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Migration and Race in Europe: The Trans-Atlantic Metastases of a Post-Colonial Cancer

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Abstract

This article examines dominant socio-political questions regarding migration, ‘multiculturalism’, and ‘integration’, as a politics of citizenship (and race) in contemporary (post-colonial) Europe. The argument unfolds through a critique of the nationalist complacencies and racial complicities in Jürgen Habermas’s remarks on ‘multiculturalism’ during the 1990s. With recourse to ‘underclass’ discourse, Habermas’s reflections were themselves a trans-Atlantic metastasis of a distinctly US ‘American’ hegemonic sociological commonsense with regard to, but actively disregarding, the fact of white supremacy. Habermas’s thoughts are critically situated alongside their subsequent metastasis, back across the Atlantic, into Francis Fukuyama’s recent invocations of ‘terrorism’ and his advocacy of the ‘American melting pot’ model as a trans-Atlantic prescription for Europe’s ailments. Treating ‘immigrants’ as a kind of societal illness, both are preoccupied by the same ‘problem’ – non-Europeans (as disaffected ‘minorities’). Thus, these discourses of ‘immigration’ manifest a distinctly post-colonial cancer coursing restlessly through the larger social formation of ‘the West’.

Keywords

integration, migration, multiculturalism, race, War on Terror

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The sources of social solidarity are drying up, with the result that social conditions of the former Third World are becoming commonplace in the urban centers of the First World. These trends are crystallizing in the phenomenon of a new ‘underclass’ . . . An underclass produces social tensions that discharge in aimless, self-destructive revolts and can only be controlled by repressive means . . . In addition, social destitution and physical immiseration cannot be locally contained; the poison of the ghettos infects the infrastructure of the inner cities, even whole regions, and penetrates the pores of the society as a whole. This leads finally to a moral erosion of the society. (Habermas, [1996] 1998: 123)

Europe’s failure to better integrate its Muslims is a ticking time bomb that has already resulted in terrorism and violence . . . and may in time threaten European democracy itself. (Fukuyama, 2006: 15)

Though the national state is today running up against its limits, we can still learn from its example. In its hey-day, the nation-state founded a domain of political communication that made it possible to absorb the advances in abstraction of societal modernization and to re-embed a population uprooted from traditional forms of life in an extended and rationalized lifeworld through the cultivation of national consciousness. It could play this role all the better in that democratic citizenship was connected with cultural membership in the nation. Today as the nation-state finds itself challenged from within by the explosive potential of multiculturalism and from without by the pressure of globalization, the question arises of whether there exists a functional equivalent for the fusion of the nation of citizens with the ethnic nation. (Habermas, [1996] 1998: 117)

Many Europeans insist that the American ‘melting pot’ approach to national identity is unique and cannot be replicated in Europe. This may well be the case, but if so, Europe is heading for a social explosion. (Fukuyama, 2006: 17)

An infectious poison is haunting Europe: or so we are led to believe, by commentators as apparently divergent in their political orientations, sociological outlooks, and national affiliations as the resolutely social-democratic (and ‘European’) Jürgen Habermas and the notoriously neoconservative (and devoutly US ‘American’) Francis Fukuyama. Destitution, immiseration, moral erosion – such was the cataclysmic gloom that one of Europe’s most celebrated luminaries cast upon the historical moment – in the first half of the 1990s – when nothing less than a new Europe seemed to be incipient. Ten years on, in the aftermath of the so-called Global War on Terror, and from the smug vantage of his perch across the ocean, Fukuyama designates Europe to be ‘a critical breeding ground and battlefield in the struggle between radical Islamism and liberal democracy’ (2006: 6), and portends ‘a ticking time bomb’ as European national states together careen toward ‘a social explosion’.

In this brief article, I will seek to destabilize some of the nationalist or racial conceits that serve as the premises of conventional intellectual discourses surrounding the vexing conundrums and mischievous aporia that trouble political debates over migration and ‘integration’, with particular reference to their currency for the politics of immigration (and race) in the contemporary European scene. This attempt to re-frame those questions by interrogating their presuppositions will unfold through a concise critique of the

