freedom? Whose Memories? Commemorating Danish Colonialism in St. Croix," *Social Identities* 17, 1 (2011): 61–72.
[21] Bolette Blaagaard, "Remembering Nordic Colonialism," 102.
[22] Bolette Blaagaard, "Det farligste er at lukke øjnene," *Weekendavisen* 30 July (2010): 10.
[23] Aimé Césaire, *Discourses on Colonialism* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972 [1955]); Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).
[24] Helma Lutz and Kathrin Gawarecki, eds., *Kolonialismus und Erinnerungskultur: Die Kolonialvergangenheit in Kollektive Gedächtnis die deutschen und niederländischen Einwanderungsgesellschaft* (New York: Waxmann Verlag 2005).
[25] Andreassen and Henningsen, *Menneskeudstilling.*
[26] Nils Roll-Hansen and Gunnar Broberg, *Eugenics and the Welfare State* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1996); Carolyn Burdett, "Introduction: Eugenics Old and New," *New Formations* 60 (2007): 7–12.

behaved in Europe).[27] The process of civilisation was racialised. A tension lay at the root of colonial racial thinking, which was preoccupied with the question of what counts as "human" in contrast to "animal". Women often occupied a boundary-position due to their reproductive sexuality. The silence in the classroom about these issues means that students go unchallenged in their view of themselves, their culture, and their history in a global context.

If the scientific, teleological idea of the "chain of being" rested on a biological sameness—structured under the Christian paradigm of racial hierarchies—in contrast the distinctions between male and female rested on innate differences.[28] The idea of innate differences between male and female was mainly based on a theory of sexuality as being a site of animality and perversion as well as a site of potential degeneracy and disease.[29]

Fear of degeneracy through mixing of races was linked to a notion of purity of the genes and the racial categories, and in this sense the "enemy" became the uncontrollable reproductive sexuality, which in turn is placed with the Other; the female (coloured) body.[30] In a cultural and political sense the Scandinavian region had many underlying assumptions in common with the German science in eugenics up until the Second World War. One commonality was an interest in the "Nordic Race",[31] and a belief in its superiority was another.[32]

The sexualisation, racialisation and finally naturalisation moreover mark the hierarchical categories following the category of white man in descending order. Because these categories were figments of the colonisers' imagination there is an ambiguity embedded in the narrative about genetic homogeneity and purity, which posits femaleness in the in-between of humanity and animality—civilisation and savagery.[33] At the First International Eugenics Congress in London in 1912, the International Eugenics Committee was established, and the perspective turned from racial others to the working class. The Committee feared that working class people—who represented the racial

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[27] Kay Anderson, *Race and the Crisis of Humanism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).
[28] Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004 [1993]).
[29] Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991/2002).
[30] Blaagaard, "The Flipside of My Passport."
[31] Ibid.
[32] Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe,* translated by Edmund Howard (London: Sussex University Press, 1974).
[33] Blaagaard, "The Flipside of My Passport."

element of low intelligence, low moral behaviour and unaesthetic appearance—would overwhelm the European middle and upper classes, due to their high reproductive rates.[34] The question of economic and social class and access to resources runs through most of colonial social history. It moreover reflects and intersects[35] with ideas of moral standing and proper female conduct.

Exhibiting exclusion

From the late 19th century, exhibitions of so-called exotic peoples and races became popular in Europe. The Danish exhibitions were curated by public amusement parks such as Tivoli and the Copenhagen Zoological Garden. People from Africa and Asia were exhibited for the curious gaze and amusement of the Danish population and arranged to illustrate the anthropological particularities and determinism of the "other".[36] The exhibitions played upon gender stereotypes, and women of African and Asian origin were deliberately staged in a sexual manner; they were costumed in little clothing and danced in provocative ways. The exhibitions were a materialisation of the racial hierarchical thinking. Because different peoples were thought to progress in a straight line from "savage" to "civilised" as according to modernisation theory, the exhibited people were seen to be a "window into the past" of the Danes and other "cultured" and "civilised" peoples, that is, the colonial powers.[37] The "wildness" and "barbarism" of particularly Africans and Australian indigenous people were underlined by descriptions of their involvement in warfare and hunting, which were seen to be inherent to their "race". However, the hierarchy among the exhibited people was also marked: whereas Bedouins were characterised as "Noble Savages" Australian indigenous people and Africans were represented as the "Barbaric Savages".[38]

When Denmark witnessed a growing interest in race-related research into the Danish population, one reason was that race and class had become increasingly inter-connected during the second half of the 19th century. Char-

[34] Søren Hansen, "Retten og Racehygiejnen," *Juridisk Tidsskrift* 1 (1915): 761–780.
[35] For more on methods of intersectionality and feminism see Martha Franken, et al., eds., *Teaching Intersectionality: Putting Gender at the Centre* (Utrecht and Stockholm: ATHENA3, University of Utrecht and Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University, 2009).
[36] Andreassen and Henningsen, *Menneskeudstilling*.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.

acteristics that originally had been applied to people of African origin, that is, backwardness, childishness and so forth, were now also being used to describe people belonging to the working classes.[39] In 1904, the Danish Anthropological Committee was founded by leading medical doctors and scientists. Several of the members had a history of studying foreign people, but they were also interested in the racial composition of the Danish population. During the first year of the Committee's existence, they carried out cranial measurements on 4000 individuals from remote areas of Denmark, as these were considered to represent "pure" Danes. Contrary to expectations, they found that there was no such thing as a pure Danish race; the majority of people seemed to be racially mixed, and only few exhibited the long and capacious head that was considered particularly "white".[40] Sweden shows a similar history as Denmark in regard to exhibitions, colonial views of others and nation building based on racial thinking.[41]

"Religion is not a race"

As scientific eugenics was denounced after the Second World War,[42] Denmark's relation to its others became characterised by a turn away from the racial terminology and towards a culturalist, ethnic and religious demarcation of difference, that is what may be termed "new racism". This new, or cultural, racism replaces nature and what was thought of as biological inferiority with a notion of cultural inferiority. This gave rise to a new cultural hierarchy that sustains the idea that some peoples or nations behave in a way that was customary to medieval Europeans—not because of their biological make-up but because of their cultural belonging.

In this new paradigm, gender once again emerges as a boundary figure. Contemporary Danish debates about racial/ethnic minorities and migration are increasingly focussing on gender and gender equality. Debates about mi-

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[39] Neil MacMaster, *Racism in Europe 1870–2000* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
[40] Andreassen and Henningsen, *Menneskeudstilling.*
[41] Annika Olsson, "The Vasa Museum—Reflections on a Privileged Narrative about Empire," in *Teaching Empires: Gender and Transnational Citizenship in Europe,* ed. Mary Clancy and Andrea Pető (Utrecht and Stockholm: ATHENA3, University of Utrecht and Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University, 2009), 23–33.
[42] Although population control continued into the 1960s. See Roll-Hansen and Broberg, *Eugenics and the Welfare State.*

gration and multiculturalism often focus on racial/ethnic minority women as victims of domestic violence, arranged and forced marriages, forced veiling and honour killings. The media and politicians often explain these oppressions by reference to migrants' culture or to Islam; they suggest that the reason why these women are being oppressed is because of their "backward" culture and/or religion, and the men, who submit women to oppression, are characterised as representatives of this "backward" culture and/or religion. This is different from the media's and politicians' explanation of domestic violence and murders committed by ethnically Danish men against ethnically Danish women. Here the men are not described as representatives of Danish culture or of Christianity; rather they are presented as individuals for whom something has gone wrong.

An integrated part of the construction of migrant and migrant-descendant women as oppressed is a parallel construction of ethnically Danish women as liberated. In most media stories about female racial/ethnic minorities, the women are directly or indirectly compared to ethnically Danish women. Since the racial/ethnic minority women are presented as oppressed and as victims of a patriarchal culture, the ethnically Danish women, who are presented in binary opposition to the minority women, appear as liberated and as living in an emancipated culture. The result is racial/ethnic division, where female oppression appears as a feature reserved for the minority population of colour.[43]

Implications for teaching

The contemporary Danish lack of knowledge transfer—from the omissions in the educational curricula to the bias of Danish media—results in non-memory, misrecognition, and consequently structural continuation of past trespasses. The chapter not only renews the focus on Denmark's less well-known past, but pleads for a reflexive reading of the past in order to deal with present patterns of discrimination and xenophobia. How would we, for instance, potentially think differently of ourselves, our nation and our history if this picture (see Figure 4.1) was in any Danish primary school book on history?

[43] Rikke Andreassen, "Sing a Song but Stay Out of Politics: Two Cases of Representations of Racial/Ethnic Minorities in the Danish media," in *Media in Motion: Cultural Complexity and Migration in the Nordic Region,* ed. Elisabeth Eide and Kaarina Nikunen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 163–181.

Figure 4.1: A group of Indians, exhibited at the Copenhagen Zoological Garden, 1901. The Indians lived in the small huts, shown in the background of the picture, in the middle of the Zoo.
(Courtesy of Copenhagen Zoological Garden Archive)

What if students were to discuss how knowledge of a colonial past might directly and indirectly influence contemporary debates about multiculturalism, language and national self-understandings? Would this challenge the status quo of society and debates in Danish politics?

The implications for teaching are therefore not only to inform students of historical events and their consequences, but more importantly to shift the students' way of thinking critically about their own position in regards to the patterns of racism and discrimination.[44] Feminism has a long tradition of imploring and implementing reflexive epistemology and practices. Adrienne Rich's white solipsism,[45] Donna Haraway's cyborg,[46] Patricia Hill Collins' black feminist

[44] See also Andrea Pető and Berteke Waaldijk, eds., *Teaching with Memories: European Women's Histories in International and Interdisciplinary Classrooms* (Galway: Women's Studies Centre, National University of Ireland, 2006).
[45] Adrienne Rich, "Disloyal to Civilization: Feminism, Racism, Gynephobia (1978)," in *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966–1978* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 275–310.
[46] Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

epistemology,[47] and Rosi Braidotti's nomadism[48]—just to mention a few—all develop ways of reflecting on one's own position in society and in thought.

We hope that the chapter inspires similar reflection in students and urge them to think specifically about their use of language and expressions in words. For example, in Denmark the term "race" is not commonly used, but the term "ethnicity" is. From that information students may discuss the differences between talking about "race" and talking about "ethnicity". What are the implications and the genealogies of the concepts used? But the students may also think of language in terms of a broader understanding of representation as for instance the case of the picture from the Copenhagen Zoological Garden. The chapter helps these reflections by recounting how, at the turn of the century, otherness was represented as exotic in public exhibitions, and the students may ask themselves what are the representations today? And they may discuss and identify different mediated and public representations and roles for "others" today—be they gendered, racial, ethnic, religious, sexual or able-bodied.

Disappearing Act therefore hopefully engenders an act of reappearance of students' self-awareness when dealing with issues of gender, race and racism.

Questions

1. In Denmark the term "race" is not commonly used, but the term "ethnicity" is. What are the differences between talking about "race" and talking about "ethnicity"?

2. Eugenics was the science of identifying unwanted and inherent qualities in certain parts of the national population and, further, attempting to eradicate those qualities. Today the scientific "evidence" supporting the idea of eugenics is rejected, but is this structure of thinking still with us? And if yes, in which way?

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[47] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge 2000).
[48] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

Assignments

1. At the turn of the century, otherness was represented as exotic in public exhibitions, what are the representations today? Discuss and identify different mediated and public representations and roles for "others" today.

2. Please analyse the Danish JBS commercial *It is hard to improve perfect* (2011) (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvExuJarZfQ). Which ideas of race and gender are at play? Discuss how the lack of historical awareness of Danish colonialism might have influenced this commercial.

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CHAPTER 5:

Portugal and the Empire: Discourses and Practices on Race and Gender

Elsa Peralta and Simone Frangella

Grasping Portuguese colonial "exceptionalism"

Portugal was the centre of an empire which spread over four continents and spanned nearly six centuries. It was the first and most enduring of the modern European colonial empires. It started in the early 15th century and lasted until 1974, when the fall of the dictatorship in Portugal led to the independence of the colonies in Africa, namely Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and São Tomé e Príncipe, which were long fighting for independence. Formally, however, the Portuguese empire lasted until 20 December 1999, when Macau was handed over to China. The durability and importance of imperial history in Portuguese definitions of national identity make the empire a central category, mediating racial relations both in Portuguese colonial contexts and in various post-colonial settings.

Central to the way these relations are ideologically conceived is the idea of *miscigenação* (miscegenation) as a special feature of Portuguese colonialism. In the course of the history of the Portuguese empire there were many instances of interracial marriage and sexual relations between the Portuguese and the colonised peoples,[1] even if colonial relations were characterised, as always, by racial discrimination and asymmetry in power relations. Nevertheless, a position of exception is generally assumed regarding Portugal's imperial history. This idea of exceptionalism relates to a general conception that Portuguese people have a special vocation for getting along and mingling with other peoples and that their colonialism, as compared with other European colonial experiences, was gentler, more peaceful and benevolent.[2] Essential to such discourse, miscegenation is transformed into a chief rhetorical tool to differentiate Portuguese colonisation from other colonial experiences.

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[1] Francisco Bethencourt and Kirti Chaudhuri, eds., *História da Expansão Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Círculo de Leitores, 1998–9).

[2] Eduardo Lourenço, "Retrato (póstumo) do Nosso Colonialismo Inocente I," *Critério* 2 (1976): 8–11.

In this chapter we will look at the way in which the discourse on miscegenation was developed during the course of the Portuguese empire from an historical and empirical situation to be subsequently turned into a hegemonic discourse both in colonial and post-colonial times. We aim to reflect on the way practical historical and everyday conditions—as well as discourses of dominance based on race, gender, class and colonialism—produce subalternity, introducing the several layers of meanings it involved, such as subjugation, self-subjugation and agency. Finally, we argue that this concrete case study is a useful tool in teaching about colonial relations, as it problematises how racial and gender interactions intersect and are transformed in diverse periods of colonial rule, generating specific national ideologies, which also turn out to be particular post-colonial representations.

Racial-gendered relations in imperial history

After a first period covering the 15th and 16th centuries, marked by an evangelising impetus and a commercial expansionism towards the East, Brazil, with its sugar, slave trade and later gold, became the centre of the Portuguese colonial economy. Brazil was Portugal's first true colonial settlement, absorbing a considerable number and variety of migrants from metropolitan Portugal.[3] Widely perceived as a land of opportunity, Brazil was able to attract a great number of Portuguese people—mostly men, but also women—who then would found a colonial society based on the labour of slaves brought from the West African coast. A process of racial mixing was to emerge as a result of cultural and sexual intercourse mainly between white men and indigenous women at first, followed by black women slaves.

