RACISM

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THE DIVERSITY OF RACISM: A CRITIQUE OF CONCEPTUAL DEFLATION

INTRODUCTION

The conceptual inflation discussed in the preceding chapter has been accompanied by a parallel and sometimes interrelated conceptual deflation. That is to say, when one examines the discussion about the meaning and scope of the concept of racism as it has developed since the late 1960s, and taking as one's point of reference the historical origin of the concept, we find that its meaning has been limited in a number of ways. We identify a number of such instances in this chapter, all of which result in a significant curtailment of the explanatory power of the concept of racism. Our objective is to sustain a concept of racism that emphasises the diversity of the phenomenon and that conceives of it as an ideological phenomenon that works through a Self/Other dialectic.

'WHITE' RACISM

Dictionary definitions of racism frequently allude to a belief in a hierarchy of 'races', or the superiority of one 'race' over other 'races'. In the academic literature, however, one of the most common and influential deflations of

the concept of racism has been its (re)definition as an exclusively 'white' phenomenon. As we have seen in the previous chapter, a number of analysts in the United States concluded during the 1960s and 1970s that only 'white' people express racist sentiments and act in a racist manner (e.g. Wellman 1977). This argument has been endorsed and developed by Katz, who argued not only that 'racism is a White problem in that its development and perpetuation rest with White people' (1978: 10) but that racism is a psychological disorder 'deeply embedded in White people from a very early age on both a conscious and an unconscious level', This has, as a result, 'deluded Whites into a false state of superiority that has left them in a pathological and schizophrenic state' (1978: 14–15). Thus, the concept of racism is defined to refer to all actions, inactions, sentiments and silences that sustain 'black' subordination, and also to a form of schizophrenia that all 'white' people 'have', in the sense that it structures the totality of their experience and being-in-the-world.

It follows that 'white' people lack the capacity to understand, analyse and explain racism, and that 'white' involvement in exposing and resisting racism is only further evidence of a racist and colonising mentality because it implies that the victims are unable to act as autonomous beings on their own account. These arguments are articulated more in the political than the academic arena, although an echo is apparent in the problematic category of 'white sociology' (CCCS 1982: 133–4). Some might conclude that the writing of this book is, by definition, a failure because 'white' sociologists are incapable of understanding the 'black' experience, though it is unlikely that they would make the concomitant assumption that only 'white' people are able to understand what motivates racism.

We reject these arguments, in part because of the racialised essentialism on which they are based. Let us explore this in a grounded manner. It is true that the experience of people of Caribbean and Asian origin in Britain, for example, is different from that of the 'indigenous' population in so far as sections of the latter, as well as the British state, articulate racism and practise discrimination against the former. It is also true that acceptance of racist and colonial imagery can lead to closure of the space within which resistance to racism is formulated and practised by members of the 'indigenous' population. The mistake is to assume that, as a result, all Caribbean and Asian experience is different from that of the indigenous population and that all members of the indigenous population consistently engage in such acts of closure. It is a mistake because such assumptions inaccurately generalise about a socially constructed category on the basis

of the experience of a sample in particular contexts, and because they deny a relative objectivity in order to advance an absolute subjectivity. Expressed empirically, it is evidently a mistake because there is a long tradition of 'white' people being involved in anti-racist activities of many kinds.

In other words, there is no single truth about racism that only 'black' people can know. To assert the contrary is to condemn 'white' people to a universal condition that implies possession of a permanent essence that inevitably sets them apart. As Said (1995: 322) has remarked, 'the notion that there are geographical spaces with indigenous, radically "different" inhabitants who can be defined on the basis of some religion, culture, or racial essence proper to that geographical space is . . . a debatable idea'. Armed with the notion that truth is relative and negotiated, and hence with the assumption that one may advance claims that may subsequently be refuted, there is no reason to believe that the amount of melanin in one's skin naturally or inevitably prevents one from contributing to an understanding of the nature and origin of racism. Indeed, one can only succeed in that task if, in a society in which skin colour is signified, others with a different skin colour participate in the realisation of that objective.