complacencies and complicities that may be discerned in Habermas's remarks on 'multi-culturalism' and 'immigration'. Habermas's reflections are staged here in relation to the way that they were themselves a trans-Atlantic metastasis of a distinctly US 'American' hegemonic sociological commonsense with regard to, but actively disregarding, the social fact of white supremacy. Likewise, those ideas are critically situated in juxtaposition with their subsequent metastasis, back across the Atlantic, into Fukuyama's avowed revision of the thesis of 'American exceptionalism', now unabashedly advocated as a trans-Atlantic prescription for the social and political ailments of Europe, and by implication, for 'liberal democracy' as a global (imperial) project. This brief essay therefore makes no pretence of contributing in the more narrowly scholastic sense to anything like an exhaustive dissection of this aspect of Habermas's philosophical corpus, as such. Nor does this essay presume (erroneously) that Habermas is emblematic of, or even taken very seriously by, European social science on matters concerning urban poverty and the predicaments of non-European migrant communities. Rather, it contends more simply that Habermas's discourse around these preoccupations would seem to be highly symptomatic and thus revelatory of the larger malaise that has bedeviled the politics of immigration in Europe over the last decade or more, and seeks also to expose the awkward affinities of his perspective with analogous ones, past and present, which by dint of their hegemony in the United States continue to plague the persistently post-colonial condition of the world, at large. Thus, Habermas's recourse to 'underclass' discourse is succeeded (and perhaps supplanted) by Fukuyama's invocations of 'terrorism'. Both are nonetheless preoccupied by the same 'problem' – (non-European) 'immigrants' (as disaffected 'minorities') – and each addresses himself to precisely the same task: What do we do with *them*? If these discourses generate a variety of metaphors positing 'immigrants' as the source of a kind of societal illness, however, it ought to be clear that the rhetorical and critical force of this essay is directed at unsettling the ways that these discourses about 'immigration' are themselves expressions of a deadly cancer that courses continuously through the larger social formation of 'the West'.

A Poison Infecting Europe?

What exactly might be the source of the corrosive and presumably devastating menace to European social and political life, alternately figured as contagion (for Habermas) or as infestation (for Fukuyama)? Habermas, writing in more 'innocent' times, decries a nefarious 'underclass', apparently sequestered in urban 'ghettoes', reinventing the so-called Third World (and its proverbial heart of darkness) in the 'inner cities' of urbane and enlightened Europe. An *under*-class – something pronouncedly *less* than a proper social class with its own historical significance, moreover – which purportedly manifests itself only in futile and self-destructive forms that 'can only be controlled by repressive means'. In short, a kind of utterly abject excess – something crudely apprehensible as mere human rubbish (cf. Bauman, 2004). But who are these scoundrels? Or rather, if they are indeed more akin to a poison or a social disease that 'infects' and 'penetrates the pores', then the more apt question would seem to be: what is this vermin? The subject of the article in question, after all, is what Habermas deems to be the beleaguered plight of nation-states, national sovereignty, and citizenship, and more specifically, the ways in

which these are ‘challenged from within by the *explosive* potential of multiculturalism’ ([1996] 1998: 117; emphasis added). Thus, the menacing theme of an impending ‘social explosion’ proffered by Fukuyama is squarely at the center of Habermas’s earlier reflections on the European not-yet, not-quite post-national condition. For Habermas, however, the culprit is figured only elliptically, in terms of a ‘constantly growing’ heterogeneity of ‘cultural forms of life, ethnic groups, religions, and worldviews’ (p. 117), distinct from ‘the inherited or ascribed nation founded on ethnic membership’ (p. 115), and associated with ‘transnational developments’ (p. 120). For Habermas, then, the culprit is seldom called by its more conventional or prosaic name – *migration* – and much less is it ever recognized candidly as concerning a question of *race*.

Despite the overtly social democratic and cautiously ‘multiculturalist’ agenda of Habermas’s interventions, one cannot help but be struck by the profusion in his discourse of the tell-tale totems – ostensibly de-racialized but implicitly and incorrigibly racial – transposed directly from hegemonic social science in the United States during the 1980s and early 1990s. Above all, among this noisy cacophony of genteel and banal euphemisms for class inequality and racial subjugation, there is the ever-contemptible and worrisome Underclass – the most glaringly peculiar import of all from hegemonic US sociology’s compendium of raciological ‘science’. David Theo Goldberg clarifies the fundamental dilemma of which Habermas appears to be rather blithely incognizant:

Naming the Underclass makes the Underclass, nominates it into existence, and constitutes its members at once as Other ... the notion of *the Underclass* explicitly erases the exclusionary experiences of racisms from social science analysis while silently enthroning the demeaning impact of race-based insinuations and considerations. (1993:172).

