Shadow Dancing: Colonizing Racisms and their Discontents

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Abstract

This paper offers a deep futures analysis of "race" and the many racisms that compete to colonize the future. Using poststructuralism it challenges the frames that shape our thinking on race and the "Other". Cultural narrative and boundary drawing are explored as sources of racist frames. Three distinct possible scenarios along with their defining myths and metaphors are also examined. The hidden economy of racism is also addressed as it underpins economic affluence and cultural hegemony. Finally, questions of integrity and identity are considered from the transformative logic of neohumanism.

"Color is neutral; it is the mind that gives it meaning." [1]

"Some want to understand too much and too quickly; they have explanations for everything. Others refuse to understand; they offer only cheap mystification. The only way forward lies in investigating the space between these two options." [2]

This paper builds on Roger Bastide's assertion that we construct "race", and that colour in and of itself is without meaning. Deep futures of a causal and integral nature attempts to engage with the mythic and metaphoric roots that define reality, establish boundaries and maintain the structures of inequity that configure societies, shape civilisations and underpin the disempowerment of the vast majority of our planet (Inayatullah 2002; Slaughter 2004). When developing policy, shaping educational language and community strategies to counter racism we need to understand the power of our myths to impose meaning and validity on these interventions. One component of deep futures work is to expose, through a range of strategies, the myths and metaphors that we live by in order to allow us to engage them and develop others.

Futures of this type also involves us in looking at our metaphors and being surprised. In seeing how we are complicit in much of the ugliness of the world, much of the Other that we deny yet

which we find in our own metaphors. Thus Jacques Derrida reminds us that the Other of democracy can be found in our own enactment of the principle itself:

> *The great question of modern parliamentary and representative democracy, perhaps of all democracy, is this logic of the turn around, of the other turn around, of the other time and thus of the other, of the **alter** in general, is that the **alternative to** democracy can always be **represented** as a democratic **alternation**. (Derrida 2005:30-31)*

This alternation is not so much a binary function of our thinking as the shadow of our own selves – of our fears and hopes as we grapple with the fluid, morphic nature of the social. This shadow infiltrates the best we aspire to and uses our hopes to betray us. So much of human activity involves dancing with our "shadows". Race, in this context, becomes a shadow-metaphor for our own disowning of the humanity that robs us of a sense of uniqueness and power. Thus, following Derrida's example, democracy often ushers in a painful mediocrity (Grundin 1982: 72; Kelly 2006), or anti-democratic forces that usurp the very form that underwrote its ascendancy. Similarly, as we grapple with questions of racism, the ugliness shifts and finds new languages, new tongues to play the political correctness game, to damn the "prophets" and praise the "whores".

Framing the "Real"

The power of metaphor to shape our social reality has been described by George Lakoff. He maintains that metaphors frame what is meaningful and what is not. Intelligibility depends on the congruence between frame and "reality". He puts it like this:

> *Neuroscience tells us that each of the concepts we have – the long-term concepts that structure our thinking – is instantiated in the synapses of our brains. Concepts are not things that can be changed just by someone telling us a fact. We may be presented with facts, but for us to make sense of them, they have to fit what is already in the synapses of the brain. Otherwise facts go in and then they go right back out. They are not heard, or they are not accepted as facts, or they mystify us: Why would anyone have said that? Then we label the fact as irrational, crazy, or stupid. (Lakoff 2004: 17)*

When dealing with social processes that order and structure our sensibilities and inform our values Lakoff's observation has real significance. It is important to explore how our frames – the myths and metaphors embedded in our cultural and social practices - shape social discourse such as that on race and racism. The work of the later Heidegger (1992) also explores this issue, which he describes as "enframing", referring to the process of ordering that creates the logic that destines (privileges) one outcome over another. Futures work picks up on the links between the cognitive humanism of Lakoff and the existentialism of Heidegger and explores frames and metaphors that collude to establish the dominance of specific realities over others.

In this sense, much deep futures research can be seen as an attempt to navigate the space outlined by Giorgio Agamben in the opening quotation. The speculative nature of critical futures analysis disrupts current assumptions of the real, challenging domi-

nant frames, in order to explore plausible and preferable alternative narratives (Eckersley 2004: 191). Following Agamben, the trick is to avoid categorical foreclosure while simultaneously avoiding the superficiality that results when we skim over intransigent issues in an effort to tell a story that is in fact neither useful nor accessible. The space between explanation and mystification is the rich territory of deep futures; here epistemic and ontological work informs historical, cultural, economic and social analysis and personal agency is linked to formative social imagining.