The concept of institutional racism, qua a reductionist concept implying that only 'whites' are racist and only 'blacks' the victims of racism, can be criticised on a number of grounds (cf. Miles 1982: 72–9). Importantly, this deflation of the concept has as a consequence a concomitant inflation of the concept, as we have seen and will see again. The criticisms are fourfold. First, the concept is inseparable from a theory of stratification that is simplistic and erroneous because it states or assumes that the sole or primary division within a society is between 'white' and 'black' people. This suppresses or denies the existence of class divisions, and the (unequal) distribution of 'white' and 'black' people to different class positions. Consequently, the simplistic definition of ('white') racism as 'prejudice + power' (such as in Katz 1978: 10) ignores class and other divisions within the 'white' population, and hence the differential access to power among that population. Racist beliefs and sympathy for Fascist politics among sections of the 'white' working class in Britain (e.g. Phizacklea and Miles 1980: 175) are therefore more accurately understood as a response to powerlessness rather than the consequence of the possession of power.

Moreover, 'black' people in the United States do not constitute a homogeneous population, occupying a common economic position subordinate

to all 'white' people. There is now a very considerable literature in the United States about the uneven distribution of not only African-Americans across the sites of different classes but also of Mexican-Americans, Asian-Americans and other ethnicised populations (e.g. Massey 1986; Small 1994; Kitano and Daniels 2001). Moreover, if racism is defined as the prerogative of 'white' people and as the consequence of any action which sustains the subordination of 'black' people, it is not clear how one can conceptualise and explain, for example, the continued situation of economic disadvantage of sections of the 'black' population in American cities where 'black' people occupy positions of power in the political administration (cf. Gurnah 1984: 12).

Similarly, it is not clear how one can conceptualise the continued economic disadvantage of (often female) 'black' employees of the small, but growing, 'black' bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie in Britain (see, for example, Hoel 1982; Anthias 1983; Mitter 1986). It could be claimed that, because those in positions of power are 'black', it follows by definition that their (conscious or unconscious) actions cannot be racist, but this contradicts the conceptualisation of racism as all those *acts* that have as their consequence the creation or maintenance of disadvantage. This problem is evident in, for example, Sivanandan's (1985: 14) use of quotation marks when referring to the 'black' petite bourgeoisie, suggesting that when 'black' people occupy positions of economic, political and administrative power they become less 'black'.

Second, this concept of racism is ultimately teleological. If, as Katz (1978: 10) argues, racism is a disease that all 'white' people 'have', and if racism is 'perpetuated by Whites through their conscious and/or unconscious support of a culture and institutions that are founded on racist policies and practices', then all 'white' actions (and inactions) are racist. The definition is all-inclusive, with the result that, for example, if a 'white' person suggests that some particular act is not racist, this can only be interpreted as evidence of a 'delusion' because, by definition, all 'whites' are sick and all acts that sustain the status quo are racist. In other words, the concept has no discriminatory power. And yet the analytical objective of identifying a phenomenon as racism is to distinguish it (by reference to specified criteria) from others that do not exhibit those qualities and can therefore be defined as 'not racism'. But in an inherently and holistically racist society, there can be no actions carried out by 'whites' which have the quality of 'not racism'. The concept therefore assumes what should be demonstrated, explained and contextualised (though certainly not

minimised) in every particular instance. This particular deflation of the concept of racism leads dialectically to a concomitant universalisation of racism.