Likewise, Loïc Wacquant has rightly cautioned against just such ‘a new “urban Orientalism” ... of which the “underclass” would be the loathsome figurehead’ (1997: 349). Furthermore, Goldberg incisively connects the dots among these multifarious but inter-related figures – the Third World, the Underclass, the Inner City, and so forth – for their abundant excess of racial significations:

The racial connotations carried by the ascription, ‘the Third World’, are captured most clearly in their usage by those in the United States and Europe who warn that blacks, the *Gastarbeiter* immigrants, and asylum seekers are turning their respective societies economically and culturally into Third World countries ... the racialized situation of guest workers in Europe, not that different from Mexican migrants in California, is increasingly obviated against the reconstructed measuring stick of a European identity. Their strictly economic status as guest workers transforms into a supranational, superracial one against the backdrop of a European identity. (1993: 165–6)

Perhaps most salient of all is Goldberg’s detection of a rejuvenated racial project of expressly ‘European’ identity, against which a precisely post-*colonial* whiteness is refashioned against the amorphous, heterogeneous, non-descript, yet essentialized and decidedly ‘culturally’ inimical mass of ‘immigrants’, who come to be encircled by an

ostensibly race-neutral but mercilessly racialized sort of generic alterity, which may be glibly credited as the ‘Third World’.

With regard to the woeful nemesis – the new ‘underclass’ – notably, Habermas does indeed acknowledge the salience of ‘globally interconnected ... labor markets’ ([1996] 1998: 122; emphasis in original), which he associates with ‘the sharp increase in the reserves of comparatively cheap labor’ (p. 122). However, such an equation of ‘Third World’ migrants with ‘cheap labor’, once supplemented with the notion of an ‘underclass’, immediately marks a resort to the effectively racialized themes of moral panic. As ‘cheap’ labor (by implication, ‘stealing jobs’ and undermining the social condition of the presumptively entitled ‘native’/‘national’ working class) and somehow simultaneously as an ‘underclass’ (inevitably, underemployed, unemployed, or un-employable, and leeching off the purported beneficence of the welfare state), we find ourselves in the presence of what Étienne Balibar has depicted as an ‘immigration complex’, which induces ‘a transformation of every social “problem” into a problem which is regarded as being posed *by the fact of the presence of “immigrants”* or, at least, as being aggravated by their presence’ – regardless of the problem in question (1991d: 219–20; emphasis in original). And when phrases like the ‘moral erosion of the society’ begin to become an uncritical currency in the luminous heights of European philosophical discourse, what we are witnessing, surely, is a very troubling deterioration in morale, and perhaps also a frightful failure of political imagination, in an important quarter of European intellectual life.

Writing in the wake of the global ascendancy of a metaphysics of antiterrorism and amidst the incipient planetary regime of securitization – and significantly, having been one of the programmatic visionaries of that project of imperial state formation, and also one of the prominent subsequent internal critics of its execution in practice – Fukuyama is more forthright than Habermas. Fukuyama addresses himself explicitly to the theme of ‘immigration’ and is emphatic that ‘the more serious longer-term challenge facing liberal democracies today’, and especially for Europe, is ‘the integration of immigrant minorities – particularly those from Muslim countries’ (2006: 5–6). More serious than what? Fukuyama insists that the purported problem of integrating Muslims ‘as citizens of pluralistic democracies’ is ultimately more serious than the presumed fact – about which ‘there is no doubt, of course’ – that ‘the Muslim world is dysfunctional in many ways’ (p. 5). Resorting to familiar narratives of teleological ‘modernization’, Fukuyama (following Olivier Roy) posits that, with unprecedented migration to ‘Western society’, and Western Europe in particular, as well as ‘globalization’ within Muslim countries, ‘Islam has become *detrterritorialized* in such a way as to throw open the whole question of Muslim identity’ (p. 10; emphasis in original). Accordingly, ‘it is now the turn of young Muslims to experience’ the intense alienation associated with ‘the transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*’ (p. 11). Thus, the moralistic subtext of Habermas’s ostensible analysis of the rise of an ‘underclass’ is transposed in Fukuyama’s meditations, not on the poverty or socio-political marginalization of Europe’s ‘immigrant minorities’, but rather on the emergence of ‘radical Islamism’ as a mere matter of *identity*. Indeed, Fukuyama depicts the destitution of Europe’s migrants to be simply a degrading effect of the alleged exorbitance of European welfare states, in contrast to a US social order predicated upon ‘an abundance of low-skill jobs for immigrants to take’ which purportedly ensures that migrants are assured of the elementary dignity that ‘comes through

work' (p. 18). What was ostensibly de-racialized in Habermas's account of a burgeoning 'underclass' in Europe (which just happens to be comprised of 'Third World' migrants), therefore, is now de-classed and *re-racialized* (in Fukuyama), albeit in the apparently race-neutral language of merely religious or 'civilizational' difference – as 'Muslim'.

