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Chapter 11: Heritage and ‘Race’

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‘Race’ appears in the title and body of this chapter in quotation marks - sometimes called ‘sneer quotes’ - for a reason: to foreground the status of the term as a historical fiction which has had, and continues to have, very real and damaging effects. For the concept of ‘race’ is widely discredited as a category, and yet its remnants and legacies continue to shape our contemporary heritage, just as they continue to shape the landscape of contemporary culture more broadly. This chapter considers some of the key issues, contexts and debates that have, both explicitly and implicitly, structured the relationship between ‘race’ and heritage. It does so by providing a summary of different ways in which this relationship has historically been problematic, by outlining contemporary work in the field, and closes by attempting to point towards some possible future directions for research.

‘Race’ and ethnicity

As Peter Osborne and Stella Sandford put it, ‘[“r]ace” is a concept with a disreputable past and an uncertain future, yet it continues to trouble the present, both politically and intellectually’, even whilst, today, there is a ‘widespread acknowledgement of its lack of objective validity as a principle for the classification of human differences’ (Osborne and Sandford 2002: 1). In other words, there is no objective reason why people should be compartmentalised by their skin colour any more than by the colour of their hair, their height or the number of teeth or moles they might happen to have. Consequently, today, critics such as Paul Gilroy argue against using the term ‘race’ at all, given its status as invented essentialising fiction that was primarily used as an instrument of social domination (Gilroy 2000). Nevertheless, the sheer weight of the historical processes of what Gilroy calls ‘racialisation’ also means that we obviously have to take the *effects* of such historical classifications seriously. ‘Racialisation’ has been used as a means of regulating power through the control of peoples’ bodies – through, for example, slavery, genocide, asylum and social stratification.

There are various ways to interpret how ‘race’ gained its importance and significance. Processes of racialisation are often understood by (and are themselves a good illustration of) Foucault’s theory of ‘biopolitics’ - a theoretical frame which allows us to understand how ‘biological’ discourses intersect with those of power and control (Foucault 1990; Gilroy 2000). On a historical level, there is now a large body of work tracing how racialisation came into being: with analysing the genealogies of ‘race’ (see for example Hall 1997a; Hannaford 1996; Bernasconi 2001). The early emergence of racial

classification in European colonialism, its development through ‘scientific’ Enlightenment rationalities, its dissemination through nineteenth-century processes of governmentality, and its twentieth-century resurgences through both racist and anti-racist discourse, has been the subject of much discussion over the past few decades (see Hall 1992, Osborne and Sanford 2002).

By contrast, the emphasis of ‘ethnicity’ on social and cultural construction has meant that it became for many a preferable alternative term, as the title of Stuart Hall’s classic 1992 essay, ‘New Ethnicities’, indicates (Hall 1992). Ethnicity is usually taken to indicate accumulated bonds of identification which exist between certain groups - whether cultural, social, behavioural, linguistic or religious - that are in some way connected to an idea of ancestry or to connections with particular geographical areas. However, ethnicity can also become a means of cultural racism when it is reified or used a naturalising or ‘essentialised’ way. One notorious recent example is Samuel Huntington’s book *The Clash of Civilisations*, which has been roundly critiqued for its presentation of ethnicity as a largely ‘natural’, solid and historically immutable category, rather than porous, malleable and open to change (Huntington 1996; McGuigan 2005). As Edward Said put it, such essentialised versions of ethnicity are ‘better for reinforcing defensive self-pride than for critical understanding of the bewildering interdependence of our time’ (Said 2001).

The heritage of heritage and ‘race’

The evolution of ‘race’ as a category has worked to inform heritage in a variety of ways, both consciously and unconsciously. Like ‘race’, heritage (as this book makes clear) is itself a term with a complex and multiple history, and what is meant by the term is culturally specific and philosophically debatable. However, there are some particular aspects of the history of heritage that have made it only too available to be interwoven with processes of racialisation. Both terms were used to shore up the power of the people who defined their meaning, and were mutually valorised and naturalised through discourses of lineage and stock. This was already indicated by how, in medieval times, ‘heritage’ was used in religious discourse to mark the elect, the ‘people chosen by God’ (Samuel 1994: 231). Later, through the birth of modern industrial capitalism, imperialism and the formation of the nation-state, the particular set of associations of heritage with blood, land, property and old, ‘high’ culture was formed (Boswell and Evans 1999).