Third, the definition of racism as a structural domination of 'black' by 'white' limits the scope of analysis to a limited range of historical instances. It excludes many conjunctures in which, by another definition, a racist ideology has been expressed in order to legitimate exclusionary practices, but where the object of racism was not 'black' people (Miles 1993: 128–69). For example, in the nineteenth century, the Irish in Britain were widely defined as a distinct 'race', and although the stereotype of the Irish was not consistently negative, it was nevertheless a stereotype which attributed specific characteristics to the Irish 'race' in a deterministic manner (Curtis 1968, 1971; Walvin 1986: 93). As recently as the 1920s, an official report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland identified the Irish 'race' as a threat to the existence of the Scottish 'race' and its positive cultural attributes, stereotyped the Irish as criminals, claimed they were intending political domination, and called for controls over Irish immigration to Scotland (see Miles and Muirhead 1986). The idea of the Irish as an inferior 'race' was accompanied by widespread violence against them, by active trade union opposition to their employment, and discrimination by employers (Miles 1982: 135–45). In turn, this had significant effects on the expression of racism in Scotland after 1945 (Miles and Dunlop 1986, 1987).

In the United States in the early twentieth century, a campaign for controls on the entry of certain European populations was organised on the basis of the attribution of 'racial' inferiority. It was argued, citing evidence supplied by psychologists, that the population of Europe was made up of different 'races', with differing innate intelligence, and that an increasing proportion of immigrants to the United States, originating from Southern and Eastern Europe, were of inferior 'race'. In comparison with people of British, German and Scandinavian 'stock', Italian, Polish, Russian and Jewish immigrants were said to have naturally inferior intelligence. Advocates of immigration control claimed that the increasing presence of this Southern European 'race' in the United States was lowering the average level of intelligence and predicted dire consequences. The Johnson–Lodge Immigration Act was passed in 1924 with the intention of preventing 'race deterioration' as a result of immigration from Europe (Kamin 1977: 30–51; Gould 1984: 224–32).

Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 1, the idea of 'race' has been used to

identify and exclude Jewish people. Throughout nineteenth-century Europe, older representations of the Jews as ritual murderers, wanderers, and conspirators bent on world domination were revitalised and given new force through the idea of 'race', legitimated by science. This ideological confluence sustained an idea of the distinctiveness of, and conflict between, Aryan and Jewish 'races'. In Nazi Germany, in a wider context of economic and political crisis, the idea of the Jewish people as a degenerate, unproductive and criminal 'race', as simultaneously a 'race' of exploiters and revolutionaries (Mosse 1978: 178, 219), was a key factor in the evolution of a state policy of genocide. The significance of the science of 'race', supported by the Nazi state, was evident in the continuation of anthropological measurements of Jewish people in the concentration camps, alongside human vivisection, the subjects of which were also usually Jewish (Biddiss 1975: 17; Mosse 1978: 227–8).

If one retains a definition of racism as all actions, intended or otherwise, by 'white' people that have the consequence of sustaining their dominance over 'black' people, the three examples just discussed cannot be accepted for consideration. Reflecting on more recent events, such a definition also excludes consideration of, for example, recent genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia, the conflict in the Middle East, and the upsurge of hostility to Russian Jews following the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe. Using such a definition, these must all be defined as instances of some other phenomenon, despite the articulation of the idea of 'race' and its legitimation of discrimination and/or murder. Clearly, a concept of racism that is formulated by reference to a single historical example (the United States) and then applied uncritically to another (Britain) has a degree of specificity that seriously limits its analytical scope.

The fourth problem is that the distinctions between belief and action, and between intentionality and unintentionality, are obscured. In the case of the concept of institutional racism, this is presented as a virtue insofar as it is argued that the intentionality or otherwise of actions is secondary to their consequences. The interrelations between belief and action, and between intended and unintended consequences, are complex. Beliefs may not be accompanied by logically appropriate actions, and some actions are inconsistent with beliefs. Actions can produce consequences consistent with motivations and intentions, but they often have unanticipated outcomes. These 'inconsistencies' are omnipresent in social life, and give rise to major methodological problems for the determination of

'causality'. They are largely marginalised by this homogeneous concept of racism.