To explore this space requires the recognition that metaphors, frames, images, and aspirations are central to our value contexts and engage with aspects of this deeper and layered "reality" in order to increase our ability – personally and collectively – to actively engage with the present in the knowledge that, as Richard Slaughter puts it, "the future can be shaped by the careful and responsible exercise of human will." (Slaughter 2004: 37) This "will" burns like a little candle surrounded by the shadow of the multiple, the fluid and the possible. The task is to reframe the real, because while we accept the dominant discourse – or for that matter, any discourse – unquestioningly we are trapped by the limitations inherent to that worldview.

Boundary Drawing

The following analysis hinges on the assumption that cultural narrative has its roots in the mythic forms that set and maintain the boundaries that inform identity. For instance, Zygmunt Bauman describes the fluid boundary drawing of early to high modernity and links it to the emergence of a pathological form of anti-Semitism that lead ultimately to the holocaust.

> *It is the assertion of this study that the active or passive, direct or oblique involvement in the intense concerns of the modern era with boundary-drawing and boundary-maintenance was to remain the most distinctive and defining feature of the conceptual Jew. I propose that the conceptual Jew has been historically construed as the universal "viscosity" of the Western world. (Bauman 1989: 40)*

Much of the present anxiety that characterizes racial discourse can be attributed to the lack of stability in our boundary practices. Robert Manne recently underlined this fluid condition and compares current levels of Islamophobia to the pervasiveness of anti-Semitism suggesting that both exist outside more limited forms of racism.

> *There is a real question about whether or not it is appropriate to call...fantasies about Islam and Muslims "racism", or whether [this] kind of thinking... belongs more accurately to another contiguous species of prejudice spanning, religion, culture and ethnicity: namely, anti-Semitism. (Manne 2006: 33)*

Manne's suggestion reflects similar issues to Baumann's mapping of anxiety levels, fluid history and the collapse of coherent boundaries with Modernity. The multicultural world that has been promoted as a result of such boundary-flexibility has as a result been heavily criticized in recent years as conservatives attempt to discredit the exercise and redraw traditional boundaries based on the reaffirmation of the values of the majority.

The problem is outlined in the Murdoch owned Australian national paper *The Australian* by the conservative commentator Janet Albrechtsen:

For too long, the multicultural mind-set has acted like a two-pronged censor. It forbids talk that applauds the majority culture. And it's an even more potent censor when it comes to criticising minorities. (Albrechtsen 2006)

Following this logic multiculturalism can be seen to have enforced tolerance without understanding. In this way it defines social space as a "negative" arena in which our fears and forebodings are disallowed (and hence amplified in the silence) yet not given a "positive" counterbalance and many are, as a result, left with a nostalgia for a mythic past in which boundaries helped us know both ourselves and the other in categorical and comfortable terms.

This nostalgia feeds reactionary policy such as incarceration of asylum seekers and social paranoia as expressed in tensions over difference and violence between gangs such as the riots in the Sydney suburb of Cronulla between December 11-15 2005. So today we find increased anxiety expressed over the Muslim presence in Australia with the chairman of the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria, Phong Nguyen, noting that "We cannot assume that our children who grow up in a multicultural setting will automatically be accepting of each other". (Chee Chee Leung 2006) Stoking growing Islamophobia the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, recently identified "a small section" of Australian Muslims as "refusing to embrace Australian values and urged them to fully integrate by treating women as equals and learning to speak English." (Kerbaj 2006: 1) We also find increasingly hostile language in the media attacking multiculturalism as a category.

Albrechtsen (2005: 15)[3] is quite clear on the evils of the multicultural. To her the:

West's multiculturalism created conditions that encouraged the West's fanatical enemies. We were so busy being inclusive, denigrating our own culture, that we were not noticing what was happening. I suggested that Multicultural Man and his lazy cultural relativist thinking needed to be dismantled. A few others were saying the same thing. But not many.

The problem is that the multicultural is seen by many to have become anemic and relativist. It seems that the values of inclusivity and acceptance are not enough for those who long for stronger ethnic, national, and community identity markers. This question of what makes "us", lies at the heart of how we define our humanity: our sense of self in a rapidly transforming world. When our identity is premised on the defeat, absorption, assimilation or silencing of the other even within the multicultural context, we place limits on what is human, civilized and moral.

One instance of this is the suggestion by Rotterdam councillor Michiel Smit that Arabic be banned as a vehicle of public address in the Netherlands. One supporter summed his position up succinctly:

There is a big difference between speaking German or English in the Netherlands (languages we understand), and Arabic. Certainly if Arabic is used to preach against us in mosques, because that Arabic is used as a weapon against the Netherlands state. Is that not treason? [4]

Acknowledging such limited logic, Ghassan Hage sees the human capacity to strip another human being of their humanity as a process of history and present context:

After all, the negation of a common humanity – in its more dramatic form a vision

of an abstract dehumanized other where children are not perceived in their children-ness, mothers in their motherliness – is of course inherent to the practice of the Palestinian suicide bomber. Rather than losing that sense of common humanity ourselves in the rush to condemnation, those of us driven by the ethics of social explanation will always want to ask, "What kind of social conditions must prevail and what kind of history must a people have internalized to make them lose their capacity of seeing the other in his or her humanness?" This is not an easy question to ask in the West today because the West itself is rapidly losing whatever capacity it had to see the other in his or her humanness. (Hage 2003: 139-140)