What Stuart Hall has termed ‘The Heritage’ thereby came to proclaim the lineage of particular groups – and their social and cultural worth – at the expense of others. Letting what was deemed important about the past stand there, as self-evident, obvious, singular, ‘natural’ and not subject to question was one of the key means through which it accumulated its power. As Hall puts it:

The Heritage inevitably reflects the governing assumptions of its time and context. It is always inflected by the power and authority of those who have colonised the

past, whose versions of history matter. (Hall 2005: 26)

The groups who got to define ‘The Heritage’ – and in a related sense, who *possessed* heritage - were mainly upper or upper middle-class white people, particularly men. Their whiteness was naturalised through its predominantly unspoken nature, its ‘invisibility’ simultaneously functioning to present an image of its ‘neutrality’ and to lever power (Dyer 1997; Ware and Back 2002)

In European and American societies throughout industrial modernity, then, heritage became one of a range of cultural sites and narratives through which such discourses of superiority and power could be naturalised and sustained. Whether through public museums (their large pillars at their entrances referencing ‘white’ Greco-Roman empires and their interiors flaunting imperial booty) open-access stately homes (enabling the visitor or viewer to humbly appreciate the rural residence of the white aristocracy) or the statues of the white military hero in the city centre (to offer visible evidence of imperial victories), what Hall calls ‘The Heritage’ worked to show just who was in charge (Duncan 1995). The Heritage was highly selective, yet achieved much of its power through a cultural grammar of universality; ‘other’ heritage simply didn’t count. The perpetual popularity of the notion that Europe ‘has an older heritage’ than the Americas also illustrates this point: the Native American Indian’s culture, in this schema, fails to count as heritage. In such ways, the linkages between heritage, race and nation were used to prop each other up.

The past few decades in particular has involved a range of challenges to such singular configurations of heritage, in which its associations with the blessed, ‘natural rights’ of men of certain racialised stock and lineage has been rudely disrupted. The smug certainties of a bounded heritage belonging to a white upper and upper-middle class have been punctured, their claims to be able to speak for other cultures challenged, and the constructed singularity of ‘The Heritage’ has multiplied. Stuart Hall terms this shift in heritage culture as a ‘deep slow-motion revolution’ which is still in progress, one which has taken place in the broader context of the dismantling of the Enlightenment ideal of ‘universal knowledge’ (Hall 2005: 28).

Such a slow yet monumental shift in the meaning of heritage has taken a variety of forms. For example, the expansion of the ‘heritage industry’ in Europe and America in the 1980s (see Hewinson 1995; Boswell and Evans 1999) involved a broadening-out of what counted in heritage in class terms, with heritage experience attractions, for instance, providing an arena in which domestic and ‘everyday’ heritage could be experienced. Such forms of ‘history from below’ were contentious as to the extent of their democratisation – being viewed by many as offering a thoroughly *marketised* populism (and in Britain, for example, as a form of Thatcherism in period dress) - but still undeniably marked another significant shift away from the idea of heritage as the exclusive province of the great and the good. However, whilst foregrounding their class dynamics, such populist forms of heritage – as with ‘the heritage debates’ in the humanities which analysed them - had relatively little to say about the racialised dynamics of the new heritage populism, and so were often marked by their continued

dependence on relatively uncritical pre-existing narratives of whiteness and empire (Littler and Naidoo, 2004).

However, from another perspective, the insights of postcolonial critique were being busily pursued across a number of institutional, academic and artistic heritage contexts with varying effects and degrees of success. In particular, the question of the Euro-American museum's claim to be able to speak on behalf of 'other' peoples has over the last few decades become roundly questioned and its legacies as a showcase for imperial bounty interrogated and problematised (Simpson 1996; see chapter 21). What became known as the 'new museology' sought to educate a new generation of curators into thinking through these issues as problems-in-process (Vergo 1989). More public-owned museum and gallery spaces turned their attention to featuring 'other' cultures. For instance, debates around high-profile exhibitions such as *Magiciens de la Terre* at the Pompidou Centre in Paris and the *Te Maori* exhibition at the New York Metropolitan Museum argued over to what extent the Eurocentric grand narratives were being shaken up or perpetuated (Hall 2005: 28). What Naseem Khan termed *The Arts Britain Ignores* in her groundbreaking 1976 report became slightly less ignored, as public spaces such as Walsall Museum and Art Gallery produced events oriented toward 'diversity' (such as exhibitions of Sikh art (Khan 1976; Cox and Singh 1997). However, such examples were not without precedent, as a range of grassroots initiatives had, for a very long time worked on collating archives which told stories about migration, art and cultural production. As Hall put it, 'Like the rainbow, this work comes and goes' (Hall 2005: 32), because, occluded from mainstream heritage institutions, and their work rarely funded, their ability to keep going was - and often remains - haphazard.