There are a number of reasons to object to this marginalisation. Whether disadvantage is the consequence of intentionality and a belief in the existence and inferiority of certain 'races', or of the unintentional outcome of decisions or taken-for-granted processes by people who do not hold such beliefs, invites distinct interventionist strategies. In other words, if the determinants are different, so should be the responses to prevent them from occurring in the future. Moreover, where there is no consistent or logical connection between ideas and actions, an analysis of the prevalence of racist beliefs may be an unreliable guide to the extent of discriminatory behaviour, and vice versa. Defining racism by reference to consequences absolves the analyst (and activist) from the task of identifying the diverse processes that create and reproduce disadvantage. Yet there are many forms and determinants of disadvantage. The claim that the concept 'racism' identifies only those actions that have 'black' disadvantage as their consequence excludes a large number of actions and processes. Particularly, and circularly, it assumes that these actions are in some way exclusive in that they occur only where 'black' people are present and therefore because of the meaning attached to their 'blackness'. The advocates of this argument explicitly assert the exclusive nature of racism when they argue that it refers to what 'white' people do to 'black' people. Where the concept of racism is used to identify certain negative beliefs about people defined as 'black' and/or actions that intentionally exclude, there is a clear measure of the exclusivity of disadvantage.

If the presence of certain beliefs and of intentionality are defined as irrelevant to the identification of racism, the problem of exclusivity is correspondingly intensified. For example, it is often argued that 'word of mouth' recruitment to jobs is an instance of institutional racism because, in a workplace where no 'black' people are employed, such a process will therefore exclude them, irrespective of the intention and beliefs of the employer. But such a procedure excludes individuals from any group that is not represented in the place of work. Thus, if women, Irish or Jewish people are not present, then they too are excluded by this method of recruitment, and hence the practice of 'word of mouth' recruitment does not only exclude 'black people'. There are analytical implications. Is the exclusion of women, Jewish and Irish people to be defined as institutional racism? If not, how are these instances to be conceptually differentiated? And if they are, by what logic does one identify institutional racism as

a specific phenomenon when other people are also excluded by the identical practice?

To identify racism as an exclusive phenomenon, affecting only certain groups of people, it is essential to demonstrate that the consequences are exclusive or cannot be explained in any other way. In other words, if neither specific beliefs nor intentionality are necessary criteria by which to identify racism, the potential to make a spurious correlation is considerably increased. Hence, systematic comparative analysis is essential: it is necessary to demonstrate that 'black' people collectively are treated in a certain manner or experience a particular disadvantage, and that the same treatment and disadvantage are not experienced by any other group. Demonstrating that something does not happen to another group is, methodologically, much more difficult than demonstrating that something does happen to one particular group. As a result, assertions that particular practices constitute an exclusive instance of institutional racism are often difficult to substantiate.

SCIENCE, IDEOLOGY AND DOCTRINE

We pursue our discussion of the ways in which the definition of the concept of racism has been constrained or deflated by reference to the writing of two British sociologists who engaged in a debate about the concept in the late 1960s and during the 1970s. Both Michael Banton and John Rex went on to make important contributions to our understanding of the history of racism, of its relationship to discrimination and of the multiple consequences of the expression of racism, although their work is grounded within very different paradigms (e.g. Rex 1970, 1986; Banton 1977, 1987).

We noted in Chapter 2 that, at the end of the 1960s, Banton had concluded that racism was no longer a viable concept in a world where the doctrine of 'racial typology' no longer had any legitimacy or support. Banton's rejection of the concept of racism – based on a deflation of its scope – is indicative of four problems that arose from the fact that this original concept of racism was shaped by the particular historical context, and political strategies, of the 1930s and 1940s. First, the concept of racism was forged largely in a conscious attempt to withdraw the sanction of science from a particular meaning of the idea of 'race'. This required a rejection of this product of nineteenth-century science, with the result that what had previously been considered to be a scientific fact had been

transformed into an ideological category. However, in the process of effecting this transformation, racism was defined narrowly to refer exclusively to this specific ideological object. As a result, when the concept was applied to other social contexts or when the social context changed, it failed to identify an object. In the absence of an explicit, nineteenth-century discourse of 'race', with its correlate assertions, the analyst could only conclude that racism had evaporated.