Portuguese colonisation in American lands meant a rigid direct administration and a strong attempt by the Church and the State to impose moral, cultural and religious values from the metropolis. However, in practice the control was less efficient; they could not prevent the sexual intercourse that came into play, a consequence of the attempt to occupy and exploit the territory, of the scarcity of "white women" in the colonies (above all at the beginning of the colonial process), and of the demographic limitations of

[3] Charles Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborn Empire, 1415–1825* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969).

Portugal. These two movements—one, moral and religious, and the other, more precarious and pragmatic—were at the basis of gender relations.

Pluri-ethnic sex, slavery and concubinage constituted the essential tripod of sexual relations in the colonies.[4] Portuguese settlers established a wide set of extra-conjugal or casual relations, generating offspring not usually recognised as legitimate. Relations of Indigenous women with Portuguese settlers or especially Black slaves with their masters, included assignments in domestic work or labour in plantations. Many of them had direct relations with the family of the coloniser, brought up their children, worked for the Portuguese wives, and became constant lovers of the landowners, with some being, with time, entitled to privileges. Portuguese colonial society consequently allowed space for more interracial intimacy and familiarity. Nevertheless, such ties were constructed under conditions of slavery, and concubinage had an intimate link with slavery; subjacent to it, as noted by anthropologist Roger Bastide in his description of racial colonial relations in Brazil, "race" implied "sex".[5]

Such patterns of sexual relations and romance would last throughout the colonial period in Brazil until the 18th century.[6] Indigenous and Black women were seen as impure and inferior, and mulatto women a mix of desire and danger. All these different classifications were summarised in an old saying cited in an historical account: *"branca para casar, mulata para foder e negra para trabalhar"* ("white ones to marry, mulatto women to fuck, and black ones to work").[7] Despite the social hierarchies, however, the colony gradually generated a chromatic continuum, with colour shades emerging between white and black, and transformations during this colonial process (such as manumission[8]) gave rise to an intricate set of racial and social classifications, based rather on colour than on ancestry.[9] In any case, racial mixture emerged

[4] Concubinage existed together with Christian marital interactions and surpassed the limits of slavery.
[5] Roger Bastide, "Dusky Venus, Black Apollo," *Race* 1, 1 (1959): 10–11.
[6] Ronaldo Vainfas, "Moralidades Brasílicas: Deleites Sexuais e Linguagem Erótica na Sociedade Escravista," in *História da Vida Privada no Brasil,* ed. Laura de Mello Souza (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997), 222–273.
[7] Gilberto Freyre, *Casa Grande e Senzala* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympo, 1946 [1933]), 10. Translation is provided by the authors.
[8] Manumission is the act of a slave owner freeing his or her slaves.
[9] This chromatic continuum was a fundamental axis in the discourses on national identity produced later in Brazil as it was for Cape Verde. The "mulata" (mulatto women), national symbol of the country, is the incorporation of myths that reflect the different classifications around race, gender and class. See Marisa Correa, "Sobre a invenção da Mulata," *Cadernos Pagu* 6–7 (1996): 35–50.

as a long-term process, not as a political strategy of domination, but as a consequence of the very conditions of such colonisation. Marked by racial asymmetric relations and gender specifications, the Brazilian case was nevertheless a referential moment in the making of the miscegenation discourse, as we will see later on.

After the independence of Brazil in 1822, the African colonies became the centre of the Portuguese empire, at a time when all the imperial powers began to redirect their attention to this continent. From this period on, the issue of racial mixing was quite problematic. Discourses about it at the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century were ambivalent, fluctuating between approving of hybridism for its humanism and deploring it for its impurity, in reflection of the ethno-racial conceptions of the time.[10] In the 1930s, when Salazar's regime was established,[11] assimilation was the key issue, and the relations between African peoples and settlers were to be much more regulated and distant than in Brazil. Indeed, the profile of the settlers in this period differed from that in Brazil. Beginning with a small flow of people who gradually increased (particularly after the Second World War), tradesmen and civil servants as well as landowners were invited to African colonies.[12] They arrived in a privileged situation and in a space of stated inequality, in which race had taken more clear and specific contours. Such conditions allowed for a type of settlement where racial mixture played only a small part.

Cape Verde would be the exception. Like Brazil, the country also experienced a process of long-term racial mixing, resulting in Creole[13] cultural forms, which were later used as a political project.[14] As for the other African colonies, one can say that there was never a proper racial mixing process. Gender relations between male settlers and African women were more delimited, happening mostly in the few urban centres and in contexts of sexual exploita-

[10] José Manuel Sobral, "O Norte, o Sul, a Raça, a Nação—Representações da Identidade Nacional Portuguesa (Séculos XIX–XX)," *Análise Social* 39, 171 (2004): 255–284.
[11] This was followed juridically by the promulgation of the *Acto Colonial* ("Colonial Act"), a law that emphasised the need to bring the African indigenous colonial populations into civilisation and into Portuguese culture.
[12] Cláudia Castelo, "Migração Ultramarina: Contradições e Constrangimentos," *Ler História—Emigração e Imigração* 56 (2009): 69–82.
[13] Creole is a word used mainly to designate Portuguese-based languages which resulted from colonial contact. In Cape Verde the Creole language and culture were used in both colonial and post-colonial times in attempts to define Cape Verdean national identity.
[14] Miguel Vale de Almeida, "Crioulização e Fantasmagoria," *Série Antropologia* 365 (2004): 1–13.

tion and female prostitution. Despite instances of occasional intercourse, long-term relationships, sexual abuse and abandoned mixed race children, there was no meaningful transformation in relations between whites and Africans.[15]

The making of the "gentler colonialists"

A powerful and long-lasting discourse was elaborated around the idea that Portuguese colonialism was exceptional due to the importance of racial mixing. This discourse would first appear in the 1920s in Brazil, in the aftermath of an intellectual and academic debate on the "essence" of Brazilian national identity. This debate would revolve around the centrality of the patriarchal family in the constitution of the Brazilian national character and around the question of sexuality. Several theses were put forward, of which the most prominent was Gilberto Freyre's, a Brazilian sociologist trained in the United States who had been propounding his ideas about the particular nature of Portuguese colonialism and the hybrid racial and cultural forms it fomented. This thesis was expounded in several of his books, especially in *Casa Grande e Senzala (The Masters and the Slaves),* a book published in 1933 on the formation of Brazilian society. Focussing on an analysis of the social organisation that arose in the sugar plantations in Brazil after the 16th century, Freyre argued that both the architectural arrangements and the domestic life of these plantations are expressions of a patriarchal society. The *Casa Grande* (Big House) refers to the landlords' residences in the sugar plantations and the *Senzala* refers to the dwellings of the Black slaves and servants. The relations established between these two social sites, most notably the sexual relations, were to form, according to Freyre, the basis for Brazilian society and nationality.

In this and other later works, Freyre highlighted the successful adjustment of the Portuguese to the tropical world, while stressing the original Portuguese mentality and culture as decisive factors in such adjustment. According to Freyre, the kinship that binds the Portuguese to the Arab or the Mohammedan enhanced their ability to adapt to the host physical and sociocultural environment. Accordingly, the Portuguese were able to develop a

[15] Kathleen Sheldon, *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002).

type of colonialism that differed from that practiced by the Northern Europeans. Moreover, Freyre considered that the absence of racial prejudices among the first Portuguese colonial settlers, as well as an unresponsiveness to the rules imposed by the State or to the moral and religious impositions of the Church, made Portuguese colonisation the only one suitable for tropical lands. It was as a result of this "co-fraternisation" that the Brazilian nation was to emerge, that is, a nation which is the result of the mixing of races through sexual relations between white men and black women. This view corresponds to Freyre's political aspirations towards the establishment of a "racial democracy" in Brazil, stressing the "tropical" virtues of the Brazilian people in contrast with the more liberal models of the "northern" democracies. In this model, not only were women excluded from the category of true citizens, but also Blacks, who had been freed from slavery after 1888, were not considered equal to Whites in terms of civil rights.[16] Instead of equality, women and Blacks, especially Black women, would receive the "sweetness" of intimate contact with their white landlords.

Amongst other things, in view of the close relations between, and daily proximity of, landlords and slaves, to the point of all eating at the same table, *Casa Grande e Senzala* explicitly deals with sexuality and highlights the several "benefits" of white masculine polygamy. Besides the demographic benefit of mixed offspring, who help populate the colony, another advantage was the satisfaction of the "natural" sensuality of Portuguese men, which, according to Freyre, is unique to them. As a matter of fact, Freyre frequently enhanced the special virility of Portuguese men, as this excerpt from *Casa Grande e Senzala* illustrates: "As for miscibility, no other modern coloniser people exceeded or even equalled the Portuguese. It was by pleasantly mingling with women of colour from the very beginning and multiplying themselves in mestizo children, that a few thousand daring *machos* managed to establish themselves in possession of vast lands."[17]

This attribute, inherited from the Portuguese colonialists, would thus be rhetorically transformed into the main distinctive quality of (male) Brazilian nationality: sexual relations outside marriage or, more specifically, having sex

[16] Ângela Almeida, "Sexualidade e Casamento na Colonização Portuguesa no Brasil," *Análise Social* 22, 92–93 (1986): 697–705.
[17] Freyre, *Casa Grande e Senzala,* 9. Translation is provided by the authors.

with the essential object-property of the patriarch, that is, the woman slave. To the white woman, the wife of the landlord, all was forbidden and such women were obliged to show the religious virtues of virginity and fidelity. Their sole role was reproduction, as the physical pleasures of sex and even the specific tasks of motherhood were transferred to the Black slave. As a matter of fact, Freyre does not fail to notice the importance of the "Black mother" to the Portuguese colonial aristocracy. It was the Black slave who breastfed the master's child, who told him stories and who, later on, initiated him into physical pleasures.[18] As such, the sexualised body became an axis that not only structured the social, cultural and ethical frame of colonial society, but also articulated a whole discourse around the specificity of Brazilian nationality after Brazil gained independence from Portugal.

Figure 5.1: João Ferreira Villela's portrait of Augusto Gomes Leal and wet nurse Mônica, Recife, Brazil, c. 1860 (Courtesy of Acervo Fundação Joaquim Nabuco/Coleção Francisco Rodrigues)

[18] Ibid., 283.

Despite serving as an affirmation of the Brazilian nation, Freyre's work also contains explicit praise of Portuguese colonialism, and the Portuguese colonial elites would take full advantage of it to legitimise the foundation of a new colonial policy after 1950. In the new order established by World War II, which was marked by an ever-swelling tide of anti-colonialism, a revision of the previous colonial policies was needed in order to avoid the decolonisation pressures coming from the United Nations and from the political independence movements that were forming in the colonies. Having rejected decolonisation, the Portuguese regime proceeded to undertake an ideological revision of its colonial policy. This ideological revision was based in part on the idea of Portugal as a multi-continental nation, with both European provinces and overseas ones. That is to say, Portugal was portrayed as a nation that possessed neither colonies nor non-autonomous territories. Therefore there was no sense in implementing UN-endorsed self-determination.

At that particular juncture, Salazar was insisting on the innate faculties of the Portuguese to merge and mingle with the local communities. The "scientific" legitimacy of the regime's new colonialist ideology, of racial and cultural equality, and of the uniqueness of Portuguese colonisation, could be found in the theses of Gilberto Freyre. Still, certain "hot" details were meticulously disregarded by a regime that was both ultra-conservative and Catholic. Nevertheless, Freyre's accounts of the virtues of Portuguese colonial rule, conceived as a non-racist colonialism that encourages miscegenation and suggesting a cultural unity between the metropolis and the colonies, would turn out to be extremely useful to the scientific and ideological legitimisation of Portugal's overseas policy. This was especially so given that this interpretation was provided by someone who was himself a "subject" of Portuguese colonialism.

It is in this context that the term Lusotropicalism was coined (referring to the Portuguese of the tropics).[19] Aspects of Lusotropicalism (miscegenation, cultural fusion, and absence of racial prejudice) were suitable adjustments of colonial ideology to an anti-colonial international setting. Schoolbooks and educational devices were to be powerful instruments in the propagation of

[19] The term Lusotropicalism was first put forward by Gilberto Freyre in Goa, India, in 1951, at a conference entitled "A modern culture: the Lusotropical" held during a "field trip" to the Portuguese provinces offered to Freyre by the Portuguese official bodies.

Figure 5.2: Illustration from the Estado Novo school textbook for the 4th grade, 1965
(Courtesy of Lello Editores)

the idea of a unified Portugal, both in the metropolis and in the colonies, as we can see in the example of the illustration above (see Figure 5.2).

Post-colonial reverberations

This thesis was to remain deeply ingrained in the representations and discourses on Portugality in the Portuguese public sphere—even in post-colonial times. It would also turn into a powerful tool in the cultural affirmation of former Portuguese colonies in the post-colonial period, especially in the cases of Brazil and Cape Verde, whose specificity has always been affirmed by the discourse of miscegenation. Moreover, in recent years and against a backdrop of migration flows and debates on multiculturalism, the miscegenation discourse has provided a very positive framework for the Portuguese colonial experience, mitigating its nefarious effects by comparing them to other colonial systems. Thus, it was with relative ease that this discourse came to prevail in the post-colonial setting; it was internalised and reproduced by large sections of the population, even if some criticism could be heard, most notably in academic circles.

After decolonisation there was no critical discussion of the empire and of colonialism in the Portuguese public arena. Racism became a critical topic for public debate, but the ideology of Lusotropicalism remained in poetry, literature, public displays and politics. A dominant discourse of multiculturalism in hybrid forms emerged, being generally integrated into cultural consumption and presented (and self-presenting) as a national product.

But behind the public façade of a tolerant and anti-racist society, the true social fabric is characterised by striking social differences and the existence of a subtle and unspoken racism that is highly restrictive when it comes to social relations in Portugal and when dealing with people from the ex-colonies who live in the country. Race and class combine to engender cultural distance and social conflict. Moreover, gender relations have a fundamental and complex role in this context. Our own research on migration indicates that Brazilian women, especially the poorer ones, tend to have their Lusotropicalist image reinforced, being positively considered sweet, generous, sensual, and a delightful prototype of mixed race. At the same time, they are racialised (as non-whites) and sexualised (as too "available")—two classifications that often put them in an unequal position in relation to European women. African women, meanwhile, are disadvantaged because of their colour and the lack of "mixed attributes". Sex abuse, prostitution, and poverty are some of the consequences of this. One cannot fail to notice the contradictions between the inclusion legitimised by discourses on the colonial past and the segregation based on long-term race, class and gender classification and exploitation.