In addition, the increasing invocation of heritage as an issue for governmental and policy attention helped consolidate the area now regularly defined as 'the heritage sector', which has increasingly been urged to adopt pivotal new roles in terms of governmental and transnational strategies for social inclusion and to redress racialised inequalities. As Richard Sandell put it, heritage institutions such as museums from the 1980s were increasingly working 'to explore their contribution towards the combating of social as well as cultural inequality' (Sandell 2002: xvii). They were encouraged to do so in part through policy initiatives such as *Not for the Likes of You, People and Places* and *Building on PAT 10* (Littler 2005: 11; McGuigan 2004: 92-112).

Taken collectively, this surge in the variety of attempts and initiatives to address the problematic history of heritage and 'race', and to reconfigure its problematic relationship, has resulted in a range of approaches and discourses - the good, the bad and the downright ugly. One means of considering how heritage and 'race' have recently been configured across a range of realms is by sketching broad paradigms and problems that have been noticed, or commented on in this area, and sketching how they have (or might be) overcome. What follows, then, is an outline of a series of problematic 'tendencies' in how contemporary heritage (as a broadly conceived domain) negotiates with the legacies of the idea of 'race'. To point out such tendencies is not to suggest that these are consistently or neatly demarcated areas. Instead, following on from Patrick Wright's useful schema of heritage discourses or 'alignments' in 1980s Britain (Wright 1985;

Littler and Naidoo 2004), it is a means to discuss how different discourses are in circulation at the present time – whether these are fluctuating, overlapping, residual or emergent.

Problematic positions

i) *Uncritical imperialism*

There is a sizeable body of opinion which does not see any serious problem with the legacies of imperialism and race in heritage, and acts to validate it; a formation we might crudely label as ‘uncritical imperialism’. The uncritical imperialism can take various forms. For example, it can appear through simply ignoring, or airbrushing, imperialism from the heritage narrative in question. Cadbury World in Birmingham, for example, conveniently bypasses any mention of the systems of slavery upon which the chocolate company was founded (Ransom, 2001: 116). Uncritical imperialism can also take the form of being outraged at any attempt even to *raise* difficult issues over heritage and ‘race’.

For a particularly graphic recent example we have only to look at the moral media panic which was unleashed by the British press over the 2000 publication of The Parekh Report, initially commissioned by the new Labour Government on *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* (Runnymede Trust 2000). The Parekh Report’s mild conclusion that the idea of Britishness often has ‘unspoken racial connotations’ induced, as Bill Schwarz puts it in his cogent analysis of the event, a ‘staggering’ level of controversy (Schwarz 2005: 224). The totalising, panicked denunciations of the report (initially surfacing in the right-wing press, and swiftly followed by a slew of back-tracking statements by government ministers) were invariably accompanied by assertions that the commentator was - by contrast with the Parekh Report - ‘proud to be British’. As Schwarz argues, ‘[s]urely, a thoughtful, responsible pride must also co-exist with recognition of the moments of barbarism, with an understanding of the ills which have arisen from conduct perpetrated in the name of one’s country?’. This moral panic was an example of uncritical imperialism, a kind of fanatical moment in which imperialist legacies were overwhelmingly *denied, repeated, and acted out*, rather than worked-through (Schwarz 2005: 224-225).

ii) *White past, multicultural present*

Sometimes heritage can take the form of celebrating contemporary multiculturalism whilst simultaneously presenting it as a solely *recent* phenomena and suggesting (implicitly or otherwise) that the past was a time when nationality was a more simple affair (usually white). There is now a huge body of work discussing how nations’ histories are constituted through waves of immigration and diaspora: histories which were effectively whitewashed and streamlined by the rise of nationalism and its cultural solidification through what Hobsbawm and Ranger influentially termed ‘the invention of tradition’ (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). In Britain, heritage as a space constituted by

flows of, for example, Angles, Saxons, Normans, Huguenots, Indians, Africans, West Indians has been well documented by historians (see, for example, Fryer 1984; Visram, 1986; Phillips and Brocklehurst 2004). Yet, despite this work, multicultural society can still sometimes be figured as a 'new' development, rather than as a phenomenon which has always been with us, as a phenomenon which is formatively constitutive of our past as well as present.