Hence, in an essay that began as an address (to Canadians) commemorating Seymour Martin Lipset's intellectual legacy as the most prominent proponent of 'American exceptionalism', Fukuyama designates the politics of immigration, citizenship, and national identity *in Europe* as the decisive and enduring frontline in liberal democracy's twenty-first-century epic struggle against 'radical Islamist ideology' and 'jihadist terrorism' (pp. 5–6). Dismissing 'the "post-national" ideal promoted by intellectuals like Jürgen Habermas and embodied in the European project' as mere wishful thinking, Fukuyama declares baldly that 'European identity' – in contrast with (US) 'American' national identity – is 'confused' (p. 13), and moreover, that European *national* identities remain vital and pertinent. Criticizing these European national identities as 'more blood-and-soil based' than their American counterparts, and therefore as preemptively exclusionary with respect to migrant newcomers, while upholding policies that are 'multicultural without being assimilative' (p. 14), Fukuyama worries that the twentieth-century legacies of internecine European nationalism and fascism have inhibited a frank, open, and honest dialogue regarding Europeans' national identities and prerogatives, and attributes this incapacitation to 'a pervasive political correctness surrounding this whole set of issues' p. 18). Fukuyama nonetheless discerns progress in The Netherlands and a few other exceptional countries where far-right anti-immigrant populism and racist violence have ensured that 'the discussion is at least taking place'. Which discussion? – 'the problem of Muslim integration' (p. 18) as a matter concerning 'the substance of the good life to which [people] aspire in common', 'those positive virtues that define what it means to be a member of the larger community', and thus, 'the question "Who are we?" posed by Samuel Huntington' (p. 19). For Fukuyama, assertively addressing this 'postmodern' dilemma is an urgent and acute task, for any prospective failure to do so promises that the nations of the West 'will indeed be overwhelmed by people who are more sure about who they are'.

Liberalism, Nationalism, and the Politics of 'Identity'

As we have seen, and in contrast with Habermas, Fukuyama's discourse is avowedly and audaciously identitarian. Indeed, his argument pivots around the claim that 'radical Islamism ... is a manifestation of modern identity politics, a byproduct of the modernization process itself' (2006: 6). Furthermore, in an unapologetic gesture of trans-national (Eurocentric) identitarianism, he proclaims unreservedly:

The civilization of the European Enlightenment, of which contemporary liberal democracy is the heir, cannot be culturally neutral, since liberal societies have their own values regarding the equal worth and dignity of individuals. Cultures that do not accept these basic premises do not deserve equal protection in a modern liberal democracy ... Multiculturalism, as it was originally conceived in Canada, the United States, and Europe, was in some sense a

'game at the end of history.' That is, cultural diversity was seen as a kind of ornament to liberal pluralism . . . something to be practiced largely in the private sphere, where it would not . . . challenge the essentially liberal social order. (p. 15)

Yet, these same liberal commitments are also crucial for Habermas, and help to reveal a comparable identitarianism that operates within his discourse (albeit in a more subterranean fashion).

The misguided fascination with decrying the 'underclass' seems, upon closer scrutiny, to be symptomatic of what may be considered a more basic anti-immigrant impulse that animates Habermas's liberalism, and which is decisive for his formulation of 'constitutional patriotism'. Habermas maintains that 'cultural' liberties must be subordinate to political loyalty: 'Of course, the claim to coexist with equal rights is subject to the proviso that the protected [cultural, ethnic, and religious] faiths and practices must not contradict the reigning constitutional principles (as they are interpreted by the political culture)' ([1996] 1998: 118). 'Multiculturalism', in other words, whatever that may be taken to mean, may variously be merely tolerated or even energetically encouraged, but only contingent upon a compulsory deference to a political constitution and legal regime – more or less embodying putatively 'universal' democratic principles and cosmopolitan values – which have nonetheless already been established by the dominant (national) 'culture'. Although *nativism* – as a term for anti-immigrant hostility or, more blandly, the commitment to restrict or exclude immigration – has a peculiarly (US) 'American' genealogy and does not have much currency outside of the United States, I propose it as a more precise analytic category than the more psychologistic and one-dimensional concept *xenophobia*. As I have argued in greater detail elsewhere (De Genova, 2005: 56–94), nativism is best apprehended precisely as *native-ism* – a promotion of the priority of 'natives', on no other grounds than their *being* such. In this sense, nativism thus operates inextricably as a politics of *identity* animating all nationalisms. And, with or without all the associated assumptions (however fictive or spectral) of common ancestry, mutual kinship, and shared substance, any such notion of 'native' *identity* at the base of nationhood is inextricably bound up with an assumption of *natal* entitlement. Thus, the purported 'integration' of 'immigrants' into the more elemental and fundamental 'national community' inevitably sustains and upholds the primacy and priority of 'natives' that is the submerged identitarian commitment of nationalism itself. Despite Habermas's overt if cautious endorsement of 'multiculturalism' and his explicit cosmopolitanism, the liberal notion of constitutional patriotism that he has promoted nonetheless retains an unseemly residue of civic nationalism deeply committed to (and entangled in all the contradictions, conundrums, and lacunae of) upholding the *political* prerogatives of 'natives'.