Implications for teaching

We believe that this chapter can be helpful in teaching and reflecting on the link between the weight of the colonial past and its portrayal in contemporary discourses and fundamental analytical keys, such as gender and race. We suggest that historical backgrounds help us to understand the specificity of these contextual relations, giving rise to particular forms of gender positions, which, in turn, are repositioned over time. In the Portuguese case, gender and race intersect and create an imaginary of specific dynamics, which apparently enhance social mobility; even so, if one undertakes a more analytical study, one can point out the power asymmetries involved in its transformations. Both categories have gradually become experiences in imperial histories. The analytical challenge is now to analyse what kind of social, political and power relations emerged from their intersection.

Learning about how race and gender intersect is essential if one wants to understand the many legacies of colonial times and how they are being re-enacted or transformed. The intersections of categories, such as gender, class, race, nation, religion, among others, can be better understood—as Brah in-

dicates in her interpretation of intersectionality—as contextual and contingent in historical terms.[20] Such categories exist in reciprocal and contradictory relations, and create more or less relational possibilities and differentiations. This perspective, when applied to historical and analytical approaches to gender, race and colonisation, can help us to understand the unequal positions of people in global contexts, as we consider paradoxically the reinforcement of power asymmetries and a new politics of agency.[21]

Thus, crossing gender and class in colonial times leads us almost inevitably to the situation of Black women, constituted in both racial and sexual terms, as sexualised individuals—almost animals—who are excluded from legal marriage forms.[22] However, if this is true for colonial contexts in general, in the case of Portugal a particular tone is added to this process, whether we are speaking of the empirical forms of domination or of subsequent constructions of ideological and political imaginary. The miscegenation process, borne from a loose control of traditional institutions, became a tool of social domination. When transferred into the Lusotropicalist discourse, it tended to reinforce the subaltern position of women from the ex-colonies. Thus, white and male dominance over women—and especially over Black women—is reinforced by the knowledge produced by the discourse which, as Stuart Hall argued, is put into practice and becomes reality.[23] However, in their everyday contemporary lives in Portugal, the articulation of this discourse as a strategy for their own benefit is part of their response to these social and historical interactions, reminding us that subalternity is "always negotiable and negotiated".[24] It does not prevent forms of oppression, but it allows some forms of agency that puts this oppression in perspective, opening up space for further inquiry on the different ways the subaltern position of these women is being negotiated on a practical everyday basis.[25]

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[20] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Indentities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996).
[21] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995).
[22] Adriana Piscitelli, "Gênero, a História de um Conceito," in *Diferenças, Igualdades,* ed. Heloisa Buarque de Almeida and José Szwako (Sao Paulo: Berlendis, 2009), 116–150.
[23] Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power," in *Formations of Modernity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (Cambridge: Open University, Polity Press, 1992), 275–331.
[24] Gyanendra Pandey, "Introduction: The Subaltern as Subaltern Citizen," in *Subaltern Citizens and Their Histories: Investigations from India and the USA,* ed. Gyanendra Pandey (New York: Routledge, 2010), 4.
[25] This is a key analytical dimension of an ongoing research project which is being developed by Simone Frangella on Brazilian women migrants in Portugal, but which still needs further development.

Thinking about teaching, we believe it would be useful to reflect on some issues discussed in the text in other social, political and historical contexts. It is useful to ask, for example, whether more racial mixing might mean less racism. How do we analyse symbolic narratives, such as national discourses? Can they be perceived as more real than the facts of reality? Considering that relations between people of the ex-colonies and of the former colonial centres are based on asymmetrical power relations, is it possible to understand a relational or mutual subjectivity? How can we make sense of such things?

Some reflections will also be worthwhile where students are seeking to understand the context of colonial relations in the light of gender. We recommend, firstly, to discuss how racial and gender relations in the imperialist context contributed to national and colonial ideologies. Secondly, we suggest a debate on the various racial and gender interactions in the different colonial contexts. Both assignments can be undertaken in the form of historical research or an ethnographic investigation, resulting in a good understanding of the process by which categories such as gender and race are negotiated through a temporal axis.

Questions

1. Figure 5.2 shows the diffusion of a pluri-continental rhetoric in Portuguese schools. Indicate how racial and gender relations constituted in an imperialist context contributed to national and colonial ideologies in Portugal.

2. The discourse of miscegenation plays a crucial role in Portuguese colonial history. How is this discourse related to racism?

Assignments

1. Figure 5.1 provides a strong image of racial and gendered relations in the Portuguese Empire. Is there a mutual subjectivity that constitutes the relationship between people of the formal colonies and people of the colonial centres, even where the relationship is based on asymmetrical power relations? Discuss by referring to the arguments made in this chapter.

2. Use the specific colonial history of Portugal—the centrality of miscegenation—as a starting point to develop an argument about how different racial and gender interactions in the various colonial contexts may result in different post-colonial realities.

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CHAPTER 6:

The French Ban on Headscarves: Rendering Racism Respectable

Erzsébet Barát and Ebru Sungun

Introduction

In our paper we address the French government's 2004 law that instituted a ban on wearing "conspicuous signs" of religious affiliation in public schools as a representative example of contemporary anxieties about the Muslim faith. France is not the only country in Europe that sees the headscarf as a challenge to secular democracy. Since 2004 Belgium and Spain have also introduced a ban. Nor is the intensity of the anxiety a matter of actual numbers of the population that identify as Muslim in the various countries. The headscarf or the "veil", standing for the various forms of women's clothing (including the hijab in France, the burqa in Holland, and the niqab in England), has become a symbol of the stigmatisation of ethnic or religious Muslim others in contemporary political discourse. As Joan Scott observes, "Banning the headscarf or veil is a symbolic gesture; for some European nations it is a way of taking a stand against Islam, declaring entire Muslim populations to be a threat to national integrity and harmony."[1] We challenge the proponents' claim that the French ban applies to every religion and that its sole purpose is to exclude "conspicuous religious signs" from the public space. The ban does not impact everyone's life equally. It is most discriminatory against Muslim girls who are likely to wear the headscarf. We have chosen the highly topical French case as the most telling example of contemporary "veil-bashing" in Europe, in order to show that the law's failure to integrate (former) colonial subjects as full citizens is particularly detrimental to young Muslim girls. Unlike Scott, though, we are not concerned predominantly with the role of sexuality in the criminalisation of the ban but rather with its gender implications. At the same time we share her conclusion that the 2004 ban can not reconcile religious and/or ethnic differences, but instead reiterates them. The French government's discrimination against the religious or cultural belonging of Muslims

[1] Joan W. Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 3.

is played out through the prevailing aspect of the excluded identity, namely gender. Focussing on the 2004 French ban on the wearing of headscarves in public schools, this chapter may be used in classroom discussions to explore similar situations in which a particular garment associated with women is transformed into a symbol of the stigmatisation of ethnic or religious others in contemporary European political discourse.

The history of secularisation in the Christian West is tied to the emergence of the nation-state and to the separation of politics from religion. Therefore, in contemporary debates about the compatibility of Islamic values with political democracy and secular modernity, doubts are often raised. As the gendered dimension of secularism is a fundamental feature of male-centred modernisation, French *laïcité* (the French version of secularism) established a secular public sphere where religion is absent but women as markers of modernity are profoundly present. Within this framework, girls wearing a headscarf in recognition of their cultural and/or religious belonging in public schools are seen as at odds with the principles of secularism and modernity in European society. Consequently, feminist scholars and activists face the challenge of reconciling the headscarf with the principle of gender equality, a fundamental value of western secular societies. Furthermore, in so far as the girls wearing the headscarves come from families that are seen as "immigrants", "Arabs" or "Africans" from former colonies, the ban on the headscarf appears questionable not only in terms of the equality principle in a democracy, but also as a covert act of racism played out in the name of political progress at the expense of young women. Gender oppression and racial oppression intersect and legitimise once again the majority society's control over the meaning and terms of multicultural "coexistence".[2]

[2] When discussing the relationship between racism and gender, we adopt an intersectional approach as the theoretical framework. See Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13 (2006): 193–209. This approach enables us to examine how various analytical categories are socially constructed within a particular network of social arrangements and particular frameworks of intelligibility and how they manifest themselves in various forms of inequality. See Leslie McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, 3 (2005): 1771–1800. The materiality of female existence is inextricably bound to the discourses through which it comes to be intelligible. Hence we can explore the French ban on the headscarf as an instance of explicit reference to the defence of secular politics through the reiteration of gender inequalities in the lives of teenage girls.

Situating the 2004 Act

The French legislature passed a law in March 2004 that, as of September 2004, banned the wearing of "conspicuous religious symbols" in state owned schools as an amendment to the French Code of Education. Although Jewish scull caps and "excessively large" crucifixes are also covered by the law, it is agreed in public discourses that the act of banning targeted primarily the headscarves worn by Muslim girls. This point underscores the concern feminist scholars have recently voiced about the importance of acknowledging the relative specificity of the various forms of oppression. In order to tackle the various forms of inequity, we need to address the differential basis of exclusion, by, for instance, addressing the differences of the framing of the issues and the politics of categorisation they entail.[3] Consequently, in line with Johanna Kantola's[4] proposition, we argue that an intersectional approach to inequalities should not assume that all aspects of discrimination take place at the same time and to the same extent. The question should be which of the identities involved prevails in the particular social and cultural context. As the particular case of French legislation demonstrates, we argue, gender is the most salient aspect of identity that is effectively manipulated for implied racist purposes. Discrimination in cases of the symbolic manifestation of religious or cultural identity functions predominantly as a means of control over the integration of young migrant women into contemporary French society. Ironically, though, the purported intent of the French state to integrate Muslim girls into the state school system in the name of liberal secularism leaves those very girls with little choice but to turn to private Muslim schooling, driving them further away from the alleged ideal of (secularised) integration. We shall demonstrate how gender inequalities are embedded in the hierarchy of other aspects of identity, particularly race, ethnicity and religion. The French Government's 2004 ban on the headscarf is a particular enactment of ideology-

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[3] See Mieke Verloo, "Multiple Inequalities, Intersectionality and the European Union," *European Journal of Women Studies* 13, 3 (2006): 211–228, who challenges the simplistic conceptualisation of "multiple discrimination" in contemporary (EU) policy documents, which assume that the various dimensions of inequality are freely interchangeable.

[4] Johanna Kantola, "Tackling Multiple Discrimination: Gender and Crosscutting Inequalities in Europe," in *Teaching Intersectionality: Putting Gender at the Centre,* ed. Martha Franken, et al. (Utrecht and Stockholm: ATHENA3, University of Utrecht and Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University, 2009), 27.

driven integration. As Kimie Takahashi[5] observes, othering the linguistic behaviour of (im)migrants is frequently used as a substitute "for [explicit forms of] racial, ethnic and gender discrimination, particularly in societies that see themselves as non-racist or post-racist"—such as French society in our case.

Since the late 1980s, headscarves (called *foulards* in Arabic) have been a source of anxiety in France, which historically sees itself as the world leader in secularism *(laïcité)* and in the separation of state and religious power. The headscarf was perceived as a threat to French national identity, which has traditionally been based on the values of secularism, republicanism, and universalism. The anxiety surfaced in the context of the French government's attempt in the early 1980s to make the education system more secular. In an unexpectedly successful response, the Catholic Church initiated a large protest, bringing out a million faithful Catholics to demonstrate against the government's plans. Prime Minister Mitterrand had to fight for his political life. The Socialists remained in power but they never again attempted to remove Catholicism from the school system. The protests brought an end to the secularised foundation of the French Republic, set up against the Catholic religion, as Judith Ezekiel argues. From the French Revolution in 1789 to the 1980s, secularism was seen as an unquestionable bulwark against the hierarchical, reactionary and powerful Catholic Church. As a result of the failure of the Government's educational reform in the 1980s, there was a tendency for Catholicism to disappear as the enemy in the discourse of secularism, only to be conveniently replaced by Islam.[6] The shift to the Islamic Other in the secular narratives reached its peak in 2004 with the banning of "conspicuous" religious symbols in public schools. The 2004 law was adopted with 494 votes in favour and only 36 votes against.

The 2004 ban was in fact the culmination of a series of conflicts in state schools which began in the late 1980s and concluded in 2003 when Jacques Chirac set up an investigative committee (Commission Stasi, named after its head, then ombudsman Bertrand Stasi) to advise him on how the principle of laïcité should be applied in public schools. According to Mayer Nonna,[7]

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[5] Kimie Takahashi, "Multilingualism and Gender," (preprint, forthcoming) http://mq.academia.edu/KimieTakahashi/Papers/136772/_Preprint_Multilingualism_and_Gender.

[6] Judith Ezekiel, "French Dressing: Race, Gender, and the Hijab Story," *Feminist Studies* 32, 2 (2006): 266.

[7] Nonna Mayer, "Is France Racist?" *Contemporary European History* 5, 1 (1996): 119–127.

in a survey conducted on minorities after the French presidential election of 1988, the answers show the scale of hostility towards migrants and their cultural specificities. The survey asked four questions about the place of minorities in France and their rights. Of those interviewed, 21 percent thought that "Jews have too much power in France", 38 percent did not think it is "all right for Muslims living in France to have a mosque in which to practice their religion", half of the respondents had a vague feeling that "we don't feel the country belongs to us any more" and two-thirds thought that "there are too many immigrants in France". One could argue that there is a general high level of hostility towards immigrants and towards anyone who is "different". The answers can be shown to demonstrate a progressive scale of ethnocentrism among the French population with Jewish people at the lowest end of the scale, with Muslims in the middle, and with the unspecified migrant in general at the top end. The 2004 ban on the veil in state schools reflected this generally non-favourable disposition towards migrants.