Not only, he argues are we as a civilisation unable to tolerate the other, we are also unable to tolerate social explanations, preferring instead to take a voyeuristic media driven approach that sensationalizes and distances both the ugly and the subtle. In this way we are captured by images of tattooed youths on the beach at Cronulla inscribing their social alienation on their bodies and mystified, perhaps even repelled, by the "political correctness" of those who attempt to engage thoughtfully with the Cronulla riots. Martin Lehmann for instance, rages in an e-column (December 13, 2005): "The anti-Australian, left-wing mainstream media are having a field day blackening Australia's reputation following the Cronulla riots." Furthermore our tolerance is running increasingly thin in the face of a host of uncertainties bundled together under the banner of globalization.

The Future Context

A futures analysis of this situation acknowledges a triangle of forces (Figure 1) that shapes the contexts that maintain the forms of racism described above. This simple tool, developed by Inayatullah (2005), allows us to unpack the forces at work in generating, maintaining and reconfiguring the present. It acknowledges the fact that no present is absolute, that despite appearances of permanency, cultural process can morph rapidly. In this way we can read the present as simply one possible outcome of a set of possibilities that are almost infinitely variable. Such loosening of the grip of determinism allows us to open up the future to multiple trajectories.

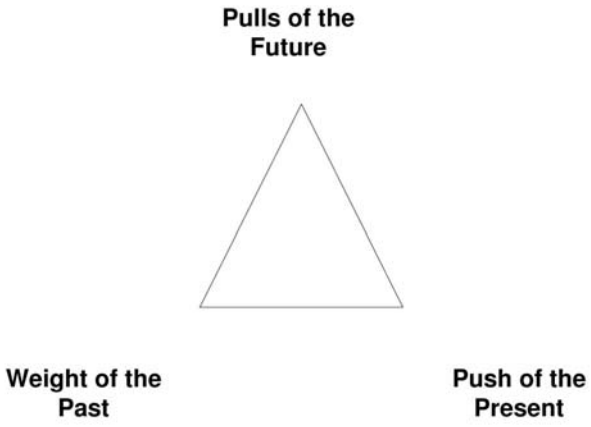

Figure 1

Firstly, we have the past weighing us down, shaping so much of our capacity to frame, interpret and problem solve. Here we must face the causal link with today's terrors as well as acknowledge the processes set in place to generate more enlightened solutions. Weights from the past include colonialism, tribalism and patriarchy. We can also add to this list philosophical perspectives and paradigms such as humanism, capitalism, democracy and empiricism.

Each one of these points is significant in defining the present, yet each is more or less significant according to history and context. So for example, in Australia, colonialism is a factor that shapes our self-image by generating values of mateship and loyalty, attachment to "our" British roots and the monarchy, a history of struggle, hardship, the overcoming of heavy odds, etc.. This image obviously does not include the Indigenous people, who have a different account of colonialism, nor many Australians from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Yet it still informs our consciousness as the Prime Minister John Howard of Australia recently observed: "There's no such thing as a nation without a dominant culture. We have a dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. It's our language, our literature, our institutions... You can be part of the mainstream culture and still have a place in your life and your heart for your home country" (Dusevic 2006). These points are therefore context bound and are driven by particular myths and metaphors – the bronzed "digger"[5] for example - yet appear as themes and patterns in most national settings.

Secondly, there is the present context. Here we are pushed along by a powerful set of ordering processes – frames - that set *apparent* limits to the possible. This context includes the constraints and enthusiasms that push us in directions that we may not feel comfortable with either as individuals or communities. Such forces are experienced as momentum and include globalisation, the war on terror and fear of the "Other". Ideology in general exerts considerable formative pressure (neoliberalism; socialism; environmentalism; etc.) as does party politics, the media, technology in general, popular authoritarianism and limited and authoritarian democracy.

Once again context is everything. Ghassan Hage cites Ali discussing the fact that "we are all at times *enthusiasts* (Hamas[6])." (Hage 2004: 139) This observation hinges on the fact that history sometimes forces our hand and that the present explodes with conditions that limit our choices. So, today we find Christian Lebanese who are forced, due to the pressure of circumstance, into supporting an increasingly radicalized anti-Christian Hizb'allah. By the same token, many Israelis are caught up by the same forces of radicalization. Polarization is a condition that takes intense will to transcend as do all the dominant narratives that frame and shape our choices.