It is telling that Habermas's argument for constitutional patriotism, in at least one important earlier iteration (1992), cites as its pertinent authority Peter Schuck and Rogers Smith's *Citizenship Without Consent: Illegal Aliens in the American Polity* (1985), a work whose most palpable practical intent was to elaborate the putative constitutionality of the case for rescinding the birthright US citizenship of the US-born children of undocumented migrants. Schuck and Smith's book, ostensibly preoccupied with properly scholastic and distinctly liberal questions of *consent*, signaled a politically significant

intervention on the side of 'immigration control' and the restriction of citizenship in the United States. By supplying an academic and legal rationale for migrant exclusion and the restriction of citizenship rights for the children of undocumented migrants, Schuck and Smith advanced a profound articulation of what I call liberal nativism. Similarly rejecting birthright citizenship as sufficient grounds for political membership, Habermas contends:

In democratic states, which understand themselves as an association of free and equal citizens, membership depends on the principle of voluntariness. Here, the usual ascriptive characteristic of domicile and birth (*jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*) by no means justify a person's being irrevocably subjected to the sovereign authority of that country. (1992: 5)

Thus, while he emphasizes the consent and volition required for an individual citizen's subjection to the state's power, and otherwise appears to repudiate ascriptive (effectively, accidental) qualifications for political membership, Habermas likewise affirms implicitly what is ultimately the prohibitive premium that Schuck and Smith put on the 'consent' of the established (and presumptively entitled) national polity to finally certify whether or not particular migrants may be admitted for inclusion. 'Voluntariness', after all, works in both directions, albeit with far greater coercive force from one side (the 'community') than from that of individual (migrant) petitioners for inclusion.

In a remarkable ruse of distinctly post-colonial cynical reason, and notably anticipating Fukuyama's injunctions to the polities of Europe to reinvigorate the debate over national identity, Habermas appeals: 'Assuming that the autonomously developed state order is indeed shaped by ethics, does the right to self-determination not include the right of a nation to affirm its identity vis-à-vis immigrants who could give a different cast to this historically developed political-cultural form of life?' ([1996] 1998: 228). Agonistic ethical provisos notwithstanding, it is revealing that Habermas glosses such putative manifestations of national 'self-determination' as mere acts devoted to 'affirming' an (already-established, 'historically established') national 'identity' and a 'form of life' which awkwardly couples the political with the ever-unspecified 'cultural'. In a peculiar but predictable reversal of the radical open-endedness and forcefully imaginative futurity intrinsic to the very concept of self-determination, the insular version that Habermas upholds for Europe in the face of migration, it seems, can only look *backward*. As Paul Gilroy has noted in his tellingly entitled *Postcolonial Melancholia*, with specific regard to Britain but also referring to postcolonial Europe, in general, there is 'a morbid fixation with the fluctuating substance of national culture and identity', which moreover is unmistakably associated with 'a refusal to think about racism as something that structures the life of the postimperial polity' (2005: 12). For Habermas, this recourse to the otherwise (by his own accounting) anachronistic language of self-determination is particularly contradictory. Elsewhere, he is acutely aware of the sheer contingency of 'how the universe of those who come together to regulate their common life by means of positive law [is] composed' ([1996] 1998: 115). Thus, he is meticulously reserved about the 'theoretical mistake with grave practical consequences' involved in assuming that the question of defining the boundaries of a political community could ever 'be answered in normative terms' with reference to a 'right to national self-determination' (p. 116).