Civilising the "uncivilised"

The current debates about the veil in France and in Europe draw on the historical memory of European Colonialism in the 19th century. Western political and economic domination of the Middle East and North Africa throughout the colonial period was always legitimised on the premise that Muslim societies were inferior to those in the West. Civilising the Orient in general was the pretext for colonisation. The status of women, in particular, was often mentioned or implicated as "the" visible sign of the Muslim world's backwardness. As Julia Clancy-Smith argues, throughout the colonial era, French officials denounced the status of women in Algeria and used the oppression of Muslim women to deny Algerians any political or civic rights. Algerian men, unlike the French, were considered to oppress their women and therefore they were called "uncivilised". Their behaviour was seen to be conditioned by their religion, Islam. Such a framework of argumentation could effectively reinforce the legitimacy of colonialism: the more "uncivilised" the natives were, the more necessary it was for the French (or other "civilised" European nations) to "educate" and rule them. On the other hand, the ideology of civilisation played out at the expense of women in the colonies could distract attention from the struggle of the first wave of women's movements

in Europe, reinforcing the hierarchical organisation of the sex-gender system on the colonisers' home ground. Even though women in the Western colonising countries were fighting for their right to vote, to a higher education, or for property ownership,[8] western gender relations could emerge as if unproblematic and ideal, while the women of the colonies were positioned as the pitiful oppressed "Other". The colonial image of the Muslim woman and the creation of the civilised West/primitive Orient binary represented an important shift in the colonial gaze: "In the imperial imagination, behind the high walls of the Arab household, women suffered oppression due to Islamic laws and customs. As the colonial gaze fixed progressively upon Muslim women between 1870 and 1900, Islam was moved by many French writers from the battlefield into the bedroom."[9]

The dominance of negative images of "difference" linked with Islam and Muslims in France can best be understood with the help of Laura Nader's work,[10] who brings together Antonio Gramsci's[11] concept of hegemony with Michel Foucault's notions of "true discourse" and "positional superiority".[12] She exposes the way in which "the truth" about Muslims and Islam is formulated according to the social structure of power relations. Foucault's notion of "true discourse" refers to a discourse that is restrictive and exclusive of alternative conceptions of reality, obscuring concepts that could bring an alternative understanding of how different forms of power operate. As a result of such "true discourses" on migrants and migration, negative stereotypes of Muslims have become part of the dominant discourse in current narratives of cultural/religious difference. The hegemonic relationship across differential cultural values and practices is established "not through force or coercion, nor necessarily through consent, but most effectively by way of practices, tech-

[8] On contemporary articulations of the various agendas of first-wave feminist movements and the issues, see the review article by Solveig C. Robinson, "'Amazed at Our Success': the Langham Place Editors and the Emergence of a Feminist Critical Tradition," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 29, 2 (1996): 159–172.

[9] Julia Clancy-Smith, "Islam, Gender, and Identities in the Making of French Algeria, 1830–1962," in *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism,* ed. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 155.

[10] Laura Nader, "Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Control of Women," *Cultural Dynamics: An International Journal for the Study of Processes and Temporality of Cultures,* 2, 3 (1989): 1–33.

[11] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebook,* ed. and trans. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

[12] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* trans. A. M. Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 178–195.

niques, and methods which infiltrate minds and bodies, tastes, desires …"[13] Nader also argues that the hegemonic discourse of cultural difference shapes a realm that defines the relationship between the East associated with the Muslim migrant and the West linked with civilisation and progress in such a way that the West is located as a positional superior to the East. Hegemonic forms of knowledge are not only successful in forming an ideological base to protect the interest of the powerful elite but can also engage the opposition successfully in such a way as to serve hegemony.

Gendering the colonial other

The headscarf has always been an important issue in France's interaction with the "Muslim Other". As Frantz Fanon has explained, the French attempt was to "civilise" Algerians by encouraging de-veiling: "Here and there it thus happened that a woman was 'saved' and symbolically 'unveiled'."[14] According to Marnia Lazreg, unveiling ceremonies of Algerian women took place in major cities in the 1950s as part of the militarised French state's effort to "normalise" torture. The most noteworthy one was held on 16 May 1958, in the capital Constantine. The unveiling ceremony was staged by French generals, surrounded by their wives. The Arabic women lined up were forced to drop their veils before the press and a crowd of onlookers, and the generals declared that the last obstacle to a French Algeria had just collapsed.[15] The falling of the veils was seen by French colonisers as the symbolic fall of the Algerian nation the nationalists were fighting for. The traces of a past that the FLN (National Liberation Front) was fighting to reclaim would be removed symbolically by the public unveiling of women. Lazreg argues that the staging included the special orders given by the French military to encourage participation of unveiled Muslim women with applause and expression of sympathy amongst the onlookers. What is more, Lazreg gives the example of Monique Améziane, a woman in Constantine, who reports that the women forced to unveil themselves had not necessarily worn the veil before. Their selection was also part

[13] Barry Smart, "The Politics of Truth and the Problem of Hegemony" in *Foucault: A Critical Reader,* ed. David Couzens Hoy (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 160.
[14] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 42.
[15] Marnia Lazreg, *Torture and the Twilight of Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 3.

of the staging. Améziane reports that in 1958 "she was an eighteen-year-old student, living in a dorm, at the Lycée Lapérière. She *was coerced by the military to show up* at an official unveiling ceremony planned in the city, *wearing a veil she had never worn before,* and instructed to unveil herself publicly on the official podium. Had she refused, her brother, in detention at the notorious Améziane (torture) farm—a property of the family's—would have been executed. … She remembers crying as she was dressed in blue and red to give her 'the look of Marianne' [the female symbolic figure of the French republic]."[16] Frantz Fanon also argues that some of the women to be humiliated in public like that (at least in Algeria) were maids rounded up by their employers to play their part.[17] Ironically, the enforcement of de-veiling and the alleged liberation of Muslim women in Algeria were carried out by the French middle-class men against whom French women were fighting for their rights. Colonialism was justified by reference to the oppression of Muslim women by Algerian men whose "uncivilised" behaviour was argued to be conditioned by their religion. Islamophobia, the major underlying theme of the headscarf ban can be best captured by Gayatri Spivak's observation: "Brown women [are] saved by white men from brown men."[18]

The veil, however, has a more complex meaning in French colonial history. The veil, or rather its non-visibility in public spaces, played, for instance, a favourable role in building allegiances with the Kabyles in Algeria in the 1840s. French colonial oppressors constructed the imagined superior figure of the Kabyles, in acknowledgement of their aid to French colonial administrators. According to Paul Silverstein, the myth of "Kabyle superiority" was constructed in gender terms at the expense of the Arabic Other: "According to scholars, the Kabyles continued to hold their women in high respect; Kabyle women were masters of the household, went in public unveiled, and generally 'have a greater liberty than Arab women;' they count more in society."[19] In 1958 the performance of a public ceremony of unveiling Muslim women was a striking example of the "civilising mission" of France as an act of the liberator in Algeria. To

[16] Ibid., 150–151. (Italics added.)
[17] Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 62.
[18] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture,* ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 297.
[19] Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 52.

secure the mission of "civilisation" by de-veiling, France drew towards this impasse once again in 2004 when gender equality became the constant preoccupation and priority of the republic and the headscarves of Muslim teenage girls became "the" obstacle to so-called equality in France. "France cannot allow Muslims to undermine its core values, which include astrict separation of religion and state, equality between the sexes and freedom for all."[20]

Although women rights seemed to be foregrounded in the debate preceding the 2004 law and the feminist movement should have played a major role in its development, this clearly was not the case. No feminist was heard by the Stasi Commission. Nor was the Secretary of State responsible for equality and parity. The Stasi Commission, the prominent voice in favour of the ban, began its public hearings in September 2003 and quickly declared that in their view young girls wearing the veil are suffering patriarchal oppression in a country where "equality between men and women … is an important element of the republican pact and that the State can not remain passive in the face of any breach of this principle."[21] The Commission stated that the young women residing in *banlieues* ("suburbs" in English) are subject to "political and religious harassment", their community telling them what to wear in accordance with their religious principles, and they suffer "verbal, psychological or physical harm" from young men who require them to "look down" and who impose on the girls "outfits and sexless clothes", which should result in "forced marriages, polygamy, female genital mutilation".[22] The Commission was outraged at the Muslim community's arguably inherent misogyny: "The basic rights of women are now being violated daily in our country. Such a situation is unacceptable."[23] The apparent denunciation of the role of women in Islam and the "quartiers" (districts and suburbs) formed the core of the argument in favour of the law.

The law is supposed to protect Muslim girls from their families that would force them to wear headscarves and, indirectly, to protect the universal right of the public to privacy of their religious faith. But in its effect, it is dis-

[20] Dominic McGoldrick, *Human Rights and Religion: The Islamic Headscarf Debate in Europe* (Portland, OR: Hart Publishing, 2006), 89.
[21] Translation of the Stasi report is provided by Ebru Sungun. Bernard Stasi, *Laïcité et République: Rapport de la Commission de Réflexion sur l'application du principe de laïcité dans la République remis au Président de la République le 11 décembre 2003* (Paris: La Documentation Francaise, 2004), 35.
[22] Ibid., 101–105.
[23] Ibid., 104.

criminatory in that it stigmatises the Muslim population, portraying Muslims as abusers of religious rights for political purposes and as advocates of oppressive patriarchal relations of gender. The law also implicates all French citizens in a hostile rift. The public was in fact divided between "for and against the veil" positions—including feminist voices. According to the pro-law (feminist) position, communal pressures in the Muslim families are effects of negative forces, and the only reason for a woman to wear the headscarf is to submit to the oppression to men. Riva Kastoryano defends the ban on Islamic headscarves in French public schools by invoking the need to protect women's autonomy from political/religious authorities and institutions, including the family. "Law alone cannot help to liberate the individual, especially when the individual is a woman from a community where there are pressures that have become the common rule in concentrated areas like the *banlieues* [suburbs] in France. Still, such a law is important for liberating Muslims from Islam as a political force that weighs on Muslim migrant communities wherever they are settled."[24]

Feminist critique of the ban: "Une École pour Tous et pour Toutes"

According to the anti-law (feminist) position, the scarf is strongly linked to the violence against women that should allegedly occur in the "Muslim suburbs". Feminists against the ban point out that according to the pro-ban position's logic women are said to protect themselves from rape by covering themselves in a scarf. However, they are blind to the fact that from this perspective, the scarf is seen as the obvious consequence of gender violence, which, at the same time, is conflated with the Muslim faith—saving the privileges of the white hegemonic male of the neo-coloniser.

Christine Delphy (founder of the journal *Questions Féministes,* with the patronage of Simone de Beauvoir) has become the most prominent feminist figure in the group organised against the headscarf ban. Their slogan is "Une École pour Tous et pour Toutes" (School for Everyone). Delphy[25] argues that the young girls who wear headscarves have suddenly become a sign of the ar-

[24] Riva Kastoryano, "Religion and Incorporation: Islam in France," (Paper presented to the International Studies Association meetings, February 15–18, 2009), 12.
[25] Christine Delphy, *Classer, dominer: Qui sont les "autres"?* (Paris: Éditions La Fabrique, 2008).

rival of an "Islamic" society and with it the "clash of civilisations": a misogynistic, anti-democratic, repressive, warlike and cruel Islam. Delphy interprets the Commission's attempts at locating the alleged gender-based violence in the suburbs by "Arabs" and "blacks" as a systematic act of separation of gender-based violence from "ordinary" forms of violence. The "extraordinary" violence as a graver patriarchal act would never be seen as an instance of ordinary violence and it is considered a foreign effect. "Extraordinary violence" is seen as African, Arab or Muslim. Because of the ethnic identification of the perpetrators of the patriarchal acts—as Arabs and Africans—patriarchy cannot be ordinary in the sense of pertaining to French everyday life. As an ideological effect of the ethnicisation of patriarchal inequalities, patriarchal violence emerges as something alien to French society and is effectively embodied by Islam positioned as an inherently violent faith. The 2004 law is an act of Islamophobia in the guise of universal values of equal rights that should be measured by teenage girls' "non-visibility" in public schools as children of Muslim migrants.

The debate about the prohibition of the headscarf also created a media environment that considered the issue an urgent case for international concern. All Arab or Muslim countries where the headscarf is worn are conveniently homogenised and seen as spaces of brutal or cruel practices. The alleged consequences of the scarf pertaining to the teenage years of the Muslim schoolgirl are extended by the same essentialising logic into "inevitable" developmental moments in her life trajectory: forced marriages, stoning, female circumcision, amputation of the hands of thieves. The scarf is articulated to represent not what it is for the interested party, that is, the French colonialist state, but to represent all detestable traits possible that the West imagines in its demonisation of the Muslim countries and Islam.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter we explored how gender oppression and racial oppression are two separate but intersecting forms of exclusion with the help of the French case of legislation. The 2004 ban emerged as the culmination of a debate that resurfaced in the 1980s in relation to the proposals to reform the French Education Code. Its obsession with young Muslim school girls' headscarf brought to the fore powerfully once again the incompatibility of allegiances to Islam

and to the French (secular) Republic. Gender came to be manipulated for racist purposes in the name of defending the foundations of secular democracy. The "detection" of male domination in the Other Black or Arabic Muslim cultural spaces is used to legitimise the conflation of political and religious agendas set on the terms of the colonisers, in the alleged defence of equally accessible secular values. The result is the formation of a pervasive belief in the existence of stigmatised differences of a racial or ethnic type. For Saïd Bouamama,[26] the law against headscarves and the ensuing new form of Islamophobia aim to ethnicise the social problems created by neo-colonial discrimination against migration, rendering racism "respectable". French colonial culture and ideology continue to depend on an explicitly sexist and patriarchal logic that feminises the Arab Muslim "Other".

We would like to make one final point and underscore that in our discussion we tried to avoid reducing racism to xenophobia. While xenophobia is the result of an individual attitude, racism pertains to an institutional level of social practices. As Ezekiel argues, reduction of racism to xenophobia posits the immigrants as foreign and the French as white and Catholic. The poster for a new museum on immigration proclaims, "Their history is our history. However, to become part of 'our history', they must leave their separate stories at the doors of the Republic."[27] At the same time, we used racism in the more restrictive and less controversial sense of ethnocentrism. Drawing on Lévi-Strauss, it is the oldest attitude, and has solid psychological foundations since "as it tends to reappear in each one of us when we are caught unawares, [it] rejects[s] out of hand the cultural institutions—ethical, religious, social or aesthetic which are furthest removed from those with which we identify ourselves. 'Barbarous habits', 'not what we do', 'ought not to be allowed', are all crude reactions indicative of the same instinctive antipathy, the same repugnance for ways of life, thought or belief to which we are unaccustomed."[28]

[26] Saïd Bouamama, *L'affaire du foulard islamique: production d'un racisme respectable* (Roubaix: Le Geai bleu, 2004).
[27] Ezekiel, "French Dressing," 263.
[28] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Race and History* (Paris: Unesco, 1952), 11.

Implications for teaching

Given the diversity of feminist scholarship, we had to assume that our potential readers belong to diverse epistemological traditions. Nevertheless, according to our understanding, the various feminist approaches to women's life share the interest in producing transformative and critical knowledge. This explicit commitment to a transformative politics of knowledge highlights the importance of reflexivity. Without systematic reflections one cannot engage in a critical exploration of the given social formations of unequal relations. To be critical therefore we need to avoid being "in discourse", to avoid articulating "the issues" in terms of the discourses of the dominant imaginary. The objective of critical reflexivity therefore translates into a methodological requirement for shifting perspectives, and into an ability to look systematically from "somewhere else". Our text therefore tries to demonstrate to students how to do an intersectional analysis that sees the headscarf from the perspective of gender as well as ethnic relations—instead of considering it in terms of the expected state concern about secular democracy. Our approach in this regard observes the tradition in feminist pedagogy of teaching resistance. It teaches students to re/articulate themselves in new positions, to deploy a critical approach to their own contexts.