Thirdly, the future pulls us forward. Although it does not exist it is present to us as a *shadow of the present*, hence it tends to be colonized in many ways by both the past and the present (Hutchinson 1996: 34ff). Yet it is also the place where hope still exists as a social reality and where we find real alternatives to the business as usual habits of the present that close down our capacity to enact change and transcend the narrow boundaries implicit in so much of past and present experience. This future undoubtedly is a contested space, it acts as a magnet pulling us forward and when apprehended as a context for social renewal it has the potential to reshape the present. Forces pulling us into the future fall into two categories. The first is closed and fearful. Such

futures include our civilisation's fear of decline and fall; the tribalism and sectarianism that simmers beneath the surface of multicultural formulations; shifting demographics; technological determinism and environmental decline. Set against this menacing list we find both naive and strategic hope, civilisational renewal, the reclamation of the commons and an emergence of participatory governance and a trans-racial identity.

As the West faces the prospect of diminution in the face of rapid growth from developing countries (See Appendix 1) the question of its own demise is apparent (Diamond 2005; Meadows, Meadows & Randers 1992). How it frames this prospect, i.e. in terms of a clash of civilisations, a transcendence of the local or, as a globalising inevitability, determines how leaders, economies and their people face the demographic and economic challenge. In this process the future, and how we read it, folds back in on our most ancient, unconscious and cherished stories. One challenge today is to establish frames and metaphors that can generate new futures that are not colonized by ethnic and religious pasts that perpetuate racial and cultural division. Success too is contingent, as Derrida reminds us; the new world "Other" may inhabit a trans-cultural space but is this individual any less oppressed, any closer to the centre? Or, have we truly reinvented the social in which the centre is immanent rather than geographically, historically and politically grounded?

In all this lies the problem of what we don't know we don't know. Here we find the creativity to transform the real and openly engage the humanist narrative of inclusion with broader sweeps of the possible – the "neo" human. It could be that any such transformation is premised on the collapse of agency and structure with an emergent neohumanist stance that embraces otherness as its own shadow. In this, identity is linked to relationship with reality – in its social, natural and human forms. To be human, in this context is to be in relation to Being, as Martin Heidegger (1992b: 245) argues and as the Indian philosopher and mystic P.R. Sarkar (1982: 92-94; 99-101) also maintains.

The difference between Hage's analysis and a deep and critical futures one is that his is set within the first two categories of the weights and pushes of the future. He seeks socio-historical explanations for the present. This kind of future analysis acknowledges an understanding of both as a necessary condition for engaging with the present, yet it contextualizes both within the social imaginary of society in order to generate engagement with the present. In this context we are concerned not just with the probable future but also with possible and preferable futures (Bell 1994: 17-22). Futures is, as David Hicks affirms, a practical and issues based process (Hicks 2004: 165). It is not simply concerned with analysis but uses analysis to inform the present with the reflective capacity to generate alternatives. This insight brings us to the critical question of who owns the future: who is already there shaping it? And, how is 'race' being constructed in that possible space?

Whose Future?

When asking such questions and looking at the future in this way it is important to realize that, as Ashis Nandy observed, one person's preferred future is another's nightmare (Nandy 1993: 1). This alerts us to the ethical and subjective dynamic at the heart

of emergent futures. Social ordering is a forever open and contested process (Hetherington 1997: 10-11). Further-more, all solutions are experienced as cultural contexts and are as contingent as they are varied.

Jacques Derrida reminds us that we count the dead differently around the world (Borradori 2003: 92), similarly we weight futures differentially, attributing higher status to some over others. This act of "judgment" is political as it reflects the power to define the preferable, the possible and the probable thus legitimating certain forms of expression – certain futures - over others.

If we take the 2005 riots in France as a recent example of this power to define, we can see in the anger and violence two contesting definitions of what it is to be French. Populist French politician Nicholas Sarkozy had called protesters in the banlieue "scum" days before the riots erupted. These protesters were mostly second generation French nationals with ethnic roots in Africa and the middle east. Many are Muslim and all are poor with unemployment rates as high as 40% (Graff 2005: 24-29). The riots, and comments such as those of Sarkozy, have lead Muslim rap star Médine to ask what does it take to be French?

> *Today, with many young people returning to religion as they start searching for their own identities, faith is becoming the difference that's most often pointed out. I'm not just a black guy or an Arab anymore; I'm a Muslim. And that's a code word for alien, someone who's determined not to fit in. But I was born and raised in France. I've been a citizen since birth. How much more "French" can I be? (Médine 2005: 29)*

What is disturbingly ironic here is that Sarkozy is only a first generation French national. What makes the difference? Sarkozy is from an aristocratic Hungarian family and is a practicing Catholic. He is culturally and religiously familiar to the "French" template. In Lakoff's terms, he fits a comfortable "frame" that allows him to avoid the otherness he is attacking. Furthermore, he has the power to define; the rioters in rioting are seeking something of the same lest they succumb to definition. Ghassan Hage found something similar in his research with Hizb'allah supporters in Lebanon. Thus one interviewee, Ali dryly observes:

> *What is so strange about saying: "I am not going to let you rob me of all my humanity and all my will?" What is so strange about saying: "I'd rather kill you on my own terms and kill myself with you than be lead to my death like a sheep on your own terms?" (Hage 2003: 139)*

When examining the futures of racism it is important to recognize that the power to define the other is central to how racism will modulate over the coming decades. The inverse of course is equally true, how we define ourselves as individuals, communities, nations and even as a race deeply inform the ability to shape boundaries and transcend the limitations of alienated approaches to being and acting.