Yet, in light of Gilroy's sense of a concomitant if tacit and unacknowledged *refusal* to confront the enduring toxicity of racism as a defining socio-political fact of the European condition, the equivocation in Habermas around this question may disclose the deeper and more insidious co-presence of ambivalence and disavowal. Here, it suffices for Habermas that a European entitlement to one or the other historically sanctioned national 'identity' be juxtaposed with 'immigrants' who disruptively introduce various kinds of unsettling *difference* (p. 228). There, the line from this 'explosive potential of multiculturalism' (p. 117) leads circuitously but unfailingly to the 'aimless' rebellions and generalized moral corrosion of a degenerate 'underclass' (p. 123). And metastasized further into the brave new world of Fukuyama's antiterrorist twenty-first century, the impending explosion that awaits Europe derives from the tell-tale anxieties of 'second and third generation European Muslims' who find themselves inexplicably 'stuck between two cultures with which they cannot identify' and therefore perilously magnetized by 'extremist' political modes of identification and self-assertion (p. 11). In the 1990s, Habermas imported a US sociological rationalization for the endemic misery and desperation of 'native' racial 'minorities' (above all, African Americans) in order to comprehend Europe's new racial order of increasingly disaffected migrants and their progeny, excluded from any proper sense of European belonging in an indefinite and seemingly permanent racialized deferral. Fukuyama addresses himself to the same social phenomenon, but can only rationalize it with recourse to the time-worn complacencies of early twentieth-century sociological commonsense (itself deeply informed by Georg Simmel's theorization of the figure of the European Jew as iconic 'stranger') about the presumed 'pathologies' inherent to the 'assimilation' of European-origin migrants in the United States. Morbidity, indeed. Of course, the European-origin migrants to the United States in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century era came, over time, to be racialized as 'white', and their 'assimilation' into an 'American' national identity was inextricable from that process of racial formation (De Genova, 2005: 56–94). Thus, Habermas is inclined to translate the implausibility of such a racialized 'assimilation' of Europe's 'Third World' denizens in terms of the raciological conceits of a sociology devised to account for the perennial subordination of American Black people. In contrast, Fukuyama (himself a descendant of migrants who were expressly racialized as not-white, and historically rendered ineligible for US citizenship on explicitly racial grounds) proposes to resolve the abortive integration of Europe's migrants with a remaking of European national identities on US nationalism's 'deracinated' (2006: 13) and 'open' model of identity as patriotic civic religion (p. 17). Morbidity, again.

A Post-Colonial Cancer: Explosion or Implosion?

There are two glaring omissions in Habermas's hand-wringing denunciations of the European 'underclass', namely, *colonialism* (as the historical legacy without which the European nation-state itself, historically and materially, is finally inconceivable; cf. Balibar 1991c), and *racism* (as the contemporary dynamic without which the literally post-colonial character of Europe is truly incomprehensible). Indeed, the elision of European racisms – as the most palpable manifestation of the postcolonial condition of Europe – serves above all to render invisible that postcoloniality itself, and colludes

with the insinuation that racist or nativist outbursts or movements within Europe are nothing more than populist reaction formations, provoked by the unseemly presence of the migrants themselves. Hence, after all the protracted calamities perpetrated or perpetuated by European colonialism and the subsequently tragic or disgraceful demise of the multifarious anticolonial projects in what was formerly known as the Third World, according to Habermas, it is now supposed to be the prerogative of *European* nation-states to lay claim to their sacrosanct 'right' of self-determination – against the myriad refugees and migrants who allegedly menace them with Third Worldization?!?

In his self-anointed role as witch-doctor for Europe's 'immigrant'-*qua*-'Muslim' 'problem', Fukuyama prescribes a strikingly similar snake-oil cure for reversing Europe's condition as 'a critical breeding ground and battlefield in the struggle between radical Islamism and liberal democracy': a reinvigorated debate over the substance of national identity, informed by the challenge of reinventing 'liberal democratic' national 'cultures' in a manner that would more effectively 'integrate' Muslim/'immigrant' 'minorities' while also ensuring the exclusion of 'illiberal cultures'. In flagrant disregard for the histories and consequences of European colonialism and the ghastly reverberations of their racial projects, Fukuyama proffers the facile 'American "melting pot" approach' and the patriotic exultation of national identity through the assimilationist ceremonies and rituals of a civic religion (2006: 17–18). Notably, in his effort to invert 'American exceptionalism' as a positive remedy that may be exported to the proverbial Old World, he recapitulates one of the most cherished conceits of that exceptionalist narrative – namely, the disavowal of the intrinsically *colonial* character of US nation-state formation (which compels a precisely anti-exceptionalist account of the affinities between the US socio-political order and those of postcolonial European nation-states), as well as the constitutive role of white supremacy for US nationalism as a *racial* formation of whiteness, and the enduringly *imperial* relation of the United States to the rest of the planet (De Genova, 2005, 2006, 2007; cf. Stoler, 2006a, 2006b).

Here, then, is the post-colonial cancer, which so deviously and opportunistically metastasizes across distinct historical moments and disparate geopolitical spaces, and manifests itself in the discrepant discourses of apparently divergent intellectual and political personalities, throughout the trans-Atlantic body of 'the West': the global (post-colonial) fact of white supremacy, and the enduring (racialized) fact of empire as a material and practical enterprise. Like any cancer, it does not arrive cataclysmically and unannounced from elsewhere, but rather originates from within, and flourishes and proliferates in the very body that has nurtured it through its own degeneracy. Its source is then not a healthy body that must somehow be excised of an unseemly intrusion, but rather a body so irreversibly and irreconcilably moribund that it can no longer accomplish its most elementary vocation, namely, to merely sustain its own vitality. Like any cancer, this one concerns the body's escalating debilitation and incapacitation in the face of a corrosive and dreadful illness that the toxic body itself has bred and cultivated. And the product now devours its own creator. At the risk of over-extending this admittedly problematic super-organic metaphor, the evidence of multiple and disparate metastases of this post-colonial cancer simply confirms that the body itself must be radically replaced, as no amount of corrective shock therapy can achieve anything more than a prolongation of the life of the pernicious disease, now regnant with the body in thrall.