The text is a case study that offers multiple opportunities for carrying out in-depth analysis of similar processes in the students' social and cultural contexts. It can be of particular relevance for classrooms with students and instructors of multicultural background where they may carry out comparisons when they look at the historical legacies of contemporary flows of migration in Europe. They can collect actual examples of social injustices and analyse their meaning production aspects. They may find out which particular cultural objects come to assume symbolic meanings similar to the headwear. They can understand in what ways those cultural objects obscure the recognition of unequal relations of power and legitimise the struggle against them as if "real" reasons for social concern.

In so far as contemporary social movements focus on the political demand of recognition of personhood, our analysis of the headscarf debate may promote the discussion of similar demands. Students may learn how to explore the shifts in the focalisation of the various debates in contemporary European political discourses that do not necessarily foreground migration on their agendas but thematise something else, such as the recent declaration of the

"death of multiculturalism", or that of the concerns voiced about the "aging" society of Europe and the need "to protect" the labour market, in addition to old accusations about the "rise of criminality" in the wake of migration. The questions we have formulated advance such critical awareness against the backdrop of a revival of nationalist ideologies in Europe, deploying various contemporary feminist concerns about how to categorise personhood in non-discriminatory ways.

Questions and assignments

1. Judith Butler in *Undoing Gender,* Chapter 9, tries to cut across the unproductive binary of universal human rights and difference by debunking the concept of universal. Drawing on Butler's argument, what would you see as an act of "fair treatment" in the French case? How can it sidestep the contradiction between the French theoretical commitment to universalism and the practice of ethnic-based discrimination?

2. Many (female) teachers in France argued that the Act was a relief because they did not have to arbitrate on whether their female pupils should wear the headscarf or not. Yet the French ban implies an internal division between various groups of women in terms of their perception of religion. What forms of freedoms are desired in your own social and/or cultural context that are articulations of similar racism played out through unequal treatment of different groups of women? How are the disagreements valued and seen by the various groups of women?

3. The expression "clashes of civilisations" seems to be a commonsense though highly problematic formulation in contemporary struggles over how to see the global formation of multicultural societies. Should cultural difference be seen as integral to multicultural and multilingual societies, resulting in heterogeneous, hybrid cultures or rather as an inherent trait that results in multiple but separate cultures living side-by-side as if in a patchwork? Why can the latter result in rendering invisible the Muslim presence in white neo-colonial societies, paradoxically, through the explicit focalisation on Muslim women?

4. The call for legislation on religious symbols in state schools was embedded in the debates about the reforms of the French National Code. It eventually passed into the form of a law that expects anyone born of immigrant parents and ordinary residents in France to make a public declaration of allegiance to the republic before receiving full citizenship. What does this tell us about the gendered aspect of citizenship?

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CHAPTER 7:

Racial/Ethnic Otherness in Polish Public Discourse

Aleksandra M. Różalska

Conceptualising the racial other in Polish culture

Throughout the last two decades feminist and minority scholars and activists have hoped that Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 would contribute—literally and metaphorically—to a receptiveness to the ideas of cultural diversity in Polish society, owing not only to increased immigration to Poland but also to massive Polish emigration to such multicultural countries as Great Britain or Germany. However, a thorough examination of both political and media discourses in Poland, as well as of the attitudes of Polish immigrants abroad, who for the first time experience living in a multicultural environment, does not yet allow us to draw positive conclusions. On the contrary, EU enlargement has evoked fear and a sense of uncertainty. As Dorota Golańska rightly contends: "Although recently there have been neither open nationalist conflicts nor ethnic wars in Poland, … the country's situation during and after the transition period from the communist regime to a democratic system, as well as its integration within European structures, have constituted a favourable ground for nationalistic rhetoric, since both are preoccupied with the issue of national identity."[1]

This chapter—although it concentrates on the specific example of Poland—aims to identify broader processes in Europe, such as growing racism, the crisis of multiculturalism, anti-immigration sentiments, violence against women and minorities, the increasing popularity of conservative and right-wing rhetoric, to name just a few. I intend to situate Polish experiences within a complex European landscape.

Whereas feminist and minority scholars have addressed the intersections between gender and race in various European contexts[2] (together with their

[1] Dorota Golańska, "Intimate Citizenship: The Intersection of Gender and Nationalism in Polish Discourses on Abortion and EU Enlargement," in *New Subjectivities: Negotiating Citizenship in the Context of Migration and Diversity,* ed. Dorota Golańska and Aleksandra M. Różalska (Łódź: Łódź University Press, 2008), 170.

[2] See Elżbieta H. Oleksy, Andrea Pető and Berteke Waaldijk, eds., *Gender and Citizenship in a Multicultural Context* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008).

implications for both research and teaching), Polish researchers have rather concentrated on investigating racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination separately.[3] Therefore, in this chapter I explain how the specific history of Poland influences society's attitudes towards different kinds of otherness, especially its perception of racial, ethnic and national minorities, with important reference to gender/sexuality. It is crucial to understand that the tradition of Polish patriotism and nationalism, which—to use the words of Anne McClintock—is gendered and "dependent on powerful construction of gender difference",[4] in a similar way naturalises ethnic/racial difference. As Agnieszka Graff underlines: "Nation and gender are both culturally constructed; moreover, they construct each other, via notions of what is 'natural' and what is 'cultural.' The negotiation of gender difference and the advancement of nationalism are parallel processes, because ideologies which naturalize gender tend to naturalize race and ethnicity."[5] These mutual interdependencies between different forms of discrimination (in this context, racism and sexism) and the resultant "matrix of domination"[6] are rarely addressed in Polish university classrooms (with the exception of the gender studies programmes that I will refer to later on). Therefore, throughout this chapter I will emphasise the need to introduce intersectional perspectives[7] to teaching curricula, not only at university but also in primary and secondary education. I agree with Jane Elliot that "anything you learn, you can unlearn, including racism".[8] However, it is not possible to "unlearn" things if the concepts of cultural diversity, multiculturalism and knowledge about other religions are absent from teaching curricula. Generally speaking, the intersectional perspective is still absent from both academic research and NGOs reports, not to mention the popular media discourse. For

[3] See Agnieszka Graff, "Gender, Sexuality, and Nation—Here and Now: Reflections on the Gendered and Sexualized Aspects of Contemporary Polish Nationalism," in *Intimate Citizenships. Gender, Sexualities, Politics,* ed. Elżbieta H. Oleksy (New York: Routledge, 2009), 133–146.

[4] Anne McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven: Women and Nationalism in South Africa," *Transition* 15 (1991): 105.

[5] Agnieszka Graff, "The Land of Real Men and Real Women: Gender and EU Accession in Three Polish Weeklies," *The Journal of the International Institute* 15, 1 (2007): 10. For further explanations of gender/nation intersection see: Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: SAGE, 1997).

[6] See Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

[7] I wrote about intersectional approaches to visual texts in "Intersectionality and Visual Culture: Approaches, Complexities and Teaching Implications," in *Teaching Visual Culture in an Interdisciplinary Classroom,* ed. Elżbieta H. Oleksy and Dorota Golańska (Utrecht and Stockholm: ATHENA3, University of Utrecht and Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University, 2009), 55–74.

[8] "Jane Elliott Attacks Racism in UNCP Address," http://www.uncp.edu/news/2002/jane_elliott_2.htm.

instance, only one NGO report mentioned the need for an intersectional approach to discrimination of Muslim women—refugees from Chechnya.[9] In order to understand the difficulties in introducing minority and gender perspectives as well as intersectionality methodologies to the Polish education system and to policy making in Poland, one needs to take a closer look at Polish history and at the current composition of Polish society. Such perspectives, together with an overview of the existing legal framework on discrimination, will help contextualise the notion of cultural racism.

The ethnic and religious composition of Polish society: An historical perspective

Poland is an ethnically homogenous country where almost 97 percent of the population of 38 million is of Polish ethnic origin and nationality. Moreover, a similar number of people (95.8 percent[10]) self-identify as Catholics. Registered ethnic and national minorities constitute approximately 1.2 percent of Polish society.[11] Although the multicultural Poland of the interwar period (1918–1939)—tolerant towards national and religious minorities—is still a part of national mythology, the idea has little reflection in the present reality. Although the composition of the interwar Polish state—newly established in 1918—certainly resulted in tensions and social and political unrest, nevertheless coexistence with minorities was a part of the everyday experience of Poles. This situation was disrupted by the experiences of World War II—the occupation of Poland by the Soviet Union and Germany, the Holocaust and the mass extermination of Poles in concentration camps—and by subsequent events: the Soviet annexation of eastern Poland, the loss of political sovereignty to the Soviet Union in 1945, and the introduction of communist rule.

Until 1989, under a communist regime that emphasised equality and collectivity in its ideology, the concept of an ethnically and nationally homogenous country prevailed, eliminating any discussion of minority rights and allowing for a prevalence of anti-Semitic attitudes. The transition period of

[9] Katarzyna Wencel and Witold Klaus, "Dyskryminacja cudzoziemców w Polsce w latach 2008–2010," *Analizy, Raporty, Ekspertyzy* 6 (2010): 61.
[10] Grzegorz Gudaszewski and Mariusz Chmielewski, *Wyznania religijne i stowarzyszenia narodowościowe i etniczne w Polsce 2006–2008* (Warsaw: Central Statistical Office, 2010), 36.
[11] There are nine national minorities (Byelorussians, Czechs, Lithuanians, Germans, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Jews) and four ethnic minorities (Karaims, Lemkos, Roma, and Tatars).

1989 was supposed to bring a new quality to the perception of the nation and society, including the minority and gender perspectives. The former were—at least declaratively—addressed by the first democratic government. The latter became the subject of a political and ideological struggle over the meaning of womanhood, the issues of reproductive rights and abortion, and equal rights and opportunities. It is symptomatic of societies in transition that the traditional gender rhetoric becomes the dominant one. Even so, I would argue that this concerns not only gender but also racial/ethnic, sexual and religious otherness. In this sense, Poland is still in the transition period, even though it has been more than twenty years since the collapse of communism.

Legal framework

The Polish Constitution of 1997 prohibits any kind of discrimination in political, social or economic life and also ensures the protection of the rights of national and ethnic minorities. Other legislation, such as the Labour Code Act, also complies with these general provisions. The Criminal Code forbids certain crimes committed on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity or denomination; however, as numerous NGOs underline, there has been a problem with putting the law into practice.

Soon after the transition period work began on drafting the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on Regional Languages; it was signed only on 6 January 2005. If it were put into practice, the Act would constitute a good starting point for a debate on minority rights in Poland. Nonetheless, it is important to underline that the legislation applies only to ethnic and national minorities defined therein; it fails to address the situation of immigrants, refugees and other foreigners subjected to discrimination for ethnic or racial reasons. This gap is (unsatisfactorily) filled with European Union-based legislation, for example the National Programme Against Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2004–2009).[12] Unfortunately, implementation has been problematic because the Polish government lacks a special body that would monitor and put into practice the EU regulations. In theory,

[12] European Network Against Racism, *Responding to Racism in Poland* (ENAR, 2006), http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/pdf/Poland_EN.pdf.

these tasks are the responsibility of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment. However, her activities in 2008–2011 have been criticised by a majority of women's and minority organisations for not engaging enough in the implementation of gender equality and the promotion of diversity.

Numerous reports and qualitative research based on case studies suggest that—despite the official statements and statistics—discriminatory practices against immigrants seeking legal residence in Poland are not incidental, but represent a systemic problem linked with the absence of coherent anti-discrimination legislation. In 2010, the Association of Legal Intervention released a report identifying three major dimensions of discrimination: 1) poorly formulated regulations that indirectly discriminate against foreigners, 2) discriminatory practices, that is, the incorrect operation of public institutions in areas affecting foreigners, 3) discriminatory behaviours resulting from the prejudices and xenophobia of Poles, including public servants.[13] Significantly, the gender dimension of these practices is not addressed, as the reports lack the intersectional perspective that would reveal the particular experiences of women immigrants, who—undoubtedly—are more vulnerable to discrimination. It is not a uniquely Polish problem because—as was underlined by the authors of *Teaching Intersectionality*—the EU has also tended to talk about different levels of discrimination separately, and it is only within the past decade that intersectionality (under the name of "multiple discrimination") has entered the EU agenda[14] in a rather supplementary fashion.

Cultural racism

The report prepared by the European Network Against Racism, states that

> Open racism is not common in Poland. Although instances of racist violence and crimes do occur, racist violence is not drastic and or commonplace. Foreigners visiting Poland more often meet with dislike and xenophobia than racism. … The most vulnerable groups are those that look different from the bulk of Polish society, e.g. the Roma, as well as persons of dark skin colour. They are

[13] Wencel and Klaus, "Dyskryminacja cudzoziemców," 54–55.
[14] Johanna Kantola, "Tackling Multiple Discrimination: Gender and Crosscutting Inequalities in Europe," in *Teaching Intersectionality: Putting Gender at the Centre,* ed. Martha Franken et al. (Utrecht and Stockholm: ATHENA3, University of Utrecht and Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University, 2009), 15–30.

> the most frequent victims of physical and verbal abuse (invectives, insults). Jews are the group against which hate speech is most often directed.[15]

From the above citation, it is clear that there is a problem with the definition of racism, and I opt for a broad understanding of the term, one that does not exclusively refer to race/colour. It is also of crucial importance to address complexities of racism in university classes by asking the following questions: If people are "disliked" or meet with xenophobic attitudes because of their race, ethnicity, or nationality, is this racism? When people write derogatory anti-Semitic slogans on walls or scream racist/anti-Semitic names during soccer games, is that overt racism? Racist behaviour goes way beyond skin colour, as it can be manifested against any kind of (visible or invisible) otherness: "A person from Sudan can be attacked for having different customs, for coming from a continent that is associated with poverty and AIDS, for being of different skin colour. A Vietnamese, for being too effective, efficient and engaged in work, as well as for the ability to accommodate and to be competitive. Chechnyans can be blamed for at least two reasons: for being Muslim and refugees."[16]

Although there are diagnosed legal and systemic problems in dealing with discrimination, as discussed earlier, cultural racism is an equally important factor justifying prejudice. I believe there are three dimensions of cultural racism that predominate in Poland. Firstly, racist attitudes do not result from personal experiences, but rather are an effect of a lack of multicultural competency due to limited contact with people representing different cultures and ethnicities. This limited contact is a consequence of the very specific historical post-war circumstances: the redrawing of Poland's borders at the Yalta Conference in 1945, the country's isolation during the fifty years of communist rule, and the forced expulsion of the remaining Jewish minority in 1968. Secondly, different shades of prejudice are fuelled by deep misconceptions, generalisations, negative ethnic and gender stereotyping, and a fear of otherness. And finally, the roots of racism and other forms of discriminatory thinking can also be found in Poland's specific history and in a traditional vision of "Polishness" where the Polish nation is constantly attacked by enemies that threaten the traditional (heteronormative) family values and Catholic

[15] ENAR, *Responding to Racism in Poland.*
[16] Anna Bojar and Renata Kim, "Rasizm nasz powszedni," *Wprost,* December 12, 2010.

foundations of Polish culture. As I explained earlier, Polish national mythology is closely entangled with martyrdom and with a deeply rooted perception of (real or imagined) external enemies, be they neighbouring countries, communists or the European Union. Therefore, the close link between gender and nationalism, addressed by researchers in different contexts (e.g., McClintock; Yuval-Davies),[17] is clearly visible in the Polish example: "The issue of preserving national identity in an integrated Europe is of vital importance for Polish right-wing politicians, and is usually coupled with issues of reproduction, family, and compulsory heterosexuality."[18] This national self-perception leaves little space to accommodate the racial and ethnic other.