How might such violent forms of definition be renegotiated? Zia Sardar explores a future of race as one in which heterogeneity is seen as essential for social health. Sardar is a practical futurist, yet he builds with metaphors, framing his vision of humanity as a garden.

> *I close my eyes and think of a future world. A visionary world, thirty, forty years from today. A world not of new humanity but a plethora of old and new humani-*

ties. A world where more than one way of being human is not only the norm but is considered essential for the very survival of our species. This is the world as a garden. (Sardar 2005: 13)

Here identity is recognized as multiple and contextual. To get to this point and continuing the garden metaphor, requires first the planting of the seed, then its cultivation over time. This cultivation will not be easy and involves, as a central struggle, the engagement with identity in its historical context. The weight of the past must be addressed. Thus we return to those elements of western history that, though perhaps not all unique to the West, have coalesced to define the triumphal global rhetoric of the world's only super power and its supporters. Here we can ask what stories, myths and metaphor's derive from the west's collective memory and unconscious to shape and define its relationship to other races, cultures and histories?

Self and Other

These elements have all played key roles in the West's definition of itself, just as they have played identical roles in the Other's definition of self. The postmodern condition has broken down many of the traditional yardsticks for defining self and other. To proceed to re-imagine the self is proving difficult and many are taking refuge today in a retreat into fundamentalisms of all kinds. The polarization that results from such a retreat will either tear the world apart or result, after much suffering, in the emergence of a new world "other".

Sohail Inayatullah, in exploring some of the central myths at the root of the definition of the other concludes that we must both be able to empathize as well as retain our moral compass. Moving beyond the mono-cultural tendency of globalization will demand this of us.

This means thinking like others, understanding their concerns. It does not mean losing sight of one's foundational values – gender equity, human rights, for example – but expanding them. Cultural relativism is not an excuse for abusing human and natural rights. (Inayatullah 2005: 56.)

The futures that emerge once we engage with this reorientation become more open and less colonized by dominant images of the other, the fears of contestation and violent definition.

The Hidden Economy of Racism

Before we start looking at images of the future it is important to recognize the obvious, namely that the affluence of the West is not accident. The fact that most westerners seem relatively uneducated about racism and its discontents is also not accident. Today "racism" is a dirty word. Even the most ardent racists-by-actions are determined anti-racists (Hage 2003: ix). Politicians regularly like to be seen in the company of people that are culturally and linguistically different. The whitewash of western culture is almost complete. Yet we in the west are all complicit in the process of Othering that is based on a hidden economy of *racisms* that are both spatially and temporally diffuse.

Today's prosperity is built upon centuries of exploitation of indigenous cultures and the natural resources of the planet; today we continue this process under the banner of globalization, yet we are so inured to the imbalances that they seem innate features of the modern landscape; the future, too, is also being exploited with the physical and social resources of future generations being strip mined for the benefit of a generation that will never have to pick up the tab.

Thus we are indebted to the ghosts of racisms past, present and future. Figure 2 summarizes this condition of indebtedness playing with the images of the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future as experienced by Mr. Scrooge in Charles Dickens' moral fable *A Christmas Carol*.