This issue had been recognised by those who drafted the fourth UNESCO statement on 'race' in 1967. The statement noted that the widespread exposure of the falsity of assertions that the human species is composed of a hierarchy of biologically distinct groups had transformed the content of racism:

> Whenever it [racism] fails in its attempts to prove that the source of group differences lies in the biological field, it falls back upon justifications in terms of divine purpose, cultural differences, disparity of educational standards or some other doctrine which would serve to mask its continued racist beliefs.
>
> (Montagu 1972: 159)

Therefore, the deflation of the scope of the concept of racism, to refer solely to a nineteenth-century conception, led to its exclusion from some discourses and analyses, a consequence of which was a corresponding inflation of the concept in order to maintain its place in the lexicon. However, there is an alternative to Banton's rejection of the concept of racism. Returning to the notion of historically specific racisms, we can refer to this very specific ideological product of nineteenth-century science as 'scientific racism' (thus partially reflating the scope of the necessarily wider concept of racism). Comas (1961) was an early advocate of this conceptualisation. Miles (1982: 21), along with others (e.g. Rich 1986: 13), has followed and elaborated this conceptual strategy. This of course presumes a generic definition of racism, of which this scientific form is but one instance, a matter that is a central concern of this book.

Second, the original definition of racism tended to remain inextricably entangled with, and consequently to legitimate, the idea of 'race'. Because the definition of racism was confined to refer to the nineteenth-century discourse of 'race', in a context where either the idea of 'race' was given scientific legitimacy, or was not explicitly rejected on the grounds of having no real referent, the concept of racism, while rejecting as unscientific

the formulation that 'race' determines culture, left the idea of 'race' unquestioned and unchallenged. Thus, racism was exposed as a false doctrine, but it was conceded (sometimes by default, sometimes explicitly) that the human species was nevertheless divided into 'races'. In other words, the concept of 'race' remained, sanctioning some form of biological classification as meaningful and descriptively useful. This ambiguity became the focus for an extended critique of what Miles has described as the 'race relations' paradigm (e.g. 1982, 1993).

Third, because racism became a label attached to a set of beliefs about 'race' used to justify exclusionary actions and, ultimately, genocide, the historical context ensured that the concept of racism carried with it a prominent moral and political content. To label a set of assertions as racism, and the person who articulated them as a racist, consequently associated those ideas and persons with Hitler and Fascism. Hence, within a liberal and humanitarian tradition, the ideas and arguments that the concept of racism came to denote were morally reprehensible and politically unacceptable to those writers who coined and employed the term. Thus, it was a concept that claimed scientific justification for its rejection of the claims of nineteenth-century scientific investigation while simultaneously expressing a clear value judgement about what were acceptable beliefs.

Fourth, this early definition of racism, by focusing on the product of nineteenth-century scientific theorising, tended to presume that racism was always, and therefore only, a structured and relatively coherent set of assertions, usually sustained by reference to formally organised empirical evidence. This is demonstrated in Banton's early definition of racism as a *doctrine*. Such a definition excludes less formally structured assertions, stereotypical ascriptions and symbolic representations which draw meaning from unstated assertions or assumptions of causal determination, and which do not meet the criterion of constituting an explicitly 'logical' structure.

One of the members of the 1967 UNESCO group was John Rex. In the course of a critique of Banton's analysis of the concept of racism, Rex later advanced an argument similar to that contained in the UNESCO statement. Suggesting that biological arguments that identify and justify group differentiation have functional substitutes derived from different discourses, Rex argued that:

> . . . the common element in all these theories is that they see the connection between membership of a particular group and of the genetically related sub-groups (i.e. families and lineages) of which that

> group is compounded and the possession of evaluated qualities as completely deterministic.
>
> (1970: 159)