National self-pride and a lack of critical reflection on crimes committed against Jews during World War II became especially visible (both home and abroad) after the publication of Jan T. Gross's book *Neighbors,* which brings to light the dark side of the Polish role in the Holocaust. Traditionally, Polish national memory is maintained by images of Poles helping Jews during the German occupation. Gross describes the events that took place in June 1941 in a small village of Jedwabne, when Polish citizens actively participated in the massacre of the town's Jewish community. The book questions both the mythology connected with Polish martyrdom and victimhood and Poles' tolerance and respect for ethnic minorities. Needless to say, Gross's book evoked a heated debate in Poland. Politicians, historians, and journalists divided into critics and applauders of the book; the former regarded *Neighbors* as harmful, exaggerated, and anti-Polish, while the latter expressed the need to confront shameful events and Poland's history of anti-Semitism. An investigation by the Polish Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) partly confirmed Gross's findings about Poles' active role in mass murder. It became evident that Poles in Jedwabne, who were "victimized under both Soviet and German occupation, [had been themselves] capable of victimizing [their] fellow Jewish citizens, including children, women, and the elderly."[19] These complex issues should be addressed and revisited within history classes and other courses that touch upon the collective memory and identity of contemporary Polish society and seek to understand nationalism and patriotism.

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[17] See McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven," and Yuval-Davies, *Gender and Nation.*
[18] Golańska, "Intimate Citizenship," 172.
[19] Joanna Michlic, "The Polish Debate about the Jedwabne Massacre," http://sicsa.huji.ac.il/21michlicpdf, 2.

The need to bring Polish xenophobic attitudes into university classrooms is underlined by the findings of NGOs showing that "in Poland there is no systemic racism, but rather cultural racism resulting from a conviction that we are more civilised than Africans. Even educated people are not free from racist behaviours."[20] This superiority complex is combined with a complete ignorance of the African continent, which is associated with certain keywords: desert, poverty and hunger. Virtually all connotations of Africa are negative, and there are two dominant images: poor living conditions (starving children, no access to water, the AIDS epidemic, illiteracy) and an insecure political situation (ethnic conflicts, humanitarian aid, violence, refugees).[21]

The above generalisations prove that a dichotomous logic prevails when people think of racial/ethnic otherness. This is especially so in homogenous societies with a well-defined, ethnically and religiously uniform majority. Binary oppositions determine how people tend to see difference—always as a negative referent of sameness.[22] It is not only in the nationalistic media or among soccer hooligans that this logic is accepted, for such categorisations also form a part of the social "common sense" that is taught in classrooms and which has been echoed in my conversations with students.

This logic inspired an MP from a right-wing conservative party to pronounce, in the aftermath of the US elections in 2008, that "Obama is a coming catastrophe; it's the end of the civilization of the white man." The MP also publicly expressed anti-black and anti-Muslim sentiments in the Polish Parliament. The same logic allowed editors of the Catholic monthly for children *Little Sunday Guest,* which is distributed in churches, to use a cartoon with an image of an African child, saying: "It's too bad that prayers do not lighten skin." The caption adds: "The lamp without fuel is dark, and so is the man without prayer."[23] The publication is used by priests to teach religion at schools. The two examples, although rather extreme, illustrate the failing abil-

[20] Bojar and Kim, "Rasizm nasz powszedni."
[21] Paweł Średziński, *Public Opinion Research with Regards to the Integration of the Citizens of African Countries in Poland* (Warsaw: Afryka Inaczej, 2010), 38–39.
[22] The binary logic of representation is explained in the introduction to this volume. See also: Dorota Golańska and Aleksandra M. Różalska, "Representation and Difference: Introduction to Feminist Approaches," in *Gender and Diversity: Representing Difference,* ed. Dorota Golańska and Aleksandra M. Różalska (Łódź: Łódź University Press, 2011), 5–21.
[23] Katarzyna Wiśniewska, "Modlitewna wpadka z ciemną skórą," *Gazeta Wyborcza,* November 13, 2008, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,5912267, Modlitewna_wpadka_z_ciemna_skora.html.

ity of the Catholic Church to talk about otherness, and they point to depictions of the racial other as the "end of the world", as the heathen.

Such attitudes are also manifest in a more aggressive form on the streets and within the soccer hooligans' subculture. Police accounts suggest that Poland is a paradise for foreigners. Yet, as a report released by the Association "Nigdy Więcej" notes, hundreds of xenophobic and racist incidents go unreported every year.[24] Qualitative research, based on interviews with foreigners/immigrants, leaves no doubt about the level of racism, sometimes violent, in Polish society: "When they walk in the streets, they hear names: bamboo, nigger, or asphalt. People of colour do not have an easy life with us. And we live convinced that we are extremely tolerant."[25] Unsurprisingly, the hatred is manifested more often towards men (which can be explained by the powerful stereotype of black masculinity endangering white women), while women of African or Asian descent are perceived rather as exotic sexual objects. These kinds of attitudes are well recognised by intersectionality theorists who underline the double oppression of women of colour. The reports show that the worst scenario is of course the possibility of interracial relationships. The popularity of these viewpoints is confirmed by female interviewees who have black partners.[26] Polish-Arab intermarriages are accompanied by similar discourses which essentialise Arab/Muslim cultures and contribute to strengthening orientalist—in a Saidian sense—sentiments by constructing a racialised and sexualised image, "which works twofold: to alienate them from Polish society and to strengthen religiously grounded and nationalism-informed xenophobia."[27] This is, of course, by no means an exclusively Polish experience, as this kind of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic rhetoric has been increasingly present both in Europe and in the United States since 9/11. The binary opposition is also at play here: "The essentialized Orient, with its threatening Arab masculinity, appears as the opposite of Civilization and Cul-

[24] Marcin Kornak, *Brunatna księga 2009–2010* (Warsaw: Nigdy Więcej, 2011).
[25] Bojar and Kim, "Rasizm nasz powszedni."
[26] Marta Konarzewska and Piotr Pacewicz, *Zakazane miłości. Seksualność i inne tabu* (Warsaw: Krytyka Polityczna, 2011), 232–246.
[27] Emilia Korytkowska, "'He Will Make You Suffer!'—Masculism's Encounters with 'the Arab' in the Context of Polish-Arab Intermarriages," in *Gender and Citizenship in a Multicultural Context,* ed. Elżbieta H. Oleksy, Andrea Pető and Berteke Waaldijk (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008), 280.

ture, which have become synonymous with Poland, and more generally, with Europe."[28] In this context, it is striking that qualitative data on the influence of the race/gender/religion intersection on immigrant experiences, as well as on the social perception of interracial relationships, is scarce in Poland.

A report issued by the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights focuses on whether foreigners have experienced racial discrimination in Poland. The majority admitted that racism is widespread and its most common practices are avoiding contact (both physical and verbal, for example in public transportation), humiliation at work and at school, discrimination on the job and in the real estate market, hate speech and derogatory name-calling and, finally, physical violence. Such behaviours are observed (and in fact tolerated) in Polish soccer stadiums, where hooligans use racist language to humiliate foreign players.

Towards the future

Despite a belief shared—as public opinion polls indicate—in Polish society that Poles are tolerant, a fear of the other as well as racial discrimination are manifest both in public (political debates) and private (interpersonal contacts) domains. On a more positive note, research results suggest that attitudes towards ethnic/racial minorities and immigrants are slowly but gradually improving.[29] The growing respect is illustrated by the 2011 parliamentary elections. Indeed, among Poland's MPs we now find immigrants of African origin, representatives of sexual minorities, and women's activists advocating, among other things, for a liberalisation of reproductive rights. This new political climate will—hopefully—contribute to mainstreaming the discussion about gender and racial discrimination in schools. At the same time, it must be underlined that women representatives of minorities remain invisible in politics and the mainstream media, although they are engaged in NGOs' activities and actively work for the benefit of their communities. Their absence in public debates is of course part of the more general problem of Polish women's limited participation in politics, which is still problematic despite the introduction of the Act on Quotas in January 2011.

[28] Ibid., 282.
[29] *ECRI Report on Poland,* CRI 18 (2010).

EU accession, migration to multicultural countries and increasing immigration have undoubtedly made Polish society, and especially its youth, more receptive to foreign cultures. Racial/ethnic difference has become more and more visible in Poland and, similarly to other European countries, "*the other* is he who crosses our borders to become a close, internal presence, with whom we come into contact day in, day out. The other, the stranger (whether *émigré,* refugee or illegal immigrant) is now among us, he lives in our cities, he crosses our roads."[30] In this context, it is reassuring that Poles more often express the need "to demystify the vision of an ethnically homogenous Poland by emphasising in the public space that minorities and immigrants are a part of contemporary Polish society."[31] There is a great potential in these transformations, although the process of accepting the other will be neither easy nor quick.

In view of the lack of a debate on race and racism in Poland and the relative unpopularity of the intersectional approach among researchers of the various dimensions of exclusion and discrimination, a crucial role must be assigned to education on multiculturalism and cultural diversity and to education on racism and nationalism. While some Polish universities (e.g., in Łódź,[32] Warsaw and Krakow) are already running successful gender studies programmes (at both MA and postgraduate level), in my view the more burning issue is the introduction of these thematic areas to primary and secondary schools and even to kindergartens. The important question therefore arises as to how to mainstream these attitudes in schools and encourage teachers to touch upon problems of racism and other forms of discrimination in their teaching curricula. Undoubtedly, special training, designed exclusively for teachers, is required. A good example of such a programme comes from the Women's Studies Centre, University of Łódź, which offers a postgraduate course for professionally active teachers entitled "GENDER STUDIES—Equal Opportunities Policy in Educational Process".

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[30] Elena Pulcini, "Contamination and Vulnerability: The Self in the Global Age," in *Teaching Subjectivity: Travelling Selves for Feminist Pedagogy,* ed. Silvia Caporale Bizzini and Melita Richter Malabotta (Utrecht and Stockholm: ATHENA3, University of Utrecht and Centre for Gender Studies, Stockholm University, 2009), 25.

[31] Agnieszka Mikulska, *Rasizm w Polsce. Raport* (Warsaw: Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, 2010), 60.

[32] The MA programmes offered at the Women's Studies Centre UŁ include courses on intersectionality theories, postcolonialism, migration, women's and minority rights.

In addition to education, there also needs to be sensitive and attentive media coverage, whereby racist behaviours and hate speech are condemned and audiences are familiarised with national/ethnic minorities and immigrants on a daily basis. The media need to critically reflect on their role in shaping Polish civil society. As Larry Gross underlines: "Representation in the media is in itself a kind of power, and thus media invisibility helps maintain the powerlessness of groups at the bottom of the social heap."[33]

It is still an open question whether we "Poles, will be able … to face up to who we are and what we can learn from others, and whether we will admit others to the centre of our culture and identity rather than push them to the margins of society."[34]

Implications for teaching

Critical reflection on the dominant perception of racial/ethnic others is required in university classrooms, in view of the current socio-political situation in Europe and such factors as the (re)emergence of nationalistic and populist political discourse, discrimination of women and minorities, growing anti-immigrant sentiments, and the increasing popularity of neo-Nazi movements. The main goal of teaching in this complex area is to encourage students to identify the prevailing ethnocentric discourses concerning (gender and racial) difference and challenge them by questioning the dominant cultural values, traditions, national identity and mythology.

Firstly, it is necessary to deconstruct the dichotomous way of conceptualising nations or minority groups, which leads to generalisations and the homogenisation of complex, dynamic and contradictory identities. The example of Poland may serve as a point of departure to discuss existing binary oppositions in different cultural contexts: self/other, sameness/difference, friend/enemy, female/male, white/black, and so forth. What historical/social circumstances influence this kind of thinking? What kinds of representations result from it? And, more importantly, how can they be resisted or negotiated?

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[33] Larry Gross, *Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 4.

[34] Sławomir Mandes, "Miejsce obcego w kulturze," in *Public Opinion Research with Regards to the Integration of the Citizens of African Countries in Poland,* ed. Paweł Średziński (Warsaw: Afryka Inaczej, 2010), 8.

Why is it so difficult to talk affirmatively about racial, ethnic, sexual and gender difference? What are the benefits and opportunities of cultural diversity? Secondly, the chapter encourages readers to investigate the links between gender, nationalism and racism, and to reflect upon the ethnocentric modes of thinking represented in public discourses. The book by Jan T. Gross and its reception by public opinion may be an interesting starting point for a discussion, which could be further illustrated by other publications/events that have received similar publicity. Finally, the chapter underlines the importance of intersectional approaches to investigate the situation of racial/ethnic minorities (with necessary references to gender, sexuality, class, religion, etc.). It also shows the multiple possibilities offered by intersectionality in various areas of feminist interventions (human rights, minority studies, visual culture, gender mainstreaming, to name just a few). There is a great potential for teaching based on such approaches. For example, students can be encouraged to use intersectionality to conduct interviews (with peers, family members across generations, foreign students) about their perceptions of racism and sexism in a given society. Another possibility is to investigate overlapping systems of oppressions (the matrix of domination) or parallels between certain forms of discrimination (for example, anti-Semitism and homophobia).

Questions

1. What are the links between nationalism, racism and gender discrimination in the Polish context?

2. Can you think of instances when the binary form of representation is used in reference to ethnic/racial others in your country?

3. How would you define cultural racism? On which mythologies, stereotypes and misconceptions is it based (in Poland and in other countries)?

Assignments

1. Read the article by Agnieszka Graff on "gender talk" in the Polish weeklies before and after Poland's accession to the EU and then conduct similar research on a different problem (immigration, nationalism, racism, etc.).

2. Read Emilia Korytkowska's analysis of "real-life stories" on Polish-Arab marriages and investigate similar accounts (Internet fora, interviews) given by interracial couples on their experiences and the public reception of such stories.

3. Investigate how the press covered the issue of the construction of a mosque in Warsaw for a Muslim community (the debate took place in 2010).