Such limited imaginings of the past are in themselves the legacy of the rise of nationalism, or the process through which the imagined community of the nation was divested of its complexities in order to provide a securely bonded form of ethnic belonging (Anderson 1994). Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, contemporary forms of heritage which imagine the past as white and the present as multicultural often circulate around the re-branding or image management of the nation. For instance, in the 1990s, both the infamous report published by left-liberal think tank DEMOS, *Britain TM*, and *Creative Britain* (the book written by the Labour Minister for Culture, Chris Smith), emphasised contemporary Britain as an excitingly mixed multicultural place to be, foregrounding the achievement of young black musicians and artists in particular (Leonard 1997; Smith 1998). The key point here is that the emphasis on contemporary multiculturalism as hip, happening and ultramodern was not necessarily carried through to any significant extent to the imaginings of the past. Such signs of cultural amnesia were compounded through other aspects of New Labour discourse such as the Cattle Report and Home Secretary David Blunkett's introduction of a 'citizenship test', both of which stipulated that new immigrants learn 'British values' which became predominantly framed as a white British heritage in relation to which certain groups of people were positioned 'outside' (Younge 2002).

This example shows how it is possible for cultural landscapes to be configured as excitingly diverse whilst the image of their past remains more hermetic in its imaginings and its racialised legacies ignored. The problem with this discourse is that it means that those implicitly positioned as 'new' and 'other' have to continually justify their presence, becoming alienated from more long-standing or deeply historically rooted sense of belonging. It also impoverishes our collective understanding of the past, of the rich and complex mix of the multiple travels and flows of people that have worked in a multitude of ways to shape us all. The opposite of this discourse, then, can be seen in heritage practices which demonstrate how heritage spaces are always-already constituted by flows of migration and diaspora, such as the 'Peopling of London' project at the Museum of London (Merriman 1997).

iii) *Multicultural tokenism*

The 'white past, multicultural present' approach to heritage and 'race' might itself be thought of as a variant on another problematic position: multicultural tokenism. This is where heritage practices attempt to engage with the legacies of 'race', but end up doing so in a gestural fashion rather than *integrating* them with any thoroughness or longevity. Naseem Khan, for example, gives a vivid example of how Glyndebourne Opera House once fulfilled the 4 per cent 'ethnic minority' quota demanded of it by the Arts Council

by staging a one-off production of *Porgy and Bess* with an all black cast, a classic case of paying lipservice to diversity without it being mainstreamed through the organisation. As Khan remarks dryly, '[n]o-one who has been to Glyndebourne recently would be able to see the continuing effects of that brush with diversity' (Khan 2005: 137).

Multicultural tokenism, or the making of inclusive, but superficial (often unintentionally exoticising) gestures towards diversity has for a long time been a staple critique within academia, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, and is sometimes termed the 'saris, samosas and steel band syndrome' (Donald and Rattansi 1992: 2). Such gestures towards 'multiculturalism' are problematic because they imply a heritage centre which are of course unchanged and ethnically 'neutral' and so work by reinforcing positions of 'otherness' which are perpetually 'outside' the centre. As Roshi Naidoo puts it, critiquing solely cursory gestures towards multiculturalism such as producing language-sensitive leaflets to attract 'other' audiences, 'it would be more radical to imagine us all as 'multicultural' rather than bringing 'others' into the public sphere as an act of benevolence' (Naidoo 2005: 45).

However, in some realms the problem of multicultural tokenism is now being more widely recognised. In 2007, for instance, the 3 S's – 'steel band, samosas and sari syndrome' – was referred to by the Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, as a '1970s style multiculturalism' which the fight against racism needed to move beyond. Sentamu was arguing that 'there was a need to develop programmes that value ethnic diversity beyond merely identifying cultural differences' (Daily Mail 2007). Multicultural tokenism is therefore an increasingly widely recognised phenomenon, but it simultaneously remains the subject of discussion because, in a variety of different ways, shapes and areas, it very clearly *exists*.