Much as Europe truly was ‘literally the creation of the Third World’, in Frantz Fanon’s memorable formulation ([1961] 1963: 102), it is likewise true that the so-called Third World was literally Europe’s creation, and remains its rightful inheritance. It ought to go without saying, moreover, that the Third World was likewise the creation of the United States, and is no less its rightful inheritance as well. In the wake of the end of the Cold War (which bestowed upon the decolonized their specifically *third-worldliness*), Balibar has suggested the image of ‘two humanities’. Historically constituted by the global racism of capitalist (colonial) modernity, this bifurcated humanity is comprised of sub- and super-human categories, associated with abject destitution and gross overdevelopment, respectively. These ‘tendentially incompatible masses’ confront one another, however, on an unprecedented scale and, ever more ubiquitously, *within the same spaces* of practical everyday life (1991b: 44; see also 1991a: 14; cf. Anderson 1994: 321). Without ever ceasing to be excruciatingly unequal and significantly segregated, these two human camps become ensnared anew amidst the unforeseen physical proximities and incidental intimacies that arise with shared spaces of cohabitation, work and production, and, to a lesser but not negligible extent, also consumption. This transnational and decidedly post-colonial reconfiguration of global class inequalities marks an unfinished decolonization, indeed (Balibar, 1991a: 12; 2001/2004: 7; 2003: 42). It is emblazoned as before by bluntly racialized differences, in a peculiar but predictable ‘recolonization’ of ‘immigrants’ and ‘immigration’ (Balibar, 2004: 38–42; see also De Genova, 2006; Mezzadra, 2006: 39; Mezzadra, in Bojadžijev and Saint-Saëns, 2006: 15–18; Mezzadra and Rahola, 2006). Now, however, in a proliferation of postcolonial metropolitan spaces, regimented under the fastidious juridical constellations of *citizen* and *alien*, these inequalities come as never before to operate under the banners of the *native* and its inimical but ineffable other – as mere differences of ‘identity’ (for a fuller discussion, see De Genova 2010).

Indeed, new dynamics of racialization and new formations of racism become inextricable from the social production of migrants’ ‘differences’ in ways that, as often as not (or rather, *more* often than not), dissimulate their racisms and dis-articulate ‘race’ and ‘immigration’, precisely through the politics of nativism. As we have seen in the discrepant but deeply inter-related examples of Habermas and Fukuyama, with recourse to this pronouncedly *spatialized* politics of identitarian difference, ‘race’ need not always speak its name. There is not only the persistent and pernicious reification of the putative ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of the space of ‘the nation’ (see De Genova, 2006; 2007; 2010) or alternately, and increasingly, of ‘Europe’ as such (see Andrijasevic, 2010; Karakayali and Rigo, 2010; Papadopoulos et al., 2008), or even of ‘the West’, as in Fukuyama’s revivification; there are also ‘ghettoes’ and even ‘inner cities’ (see Wacquant, 2008); and finally, there remains the notorious ‘Third World’ itself, whose downward spiral of misery never ceases to be mobilized as the implicit evidence that the formerly colonized truly were better off under European rule, and really were not capable of ever governing themselves, after all. The so-called Third World appears to have ineffably seeped in through the cracks, and has apparently gained prominence in Europe in precisely inverse relation to its receding significance on the scale of global geopolitics. Hence, Fukuyama’s counter-intuitive prioritizing of Europe – over and against the various countries of the Middle East or the so-called ‘Muslim world’ – as the critical battlefield

against 'jihadist terrorism'. This is especially disconcerting for a Europe that previously might have imagined itself to be safely insulated and aloof from the consequences of the very disasters originally wrought by its own colonial enterprises in the places associated with that bedeviled designation, 'the Third World'. The amorphous mass attributed to the so-called Third World's human crisis gets transposed now as a 'crisis' *for Europe*, and already in the 1990s, could be refigured as a comparably nebulous 'underclass' composed of 'immigrant' denizens, whose alleged pathologies have come to 'penetrate the pores' of the supposed interior of Europe.