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CHAPTER 8:

"Not a Country for Women, nor for Blacks": Teaching Race and Gender in Italy between Colonial Heritages and New Perspectives

Manuela Coppola and Sonia Sabelli

It is only in recent times that Italy has started confronting its colonial past and the consequences of mass migration, thus realising how this history still shapes the present perception of racialised and gendered differences. Scholars from different disciplines have triggered a lively and fertile debate on Italian colonialism, stating in particular the impact of the colonial heritage on the contemporary experience of migration in terms of representation. The interconnections of colonial legacy and contemporary migration flows have long been on the agenda in many European countries—especially in England and France, often contributing to the negotiation and redefinition of national identities. However, due to the lack of a postcolonial critique and in view of a long history of invasions, internal migration and emigration, Italy has always perceived itself more as a colonised country than as a coloniser. As a matter of fact, Italian society has been characterised until recently by the absence of a critical debate on issues of race and gender.

In our chapter we would like to suggest how the complicity with a repressed or unquestioned colonial heritage has heavily shaped the present social and political situation, generating particular and worrying weaknesses in the Italian school system. In this light, we seek to explore the existing gap between an emerging corpus of critical work on the persisting impact of colonialism on present-day racism and sexism, and the everyday practice of teaching to the new generations. However, the chapter also attempts to offer new perspectives on school curricula, mapping some "virtuous" examples of critical reflection and outlining possible future directions for a redefinition of Italian identities in terms of race and gender.

In the last two decades, several scholars from different disciplines have started to reassess the crucial role of the legacy of Italian colonialism in the contemporary experience of migration, thus identifying a specific "strategic amnesia" as regards Italian colonial history.[1] In what Sandra Ponzanesi has defined as "post-

[1] See, for instance, Angelo Del Boca, *L'Africa nella coscienza degli italiani* (Roma–Bari: Laterza, 1992) and *Italiani, brava gente?* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2005); Sandra Ponzanesi, "Il postcolonialismo italiano.

colonial unconscious",[2] colonial history has been conveniently erased from Italian collective consciousness. Confining their colonial past to the vague memory of the Libyan "box of sand"—as the African country was called to emphasise the futility of the colonial achievement—many Italians still oscillate between repressed memory and nostalgia. Moreover, the revival of colonial clichés to deal with African alterity testifies to the persistence of biased representations which, as Alessandro Triulzi has suggested, "while including sanitized narratives of the country's colonial past, exclude African migrants from full participation in cultural, social or political life".[3]

Italian colonialism started in Northern Africa in the late 1870s—that is just after the birth of the nation, since Italy as a modern unified state has only existed since 1861. Although the colonised territories in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Libya were lost after the Second World War, Somalia remained under an Italian administration until 1960. The construction of Italian identity during the colonial period has often relied on race as a marker of irredeemable alterity and threat (see Figure 8.1), as much as today Italianness and blackness are still mutually exclusive attributes.[4] Moreover, if the intersection of race with gender has deeply affected the power relations between the coloniser and the colonised, nowadays gendered and racialised stereotypes informed by a colonial mentality are still active in the western multicultural metropolis, marking the differences between immigrants and citizens.[5]

Some recent studies have started to connect post-unification mass migration out of Italy to contemporary migration into Italy, stating that racism in Italy was not confined to the colonial period. Following the insights of Critical Whiteness Studies in a book significantly entitled *Are Italians White?,* Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno demonstrate that, during the experience of mass emigration in the last century, Italian Americans were not always perceived as quite white

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Figlie dell'Impero e letteratura meticcia," *Quaderni del '900* 4 (2004): 25–34; and Alessandro Triulzi, "Displacing the Colonial Event. Hybrid Memories of Postcolonial Italy," *Interventions* 8, 3 (2006): 430–43.

[2] Ponzanesi, "Il postcolonialismo italiano," 26.

[3] Triulzi, "Displacing the Colonial Event," 433.

[4] See Alberto Burgio, ed., *Nel nome della razza. Il razzismo nella storia d'Italia 1870–1945* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1995); Sonia Sabelli, "Quando la subalterna parla. Le *Traiettorie di sguardi* di Geneviève Makaping," in *Fuori centro. Percorsi postcoloniali nella letteratura italiana,* ed. Roberto Derobertis (Roma: Aracne, 2010), 132.

[5] Sonia Sabelli, "L'eredità del colonialismo nelle rappresentazioni contemporanee del corpo femminile nero," *Zapruder* 23 (2010): 106.

Figure 8.1: Propaganda poster, Italian Social Republic, 1944
The text says: "Defend her! She could be your mother, your wife, your sister, your daughter."
(Originally published in Alberto Mario Banti, *Sublime madre nostra. La nazione italiana dal Risorgimento al fascismo.* Bari: Laterza, 2011, 176.)

in the United States. At the same time, Caterina Romeo states that the notion that Italians are not white still permeates American popular culture today and that "the presumed whiteness of the Italian population is at the core of different kinds of racisms perpetrated by Italians in different historical periods".[6] In this

[6] Caterina Romeo, "Il colore bianco. La costruzione della razza in Italia e la sua rappresentazione nella letteratura di scrittrici migranti e postmigranti," in *L'italiano lingua di migrazione. Verso l'affermazione di una cultura transnazionale agli inizi del XXI secolo,* ed. Anna Frabetti and Walter Zidaric (Nantes: CRINI, 2006), 80.

light, she explores the complexity of the discourse on race, racism, and whiteness in Italy, stating that although during the last century Italians were discriminated for their skin colour, nowadays they are the ones who discriminate immigrants coming into Italy. Furthermore, race has also been used to establish the differences between southern and northern Italians in the context of internal migration.[7]

Marketing the "other"

Women's bodies are a matter of much controversy in Italy and are at the centre of a heated debate on their silencing and exploitation—in the media as well as in politics. The exploitation and vilification of women's bodies in mainstream media, often combined with a problematic entanglement with politics, has revealed the pervasiveness of a sexist visual imagery which is bound to pass on and "naturalise" misogynistic attitudes. However, the invisibility and/or the misrepresentation of black women's bodies seems doubly disturbing as it displays the convergence of sexist and racist attitudes. Contemporary representations of "otherness", in fact, rely on racialised *and* gendered representations of black and migrant women which reveal the persistence of the Italian colonial legacy. Repeating a colonial trope thriving on exoticism and sexual exploitation, black women are largely objectified and commodified: in line with a colonial ideology employing images of black bodies to market exotic products such as coffee or chocolate, advertising still often conveys a controversial representation of black women's bodies (see Figure 8.2).[8]

Moreover, skin colour is not the only marker of racism and discrimination in Italy, since ethnic, religious and cultural differences are significant components of processes of othering and exclusion, too.[9] Migrant women are in fact often trapped in stereotypes which are mainly informed by the spatial relations of their bodies with men and children or the elderly: while the collective image of Eastern European women is constructed either as the mature strong domestic worker

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[7] See for instance Vito Teti, *La razza maledetta. Origini del pregiudizio antimeridionale in Italia* (Roma: Manifestolibri 1993), and Enrica Capussotti, "Nordisti contro Sudisti: Internal Migration and Racism in Turin, Italy: 1950s and 1960s," *Italian Culture* 28, 2 (2010): 121–38.

[8] Sandra Ponzanesi, "Beyond the Black Venus: Colonial Sexual Politics and Contemporary Visual Practices," in *Italian Colonialism: Legacy and Memory,* ed. Jacqueline Andall and Derek Duncan (Oxford and Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), and Sabelli, "L'eredità del colonialismo nelle rappresentazioni contemporanee del corpo femminile nero."

[9] See Luisa Passerini et al., eds., *Women Migrants From East To West: Gender, Mobility and Belonging in Contemporary Europe* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).

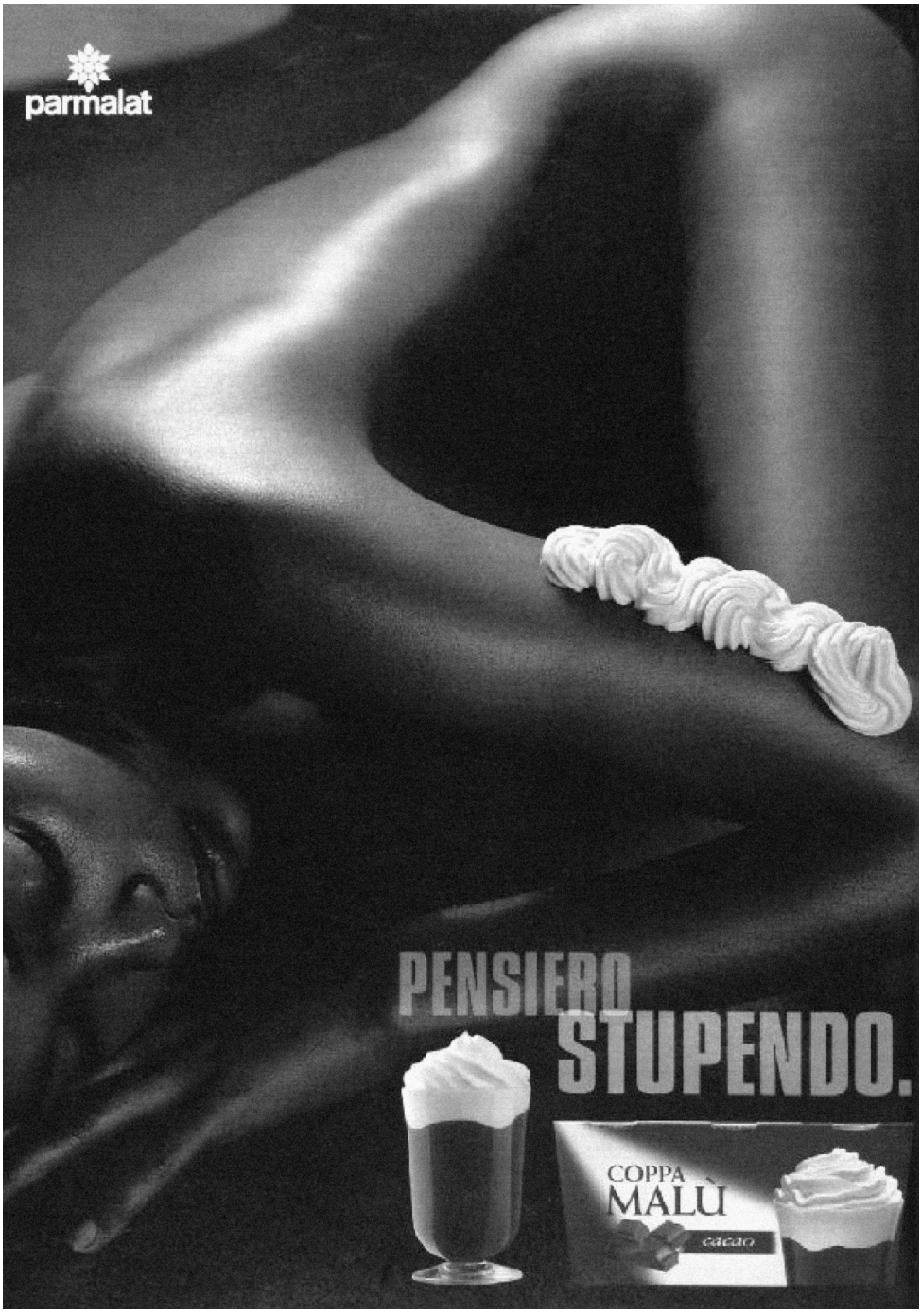

Figure 8.2: Advertising photo for the chocolate dessert Coppa Malù
The text says: "Beautiful thought."
(Originally published in Sandra Ponzanesi, "Beyond the Black Venus," 182.)

taking care of the elders, or as the young woman "stealing" someone else's husband, the identity of African women often collides with the image of prostitutes.

On the other hand, women are still the ground on which national identity is negotiated, since they mark the border of the nation and are in charge of the preservation of ethnic identity, whiteness and Italianness, thus re-producing forms of inclusion and exclusion. It is also interesting to note that the organisers of the recent national women's demonstration which took place on 13 February 2011 as a reaction to the sexual scandals that involved the former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, claiming that Italy is "not a country for women", overtly referred to women's role in the building of the nation. The chosen slogan was: "Let's give birth to Italy again"—which completely overlooked any critical reference to the power relations inherent in this possibility to literally or metaphorically "reproduce" the nation.

By reclaiming their contribution to the process of nation-building, these women have ended up forgetting that Italian national identity has often coincided with a rigid colour-line that separated white Italians from the black "others", and it has been characterised by the lack of any critical reflection about whiteness. As a matter of fact, the contemporary debate addressing sexism and the commodification of women's bodies in Italy—originating from the political scandals that revealed the connection of sex, money and power—was not able to take into account the voices and experiences of black and/or immigrant women in Italy: as Chiara Bonfiglioli has pointed out, even feminist interventions were "mainly voiced from white, middle-class, heterosexual subject positions", and "have failed to consider how bodies are simultaneously *gendered and racialized,* and how gendered violence exists at the intersections with other naturalized axes of power and privilege".[10]

Blackness and Italianness have always been mutually exclusive terms, although the ones who are racialised, in postcolonial Italy, are no longer the African colonised, but the immigrants coming from the global South and East, now claiming to be the new Italian citizens, and the Romani people who are still experiencing massive discrimination throughout Europe. Despite the formal recognition of the European Union, Roma and Sinti have been the subject of brutal policies of forced assimilation, segregation, or deportation. Moreover, in recent times their stereotypical image has been manipulated as a source of crim-

[10] Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Intersections of Racism and Sexism in Contemporary Italy: A Critical Cartography of Recent Feminist Debates," *darkmatter* 6 (2010).

inality to be repressed by both right wing and centre left parties. The association with criminality, nomadism and, in the case of women, with the myth of the "kidnapping gypsy woman", has resulted in an escalation of repressive policies and in Italian pressure to modify the EU Directive regulating the movement of European citizens, with the aim of reducing the number of Roma coming from the new member states. In fact, while a little under half of Romani people have Italian citizenship, others, especially those who migrated to Italy in recent decades, are mainly from former Yugoslavia and Romania.[11]

As a consequence of global migration flows, "[f]or the first time in its history … new fantasies of whiteness are emerging in the Italian public discourse, revolving … around the issue of Christianity as well as around the issue of Enlightenment".[12] These "fantasies of whiteness" reinforce a supposedly homogeneous idea of national identity—with no correspondence either in the past or in contemporary reality—and are disturbingly expressed through a revival of colonial stereotypes and Islamophobic comments. Therefore, the recent celebrations of Italian unification, on 17 March 2011, represented a missed opportunity to re-discuss the notions of Italianness. The worrying celebration of Italian nationalism even by the Left, in opposition to the Northern League's separatism, reveals nonetheless an incapacity to come to terms with the complexity of contemporary Italian identities that are rapidly changing as a result of immigration. However, while the debate on race and gender is still at the margin of the Italian public debate and academic culture, according to Romeo, "migrant and postmigrant writers" nowadays are the ones who are intersecting the discourse on race with such other categories of analysis as gender, religion, class and ethnicity, rewriting "not only literature but Italian national identity itself".[13]

Instead of seizing the opportunity to reconsider the notion of national identity, accepting the challenge posed by these new Italian citizens, the Italian political debate on race and immigration in the last two decades has been intertwined with religious and gender issues. On the one hand, the presumed recognition of the rights of women, lesbians, gays, and transsexuals has been used as a distinguishing mark of the superiority of Italian democracy, as opposed

[11] Cf. Isabella Clough Marinaro and Nando Sigona, "Introduction, Anti-Gypsyism and the Politics of Exclusion: Roma and Sinti in Contemporary Italy," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 16, 5 (2011): 583–589.
[12] Sandro Mezzadra, "Anti-Racist Research and Practice in Italy," *darkmatter* 6 (2010).
[13] Romeo, "Il colore bianco," 88.

to non-Western cultures. On the other hand, right-wing parties have focused on the defence of the "Christian roots" of Europe, in order to justify anti-Islamic propaganda. In both cases, issues of gender and sexuality have been strategically used against immigrants in order to enable a nationalist, racist and identitarian rhetoric.[14] This strategy—that is functional to the definition of thresholds for inclusion and exclusion—does not take into account that Italy still ranks 74 in the global gender gap index,[15] and that the process of recognition of LGBTIQ rights is still on a bumpy road of delays and complicit silences.