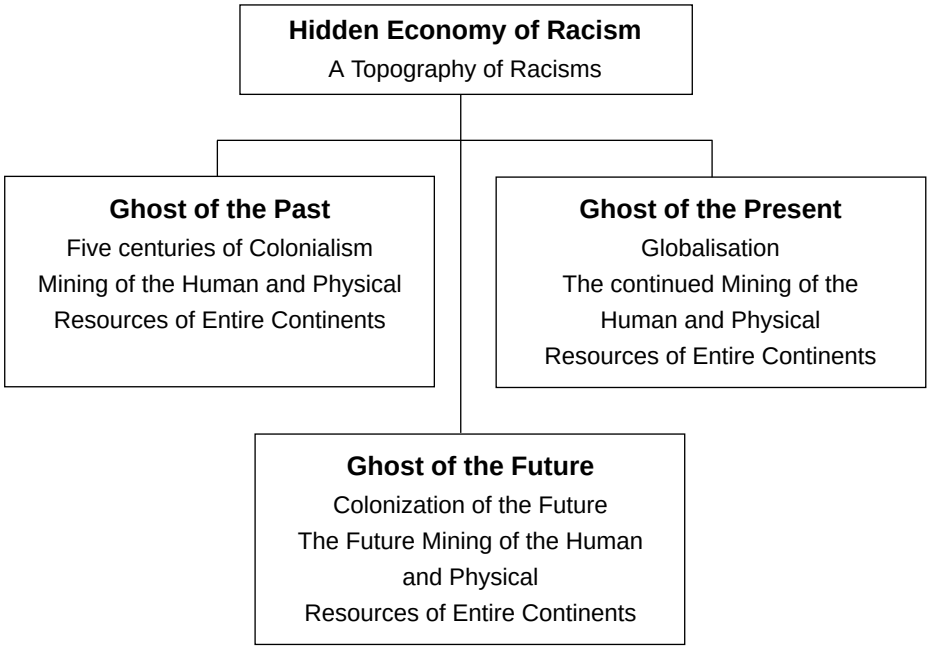

Figure 2: Differential Costing: Fixing the Books

The point is that all in the west are complicit in this process. This is true whether we are poor and inhabit the margins of prosperity and power or whether we are rich and clearly benefiting from the structural inequities built into our civilisation. Furthermore, this hidden economy has been exported world-wide and has included most of humanity in various forms of tribalism and racism that builds profit and loss into social and racial ranking.

As the future is the result of both personal and social choices made in the light of history and the cultural myths and metaphors that shape our perceptions of self and other, it comes to be seen as a contested field, not so much of endless possibilities, but of clear choices and divergent socio-historical processes. This does not mean that the future is closed, only that it is not totally open. There are logical and necessary trends that are readily studied[7] and can be seen moving from the past into the future. It is only when we look into the future with this in mind and see futures that are undesirable that we are alerted to the present as a field of human engagement that needs foresight and ethics as the corner stone of both government policy and community and individual engagement.

Three Futures

Richard Eckersley (2006) considers three futures as most pressing in terms of our history (weight), our current political, economic and social climate (push) and the contested images of the future (pull). These he describes as:

Apocalyptic Nihilism. This is a "We can't do anything about it, the problems are too big" scenario in which we play hard, build walls, wait for the inevitable and decline. In the west this is a time of decadence and indulgent longing for the good old days; for the rest, it is a time of suffering and anger.

Apocalyptic Fundamentalism. This is an "It's too hard dealing with issues of self determination, responsibility and agency" scenario in which we surrender mind and will to a confident faith that assuages us of both guilt and responsibility. This is the "end of times" and only submission to dogma and the fight between good and evil make sense of reality.

Apocalyptic Activism. This is an "It's now or never, it is time to engage with the real issues, and redefine the possible on our own, more human, terms" scenario. Here individuals and communities actively seek solutions to immediate and long-term problems. This is a time of social foresight and a mix of hope and fear.

Looking at these three futures from a macrohistorical perspective (Galtung & Inayatullah 1997) provides strong metaphors to deepen our understanding and the implications for an analysis of racism. Inayatullah describes the condition of apocalyptic nihilism in terms of a divided world, characterized by the west versus the rest, in which big gates and big dogs control access to privilege and power. Apocalyptic fundamentalism becomes for him a return to the Caliphate, this is a return to the past in which authority comes from above, women are confined, technology is limited and certainty returns. His preferred future parallels the time/space of apocalyptic activism and is described as Gaia-tech. This is where technological development parallels the development of human consciousness so that social justice, gender equity and sustain-

able economic practices define reality. This is not a utopia (no place) as such an idea brings closure; rather it is a eutopia (good place) in which the social imaginary continues to unfold and agency is not confined to structure but participates consciously in its development (Inayatullah 2005).

Such an analysis is summarized in the following table:

Table 1

Future Scenario	Underlying Myth-Metaphor	Macrohistorical View	Type
Fortress World	Conflict and Decline (Heroic/Patriarchy)	Divided World	Apocalyptic nihilism
Tribal World	Anarchy and the Abyss (Tragedy/Dystopia)	Caliphate	Apocalyptic Fundamentalism
Neohumanist World	From tribal to Thrival (Co-creation/Communal – Glocal)	Gaia tech	Apocalyptic activism

In applying these scenarios we can explore some possible definitions of "race" and who the new world "other" might be. Here it is important to recognize, as Manne suggests above, that race is just one condition for otherness, there is also gender, class, youth, senescence and disability. Each category a condition too easily essentialised when in fact they modulate, inform and reinforce each other's "Other-ness". Bell Hooks (1994: 77) for instance, notes that black feminist scholarship is increasingly examining the interconnection between race and gender and challenging the "reinscription of conventional oppressive hierarchies" that underpin much traditional scholarship. The counter balance to this essentialism she argues is the interrogation of the author's location within the matrix of power relationships. Hence my maleness, whiteness, middle classness, middle-ageness and Australianness are all conditions worthy of deconstruction within this context. The point here is that these structures of identity confine our potential to specific trajectories. Otherness modulates according to context and this is what gives scenarios their power but also confines them to the realm of the "never to be".