In other words, the concept of racism refers to any argument, irrespective of form and content, that suggests that the human species is composed of naturally occurring discrete groups in order to legitimate social inequality. This conception of racism refers to the function rather than the content of discourses: the definition does not focus on a particular ideological content but on the intention and/or consequence of any deterministic assertion about group differences. While this widens the definition to include any deterministic attribution of qualities to a group identified as biologically or culturally distinct in order to justify inequality – and therefore includes arguments or statements such as 'women should not be put in positions of responsibility because their emotional character prevents them from making rational decisions', which might otherwise be designated as sexist, and 'I don't go to Italian restaurants because Italians are rude' – it also deflates the definition because it has become, at least in part, a functionalist definition of racism that must therefore exclude purely descriptive statements when they are not intended to, or when they do not explicitly, justify inequality (cf. Miles 1982: 72–9).

Rex's critique of Banton's position did nevertheless highlight the limitations of a concept of racism that confined its scope to the necessary appearance of doctrine. Defining racism, as we do, as ideology rather than a doctrine includes within its scope relatively unstructured, incoherent and unsupported assertions, stereotypical ascriptions and symbolic representations; in short, beliefs that are consciously held but not logically structured. This is the stuff of everyday life, characterised as it is by discourses that usually consistently fail to meet the standards of formal, logical debate. It is the stuff that Gramsci sought to understand through his concept of common sense. However, it does not include *unconscious* attitudes and assumptions, nor, for that matter, exclusionary practices and violence. Contrast this with Wieviorka's (1995) influential analysis. Wieviorka distinguishes between three strands of racism that together comprise what he defines as the unity of racism, and that can be summarised as: prejudices, assumptions, attitudes and opinions; exclusionary practices, or behaviours of discrimination, segregation and violence; and racism as an ideology, doctrine, or political programme. In comparison, our definition may look too narrow. Yet, it is possible to synthesise the two positions in

the following way: racism is primarily an ideology, but it is articulated and manifest in a plurality of forms (Brown 2000: 86).

THE DIALECTIC OF SELF AND OTHER

Emerging from our critique of the inflationary and deflationary elements in the debate about the concept of racism over the past fifty years or so is a definition of racism as an ideology that is characterised by its content. More specifically, to this point, it is a content that asserts or assumes the existence of separate and discrete 'races', and attributes a negative evaluation of one or some of these putative 'races'. But this formulation may incorporate a further significant and unreasonable limitation on the scope of the concept. In other words, it may constitute another instance of conceptual deflation. As we pointed out in the Introduction, this negative evaluation is usually of a 'race' or 'races' to which the person articulating the racist ideology does not regard himself or herself as belonging. In other words, the emerging definition of racism is, to this point, premised on the identification of a negatively evaluated Other. However, there are examples of ideologies where the primary emphasis is focused on a positive conceptualisation of Self as a 'race'.

For example, the racism of the Third Reich was premised on a categorisation of the Self as an Aryan 'race' (we will introduce the concept of racialisation in Chapter 4 to identify this process theoretically), a 'race' that was attributed with an excessively positive evaluation. For Hitler, 'race' determined culture and historical development, and he identified the Aryan 'race' as chosen to rule the world and as the guarantor of civilisation (Dawidowicz 1977: 44–8). Consequently, and subsequently, the idea that the Aryan 'race' was engaged in a struggle for survival with the Jewish 'race' was embodied in the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. They were intended to maintain the purity of German 'blood' in order to ensure the continued existence of the German people, and they made marriage and sexual relations between Jews and Germans illegal (Dawidowicz 1977: 98–101). Jews were declared in law to be non-Germans:

> This legal definition, separating German Jews from Germans, laid the foundation for the liquidation of these 'parasites' who were poisoning the German blood and the German nation. Arguments invoking genocide were frequently phrased in terms of biological pollution and racial hygiene.
>
> (Seidel 1986: 21)

Thus, it was the conceptualisation of the Self as a superior 'race' (Aryans) that solicited the conceptualisation of the Other as the inferior 'race' (Jew) and that resulted in genocide. Elsewhere, the racism of the Ku Klux Klan has been legitimated in terms of 'defending' the 'superiority' of 'the white race'. Indeed, 'white' supremacism – in the United States, Nazi Germany, South Africa, Europe and elsewhere – is frequently seen as more threatening and insidious than racisms that prioritise the inferiorisation of the Other, racisms that can be described as heterophobic (anti-Other). In other words, although the historical evidence may suggest that racism is usually premised on the negative stereotyping of the Other, this is not always the case.