"Second generations" and the role of education

In this light, it is easy to imagine that a gap exists in schools as regards issues of race and gender. Although postcolonial critique is slowly gaining ground in Italian academia—in particular in the departments of Anglo-American Studies, Comparative Literature, and History—there is still a consistent delay in addressing the intersections of race and gender in school and university curricula. It is only in the last two decades that publications, conferences, and translations are increasing in Italy, producing a fertile debate on these issues.[16]

In particular, primary and secondary education is still largely unaffected by the debate taking place in academia. The strong presence of immigrant pupils is perceived—mainly at an institutional level and among policy makers—as a generic threat to the school system, as non-Italian children are accused of holding back the other students. However, while it is true that newly-arrived children enrolled in Italian schools have little or no language competence, the political response to bridge this linguistic gap has resulted in a policy of a *de facto* separation between immigrant and non-immigrant students. In fact, as recently as 2008, the Minister of Education introduced a 30 percent cap on the number of non-Italian students per class, stating that the number of foreign students would have to be proportionate to the total number of students.

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[14] These issues have been at the core of the conference *In and Out of Sexual Democracies* held in Rome in 2011 (http://www.facciamobreccia.org/content/view/516/136).
[15] World Economic Forum, "The Global Gender Gap Record 2011," http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-2011: 130.
[16] See for instance Tiziana Morosetti, ed., "La letteratura postcoloniale italiana: dalla letteratura d'immigrazione all'incontro con l'altro," *Quaderni del '900* 4 (2004); Fabrizio De Donno and Neelam Srivastava, eds., "Colonial and Postcolonial Italy," *Interventions* 8, 3 (2006); Derobertis, *Fuori centro,* and the panel on "Postcolonial Italy" organised at the EACLALS Conference held in Venice in 2008.

Apart from the predictable controversy triggered by such an overtly racist and discriminatory action, this law does not even take into consideration that about a half of the 630,000 "non-Italian" students are in fact children who, although born in Italy, are not eligible for Italian citizenship. While during colonialism "mixed race" children jeopardised the rigid colour hierarchy, today the so-called "second generations" are the ones who are questioning the legislative and institutional racism that founds citizenship on lineage rather than on *ius soli*.[17] As a result, even those Italian citizens who were born to immigrant parents are discriminated against by the ideological state apparatuses (school, police, media, etc.) as if they were strangers themselves.

In this context, as a recent report states, "what is considered a priority is the development of strategies to integrate as quickly as possible non-Italian students into the formal education system".[18] Quite significantly, this desired "integration" covertly implies an a-problematic assimilation into the school system with no particular concern for the rediscussion of school syllabi, not to mention the recognition and renegotiation of persistent colonial power relations at play in the representation of otherness.

The rhetoric of military expansion and cultural submission which characterised Italian colonialism produced a great number of images for schoolbooks, advertisements and films, which contributed to the creation of a docile and exotic otherness to be conquered and ruled. However, as Ponzanesi has noted, the representation of the "other" has not been critically addressed since the period of the fascist propaganda,[19] thus producing a void in the debate on race and gender. As a matter of fact, school syllabi are still informed by an ethnocentric—or "Italocentric"—perspective, unable to recognise the racist matrix of the Italian colonial experience and to connect it with the complex history of European imperialism. For example, examining history textbooks adopted by Italian schools since 1946, Giuliano Leoni and Andrea Tappi analyse the way the colonial experience has been revised in order to build Italian national identity and prestige in contrast

[17] Derobertis, *Fuori centro,* 22–23.
[18] COSPE, "Combating Ethnic and Racial Discrimination and Promoting Equality Trends and Developments 2000–2005," National Focal Point Italy, http://www.cirdi.org/wp/wp-contents/uploads/2011/01/IT-special-study-on-trends-on-racism-and-xenophobia-italiano.pdf: 33.
[19] Sandra Ponzanesi, *Paradoxes of Postcolonial Culture: Contemporary Women Writers of the Indian and Afro-Italian Diaspora* (New York: SUNY Press 2004), 136.

with the prejudices and stereotypes attributed to the "other": at least until the end of the 1980s, the representation of Italian colonisers as good-natured people *(italiani brava gente),* tireless workers and civilisers, goes together with silence and omissions about the atrocities they committed.[20]

If schoolbooks have only recently started to address issues of race and ethnicity in the construction of Italian national identity, their connection with gender has not still been recognised as a category of analysis and pedagogy by the educational system. Moreover, even if the feminist movement had a strong impact on Italian society during the 1970s, it has always focused on the concept of sexual difference, thus failing to account for the disparity among women in terms of race, ethnicity, class, and other categories of power.[21] On the other hand, in terms of theoretical reflections, several public debates and publications have started to address Italian colonial history from a gendered perspective,[22] analysing the construction of race and the sexual policies of Mussolini's imperial project.[23] Moreover, a new book series, significantly entitled *sessismoerazzismo* (sexism and racism), has just been inaugurated by the publisher Ediesse, in order to focus on the naturalisation of categories such as race and gender which contributes to fixing the boundaries of women's bodies and national identities. The first book of the series—an introduction to the connections between racism and sexism from an anthropological and feminist perspective—has aptly translated the insights of black and postcolonial feminism into the Italian context.[24]

New perspectives: Teaching race and gender today

A lot of work remains to be done in order to introduce issues of race and gender into school syllabi and university curricula in Italy. Thus, any critical reflection on the implications of race and racism for the Italian past and present culture—

[20] Giuliano Leoni and Andrea Tappi, "Pagine perse. Il colonialismo nei manuali di storia dal dopoguerra a oggi," *Zapruder* 23 (2010): 156.
[21] According to philosopher Olivia Guaraldo, Italian feminism has built an "orientalised" representation of femininity that resists its own transformation. "Libertà e soggettività nel pensiero femminista: un bilancio," *Dwf – donnawomanfemme* 3–4 (2011): 10.
[22] Giulietta Stefani, *Colonia per maschi. Italiani in Africa orientale: una storia di genere* (Verona: Ombre Corte, 2007).
[23] Nicoletta Poidimani, *Difendere la "razza". Identità razziale e politiche sessuali nel progetto imperiale di Mussolini* (Roma: Sensibili alle Foglie, 2009); Chiara Bonfiglioli et al., eds., *La straniera. Informazioni, sito-bibliografie e ragionamenti su razzismo e sessismo* (Roma: Alegre, 2009).
[24] Annamaria Rivera, *La Bella, la Bestia e l'Umano. Sessismo e razzismo senza escludere lo specismo* (Roma: Ediesse, 2010).

and their articulations with gender and sexism—is still dependent on the individual initiatives of school teachers and university professors, who face the new reality of intercultural classes. Some schoolteachers, for instance, have started to incorporate into the syllabus such texts as Amara Lakhous's *Scontro di civiltà per un ascensore a Piazza Vittorio* (Clash of Civilizations Over an Elevator in Piazza Vittorio) which question the safe and fixed assumptions of Italianness. In addition, in the last few years there has been a flourishing of readings and meetings with migrant writers in schools.

Moreover, the commitment of some "migrant writers"[25] to children's literature is trying to bridge this institutional gap, embracing the didactic project of teaching their language and culture of origin to the new generations living in Italy and, at the same time, introducing Italian children to different cultures and languages. Educational projects like bilingual short poems and novel—such as those of the series "Mappamondi", which have been published by Sinnos since 1991,[26] a publishing house specialised in intercultural education—are providing a new space for intercultural dialogue in schools, filling the vacuum between school curricula and the everyday reality of students. The interest of schools and libraries in these publications testifies to the necessity of overcoming the shortcomings of politics through the initiatives of writers, teachers and publishing houses. Furthermore, it is also worth mentioning that in 2006 one of the texts included in the secondary school national final examination was a quotation from an interview with Christiana de Caldas Brito, a Brazilian writer writing in Italian. Quite unexpectedly, interrupting a long tradition of quotations from (mainly) male and unquestionably Italian writers, Italian students were invited to write a short essay commenting on de Caldas Brito's statement on migration as being an ongoing and universal experience. However, although this might be seen as a timid attempt to breach the monolithic curriculum of the Italian school system, much work still needs to be done.

We would like to conclude with an illustration of the "good practices" that we consider to be the first step towards deconstructing the boundaries of cultural

[25] The definition "migrant writers", introduced to refer to writers of immigrant background, has produced a fertile debate in Italian literary criticism; some have questioned whether it is worth using a label that categorises writers into "natives" and "migrants". Nevertheless, we consider it useful in this context to underline these writers' contribution to decolonising and renewing the Italian language and literary canon. See Armando Gnisci, *La letteratura italiana della migrazione* (Roma: Lilith, 1998).
[26] See Francesca Cosenza, "In giro per mappamondi tra scrittori migranti e generazione che sale," *El Ghibli* 22, 5 (2008).

and national belonging and towards transforming the Italian educational system into an open space for the comparison of race and gender differences. We see these practices as valuable examples that will have to be emulated and multiplied, in order to redefine school curricula and educational methodologies and with the aim of recognising the ongoing transformations that are rapidly modifying the old notion of Italianness as mono-cultural and mono-colour. The contemporary reality of intercultural classes is already challenging the boundaries that divide those who have always been considered "strangers" because of their skin colour from those who can have access to citizenship rights. This is an opportunity that the educational system must not miss.

Implications for teaching

The combination of feminist pedagogy with an anti-racist pedagogy is, in our view, a crucial step in a country that, in the 2011 Amnesty International report, was described as still grappling with intolerance and discrimination on grounds of ethnic and gender identity.[27] In line with the need to bridge the gap between theoretical and critical approaches and educational practices, the text focuses on the importance of understanding the construction of gendered and racialised identities through discursive practices, encouraging a more gender- and race-conscious perspective in the classroom.

The present chapter can be used in secondary schools to encourage a critical reflection on the production of sexist and racist attitudes, thereby dismantling their supposed "naturalness" and harmlessness. By offering an overview of the existing critical debate on the subject, this chapter seeks to intersect historical, social and political perspectives with educational practices aimed at boosting awareness and discussion in the classroom as to the ways in which race and gender are dealt with, both by the school system and by society at large. In particular, the chapter may stimulate and develop discussion in the classroom as to naturalised images and verbal expressions which contribute to generating oppressive discourses, inviting a reconsideration of the socio-historical contexts that created them. The text may thus encourage a reflection on how gendered and racialised stereotypes informed by a colonial mentality outlive colonialism.

[27] Amnesty International, "Annual Report 2001," http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/italy/report-2011.

Investigating the ways in which the legacy of Italian colonialism affects everyday practices of representation, students may focus on the violence of language and representation in order to unearth the interconnected complicity of racism and sexism. For instance, students may find it useful to confront the visual material produced during the colonial period, from postcards to posters and advertisements, in order to distinguish the various biased strategies of representation and trace their persistence in contemporary Italy. Another interesting approach may be to suggest a linguistic exploration of words and expressions marked by racist and sexist overtones which originate in the colonial period, thus deconstructing their apparent "neutrality".

Generating new knowledge about and producing a critical interrogation of the complex interconnections of race and gender is of crucial importance, especially in a country facing a relatively recent multicultural reality. In this light, literature provides valuable tools to identify new teaching approaches in the Italian school system. In particular, the new perspectives opened up by the use of texts by "migrant and postmigrant writers" in the classroom will undoubtedly contribute to contrast and resist the normalising images as regards sexual and national identities in Italy, offering the new generations a de-centred perspective, which will contribute to the process of undoing the connections between whiteness and Italianness, masculinity and nationalism, blood and citizenship.

This approach certainly represents a challenge for both the students and the teachers, generating a set of interrelated questions. Can they identify with the struggle for recognition and with the search for identity most of these writers and their characters perform? What is their experience of gender and/or racial discrimination? How do they react to everyday practices of oppression, both at a personal and at an institutional level? A further element of analysis may be the impact of contemporary migration on notions of Italian subjectivity. How has migration reshaped national identities? How does multiculturalism produce new stereotypes? And, further, how does it affect and challenge biased practices of representation?

Challenging the politics of domination, students are encouraged to explore and interrogate discursive practices of racial and gender oppression, triggering their awareness of these issues and developing a critical thinking in relation to their own experience.

Questions

1. How does the legacy of Italian colonialism impact on everyday practices of representation?

2. How does the continuing influence of Italy's repressed colonial history contribute to the silencing or misrepresentation of otherness in the school system?

3. What are the new perspectives opened up by the use of texts by "migrant writers" in the classroom in order to contrast and resist the normalising images as regards sexual and national identities in Italy?

Assignments

1. Does your country have an official colonial history authorised by the government? In the light of discussion in teaching race and gender in Italy, ask yourself if there is a critical debate on the subject. Survey the textbooks used in your country and explore the ways in which race and gender are dealt with in the classroom.

2. Analyse Figure 8.1 and compare it with Figure 8.2. Discuss the differences and/or similarities between official and public, past and present, visual representations of race and gender.

3. Can you identify new teaching approaches (i.e. the use of sources from "postcolonial" writers) that are being used for producing new knowledge and a critical interrogation of the interconnections of race and gender in the school system of your country?

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