Of course, this formerly static (immobile) space of 'underdevelopment' and cultural backwardness has managed to work this magic trick of relocating itself only inasmuch as the 'place' and the people were always rendered synonymous. The people, as migrants – mobilized and in motion – wear the stigmata of the Third World's bad news on their faces, and all over their bodies – in their flesh, their hair, their teeth, their clothing, their food. The inevitably heterogeneous and exorbitantly more convoluted dimensions of 'race' in these contemporary manifestations, in any event, render the seductive but illusory coherences of 'biological' categories distinctly less meaningful, less useful. Instead, the apparently race-neutral and presumptively 'legitimate' politics of *citizenship* may serve to achieve the elision of 'race' with the full panoply of nativist conceits entailed by the ever elusive and evasive phantom called 'national identity'. Fukuyama is blunt in his advocacy for a collective European nativist priority in the revitalization of national(ist) identities and the mandate for post-multiculturalist assimilationist recipes for the 'integration' of migrants. Likewise, with various liberal and cosmopolitan guises, as in Habermas, the promotion of the priorities of 'natives' may even masquerade as a piously multiculturalist or even as an avowedly 'anti-racist' politics – a nativism, so to speak, 'from the left' (De Genova, 2005: 68–79; Balibar, 1991a: 15). Thus, from across the political spectrum, in one country after another, the 'new' European nativists authorize themselves (as citizens) to deliberate over the 'problem' of 'immigration', clamoring in unison, demanding and debating: 'What, then, do *we* do with *them*?' In effect, they pose one and the same question: 'What to do about a Third World that has over-stepped its bounds and dared to rise out of its place? What to do about this Third World run amok?'

The more noise and heat generated from this sort of nativist controversy, the more that the veritable inclusion of those incessantly targeted for exclusion proceeds apace. Their 'inclusion', of course, is finally about the subordination of their labor, which can best be accomplished only to the extent that their incorporation is permanently beleaguered with the kinds of exclusionary and racist campaigns that ensure that this inclusion is precisely a form of subjugation. What is at stake, then, is a larger socio-political (and legal) process of inclusion *through* exclusion, 'integration' as compulsory 'assimilation', labor *importation* (whether overt or covert) premised upon protracted deportability (see De Genova, 2002; 2010). If Habermas and Fukuyama both worry that this has the menacing odor of a potentially *explosive* mix, however, it is all the more urgent and crucial that we begin to recognize that, if anything, the dynamic is more accurately depicted as one of *implosion*. In the unforgettably suggestive phrase of Malcolm X, himself the embodiment and epitome of a much earlier 'Muslim problem' in the United States, such eruptions could only be a matter of the chickens coming home to roost.¹

Almost half a century ago, in the midst of the more or less violent convulsions of decolonization and the certain and irreversible demise of overt and direct European colonial power on a planetary scale, Frantz Fanon, in *Les damnés de la terre* (1961), famously proclaimed that ‘the European game [had] finally ended’, that Europe was ‘running headlong into the abyss’ ([1961] 1963: 312). It was, he reasoned, plainly time to leave this Europe behind. And yet, despite his sober and righteously damning assessment, Fanon’s anticolonial critique, which summarily conjured forth the fact of our universal *post*-colonial condition, was splendidly generous with regard to the plausible redemption of Europeans, in spite of Europe:

The Third World does not mean to organize a great crusade of hunger against the whole of Europe. What it expects from those who for centuries have kept it in slavery is that they will help it to rehabilitate mankind, and make man victorious everywhere once and for all . . . This huge task, which consists of reintroducing mankind into the world, the whole of mankind, will be carried out with the indispensable help of the European peoples, who themselves must realize that in the past they have often joined the ranks of our common masters where colonial questions were concerned. To achieve this, the European peoples must first decide to wake up and shake themselves, use their brains, and stop playing the stupid game of the Sleeping Beauty. ([1961] 1963: 106)

It seems obvious that Fanon’s sage recommendation remains as pertinent today as ever, and indeed, its urgency has only intensified. For, now, the requisite role of ‘Europeans’ in repudiating and un-doing Europe itself (and collaborating in the global project of reconstituting humanity beyond the protracted and enduring bondage of empire) is presented immediately as a task that is necessary simply to go on living . . . *in Europe*.

Note

1. As reported in the *New York Times* on 2 December 1963, Malcolm X had used this phrase the previous day in response to a question about his interpretation of the assassination of US President John F. Kennedy. Malcolm elaborated further that the systemic violence which the United States had perpetrated against Black Americans and also had exported to the Third World, as instanced by the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo, were among the proverbial ‘chickens’ that he had in mind. The public controversy that ensued led to Malcolm’s being officially silenced by Elijah Muhammad for having violated a prohibition against any such comments by spokesmen of the Nation of Islam, and ultimately to Malcolm’s conclusive break with the organization.

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Bio

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