The key conclusion to be drawn from this discussion is that it is necessary to analyse the Self/Other dialectic as a coherent, yet historically specific, unity that is found at the core of all racisms. Identifying the dialectic by reference to its two extremes, there is an explanatory utility in considering a twofold classification of racism as ideology: one based on heteroracialisation (i.e. an attribution of the 'racially' defined Other with negative characteristics); the other on autoracialisation (i.e. an attribution of the 'racially' defined Self – 'Us' – with positive characteristics). This classification was developed by Taguieff (1987: 163ff., 2001: 120ff. in Hassan Melehy's translation). Autoracialisation (*autoracisation*, translated by Melehy as 'self-racialisation') is part of a 'series' that leads to the imagining and consolidation of difference, 'purification' of the 'race', and extermination of the Other. Heteroracialisation (*hétéroracisation* or 'other-racialisation'), on the other hand, leads to inequality, domination and exploitation (1987: 163, 2001: 120). The latter, according to Taguieff (1987: 163-4, 2001: 121), is the 'normal' foundation of racism, while the former represents the extreme form of racism, 'the unconditional fear of the Other' which can only be assuaged by 'the *total destruction* of the Other' (1987: 166, 2001: 123). The former may represent a constructed 'race' or 'races' in a negative manner; the latter necessarily represents all 'races' other than one's own in a negative manner and as an absolute threat. Thus, it too is a form of racism, although it is also the case that Self and Other are racialised dialectically, without a necessary programme of extermination.

Taguieff's conceptualisation and suggested distinction between autoracialisation and heteroracialisation has been the focus of critical debate (e.g. Wieviorka 1995). We cite the distinction here, less to endorse it in some absolute sense, but rather because it serves to remind us of a potential limitation of deriving a definition of racism as ideology too

quickly and too literally from the immediate historical context in which the concept was first formulated. Political considerations may well encourage us to focus first upon the way in which racism identifies an Other as a 'race' and attributes negatively evaluated characteristics to that population. But, as we have observed above, the imagination of the Other is simultaneously an imagination of the Self, each reflecting and refracting a kaleidoscope of contrasting attributes. We might therefore conclude that the moment of racism as ideology is one in which Self and Other simultaneously embrace and repel by reference to a set of imagined attributes that carry a duality of evaluations, negative and positive. Conceptually, this is its unity. But, historically, the ideological content, the specific groups represented as Self and Other, and the consequences are always diverse.

CONCLUSION

The analytical problems explored in this chapter express a tension evident the evolution of the concept of racism. While the origin of the concept is closely related to the central role of racism in the rise of Fascism in Western Europe during the 1930s, much of its post-1945 evolution has been shaped by the need to understand colonialism, either to comprehend its legacy in a post-colonial context or to explain the response of the state and its citizens in Western European countries to migrations from ex-colonies. Many of the central features of the colonial model were carried over into the analysis in the United States of the rise of the civil rights movement and the struggle of African-Americans against their subordination. This was achieved by means of a focus upon the legacy of slavery and its origin in the colonising project and by means of the theory of internal colonialism. Consequently, we have been offered definitions and theories of racism that are so specific to the history of overseas colonisation that they have limited value in explaining any other context. Moreover, many of these theories simultaneously transpose the duality of coloniser and colonised into the duality of 'white' and 'black', further limiting the explanatory power of the resulting theory and concepts. We conclude that we need to seek for a concept of racism that has the ability to grasp and comprehend the diversity of the phenomenon to which it refers.

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