In exploring the futures mapped out in table one we find a range of possible new world "others" emerging. In the fortress world say of 2100 Caucasians make up 10% of the total world population yet still hold the bulk of the power. This is a troubled time as the population is also ageing and employing young non-Caucasians in many primary areas. The military is big, as is security in general; alien populations are kept out; ethnicity is deeply linked to wealth and prestige. Many definitions are applied to the radicalized other, they include: "undeserving", "alien", "lazy" and "inferior". But there is fear behind the stereotypes. Tragedy and disaster wait in the wings as all who accept this myth know that after decline comes the fall.

The tribal world is a fundamentalist world of binary opposites: good and evil are literally "black and white"; the new world "other", for both sides, is fanatical and violent, unenlightened and immoral. Both sides have simplistic almost caricatured understandings of the other. Women are disempowered in this tribal environment and tech-

nology is not trusted, what counts are the ties of blood and family; locality has won over universalism and markers of identity are worn on the body, but as race has triumphed in the local it has also failed in that by sustaining distinction over our common humanity it has lost sight of vision, a transformational future and an end to violence.

The neohumanist world holds out hope, yet it is deeply conflicted. As Inayatullah points out, it is driven by gaia-tech but it is the furthest out (temporally) in terms of likelihood (Inayatullah et al. 2006). It is a possible "destination" but the issue of immediate concern is how much pain will we need to experience before such a scenario can begin to unfold? The futurist James Dator (1996: 559) once quipped that he would like to skip the 21st century and get to the 22nd because it would certainly be rosier than humanities' immediate future. There is an ambivalence in this future scenario. Neohumanism as a philosophical principle envisions a humanity that recognizes itself in all beings, it privileges synthesis, benevolence and holism. It is weak however on structure, in the sense that it has no clear place for hierarchy as a principle of social order, yet it is not socialist, placing a premium on personal liberation coupled with social engagement. Perhaps the best characterization of race in this future is the garden metaphor that Sardar proposes; but it is likely that in the shadow of neohumanism lies the emergence of a hierarchy of relative enlightenment in which Indo-Chinese mystics, or green mystics, or techno-mystics are at the top. In this future the Other might be the materialist, the acquisitive, the empiricist who places analysis over synthesis. What is interesting with this scenario is that "race" as a category is subsumed in other categories of difference.

It is important to play with these categories and ask both meaningful and whimsical questions. Consider for a moment that the population of the west is shrinking vis-à-vis the rest of the world. At the current rate of global population growth it is estimated that by 2030 there will be only about 12.5% Caucasians on the planet (Appendix 1). Of course, power is not commensurate with numbers but such a ratio will have real meaning for how "otherness" is defined. What will English be like? Will it be Sino-English or Hindu-English? Or a mix?[8] Who will constitute the managerial class and what will be their affiliation to place and ethnic identity? How will issues of access and equity be dealt with? What kind of governance will exist to manage the aspirations of the majority of humanity?

Opening up the Future

When we open up the future we engage with the power to define identity and shape our personal and social trajectories. We move into the space between certainty and mystification described at the opening of this paper by Agamben. In this space there is not only fluidity, the openness to possibilities foreclosed in the other categories, there is also opportunity: we can explore the frames that shape our meaning-making and individually and collectively generate alternative metaphors that modulate the conditions that energize racial discourse.

Even a simple analysis, such as that afforded by the futures triangle and scenario building, enables us to begin to peel away the veneer of the present, the ego I-centred-

ness which is atemporal, and open us up to creative engagement with the spectrum of "racisms" that inform reality. In this process racism becomes a fellow traveler with other forms of oppression. Each is context bound and some, such as anti-Semitism (if we accept Baumann's analysis), transcend traditional boundaries and modulate, acting as a magnet for unspecified and inarticulate fear and anger. In this process hope must be realistically balanced with the powers that sustain the present configuration.

Today we live in the shadow of the fortress and the tribe. The future is colonized with a host of images linked to fear and decline. Salvation from such fears requires the surrendering of hope. In this context, as we lose hope the term "racism" is sublimated by the rhetoric of the commonsense and amnesia. Thus Ghassan Hage observes that no one today in Australia is a racist (Hage 2003: ix) and we find many in Australia are impressed by Keith Windschuttle's revisionist history *The Fabrication of Aboriginal History* (Windschuttle 2002) in which him minimizes the effect of white colonizing on Australia's indigenous population. Words hurt and the term "racist" is a hurtful word. Today we talk about security, justice, democracy, tolerance, multiculturalism, free trade, globalisation, liberation, self-determination, and even freedom and yet we are still being racist. Such terms stripped of social context and historical understanding are simply the rhetoric of the colonizer and will confine our social trajectory to either the fortress or the tribe.

The new world "other" in this context emerges from the shadows and claims their right to be exploited in the name of free trade and personal agency; the new world "other" steps forward to be subjected to inferiority in the name of democracy, liberation and security; this other "Other" is known to us all today. It is our shadow self, the one we dance with in our nightmares. This *Other* is the victim of the structures that maintain power through class, gender and ethnicity. There are many "others" joining the impoverished as they queue in the hope that they too might somehow make that one in a million leap from otherness to happiness.

When we question the future we can challenge this line of "logic". We can ask, is this our destiny? Are human beings innately racist, innately tribal? We can begin looking at and participating in creating alternative futures. Such futures push us to expand human identity and consciousness, to take seriously Bastide's assertion that colour is neutral and act on it. In seeking to escape the shadow dance it is worth considering another context, the time of gaia-tech where apocalyptic activism becomes the *modus operandi* that defines the social and reclaims the alienated individual from their "otherness". The pressures of the present – demands for sustainable economics, global economic and social justice, gender equity and a re-imagining of what it is to be ecological beings – underpin a shift in consciousness that define a neohumanist moment.

The "Neo" here, meaning *new*, pushes humanism out of its narrow preoccupation with the human and forces an engagement with our broader humanity, our relationship with the social and ecological world. Neohumanism has the potential to underwrite the transcivilizational future that reconfigures identity (Bussey 2004: 199-209) and offers the possibility of human action that is personally, socially, environmentally and spiritually sustainable. Then we can build unity, deal with injustice and develop a deeper understanding of the social and what it means to be a leader.

What might the other be in this context? Perhaps, at a deep level, it is our own

ignorance, our shadow self. Culturally, socially and historically the other will, indeed must, exist in our personal and social imaginings. Racism does not simply fade away, it may, like sibling rivalry, modulate, sublimate and even find resolution in the development of relationship. There is, however, no social terminus at which point resolution emerges. Utopias of this sort are to be shunned. The study of macrohistory allows us to see that the human journey is patterned and that consciousness is processed through the return of problems over time (Galtung and Inayatullah 1997). Deep futures allows us to engage with this patterning in the present in order to both individually and socially engage change and the issues of definition, power and discrimination.

Only when we can do this can we truly take to heart the advice of that multiply-othered rapper, Médine who, though he is both young and alien in his own country, still has the wisdom to see what so many cannot.

We need to make peace with the things that make us different. (Médine 2005: 29)

Appendix

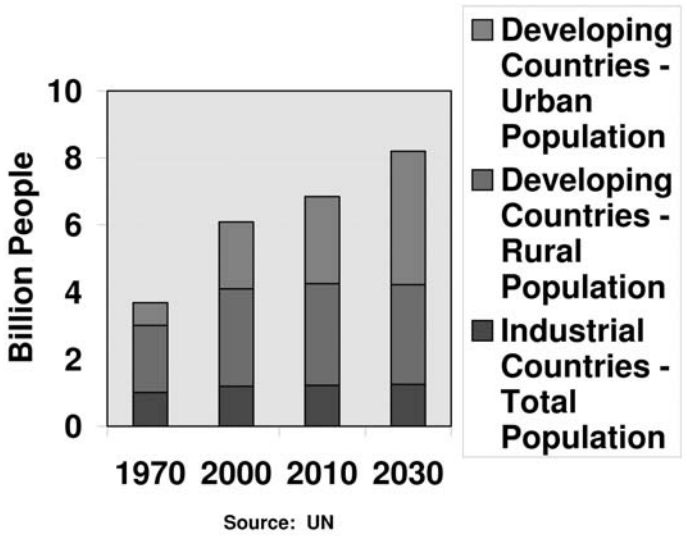

Figure 1: Population in Industrial vs. Developing Countries, 1970 and 2000, with Projections for 2010 and 2030

Source: U.N. Population Division. World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision (New York 2004).

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Notes

1. Bastide. 1967. P. 312.
2. Agamben. 1999. P. 13.
3. Quoted in Inayatullah, S. "From Multiculturalism to Neohumanism: Pedagogy and Politics in Changing Futures." In Inayatullah, Bussey & Milojevic. 2006. P. 37.
4. Quoted by Paul Treanor on http:// web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul.Treanor/eulang.html "Language Futures Europe."
5. "Digger" is the affectionate Australian description of an Australian soldier from the First World War.
6. *Hamas*. The Palestinian word for "enthusiast".
7. See Slaughter, R. & M. Bussey 2005. For an overview of methods and techniques used in futures research.
8. See for instance a recent Time Magazine article on the rise of Chinese. Ramzy, Austin. 2006. "Get Ahead, Learn Mandarin." *Time Magazine*. August 7. Pp. 44-50.

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