Moreover, whilst multicultural tokenism may be easy to critique, the kinds of 'institutional racisms' which work to produce such tokenism often need to be grappled with or tackled on a variety of different levels. In other words, multicultural tokenism exists not merely in terms of representation but also in terms of institutional process and practice, which are issues with less of a history of being aired and discussed in mainstream discourse. Work that does tackle these issues of process, by bringing together an analysis of the nitty-gritty complexities of practice and sophisticated theorisation, such as the writing of the curator and academics Nima Poovaya Smith and Carol Tulloch, therefore tends to stand out much more boldly (Poovaya Smith 1997; Tulloch 2005).

iv) The liberal myth of seamless progress

Given this talk of progress, however, it is important that we do not fall headlong into another problematic trap, and that is the liberal myth of heritage as the slow, gradual, but yet more or less seamless and inevitable progress into an enlightened multicultural future. This idea, perversely (and appropriately) enough can be traced back to the same moment in which racialisation itself was solidified and consolidated as a project: the Enlightenment. For a crucial and formative aspect of the Enlightenment was the idea that we were progressing, slowly but surely, into a better world (McLennan 1992). Such

narratives can still be seen to structure many aspects of popular discourse today, including discourses of heritage and 'race'. Whilst they are tempting in their overwhelming optimism (and whilst it is important not to underplay the extent to which a healthy dose of optimism is crucial in sustaining any activity) we need to be aware (just as with Enlightenment narratives) of what is being elided or ignored in such narratives of pure progress. This is because history invariably teaches us that progressive cultural change is usually not a seamless saunter into the sunset. To say this is not to say, however, that nothing changes, or that heritage is invariably cyclical. Rather, it is to point out that progress is a multifaceted business, is *not* inevitable, is *not* guaranteed, and is shaped by a variety of contexts. The liberal narratives of seamless progress obscure this complexity and with it the understanding needed to create more far-reaching change.

The liberal myth of gradual yet seamless progress becomes problematised when we investigate the more precise patterns and journeys such forms of 'progress' has actually made in practice. For example, Viv Szekeres has discussed how the moves in 1980s Australian heritage institutions to create accounts of the country's past which integrated rather than airbrushed out Aboriginal history suffered a series of setbacks in the late 1990s when the political climate shifted towards the right. The advent of the conservative government and the rise of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party (which campaigned on a xenophobic platform against immigration) meant that 'multicultural' policies suddenly became denounced as 'politically correct'. As Szekeres writes, the work of curators for simply including details of 'wrongs' (i.e. the massacres and appropriation of land) done to Aborigines by white Europeans therefore became increasingly vilified. Curators were accused

[...] of peddling a 'black armband history'. This phrase has become that which is used to refer to any analysis of colonisation that is not celebratory and is a concept that is having a huge and detrimental impact on the process of Aboriginal Reconciliation. (Szekeres 2002: 151)

Similarly, in 2002, in response to the British government's shift in race relations policy, specifically the Home Secretary David Blunkett's 'racialisation' of citizenship, Gary Younge argued that

We are returning to the crude and flawed mythology of a mono-racial, culturally uniform British identity in which non-white people's presence is tolerated - and even then only conditionally. [...] Three years ago racism was regarded as the problem. Now, once again, the very existence of Britain's ethnic minorities is becoming the problem. (Younge 2002)

In other words, Britain was stepping *back*, rather than *forward*, in terms of progress.

The implication of such examples is that the idea that we are just moving forward to a happier multicultural place is an Enlightenment-derived liberal myth which patronises the past and does not do analytical justice to the present. There were clearly some spaces and places in mid-twentieth century London, for example, such as dance halls (see Nava and

O'Shea 1995) which were more integrated and cosmopolitan than those existing in the 2000s (such as the BNP-friendly enclave of Barking). We might say, then, that some aspects of the relationship between heritage and 'race', are moving forward; some back; and some are in flux. But even to say that on its own is fairly banal. To be able to say anything really very interesting or significant about the relationship between heritage and 'race' is therefore usually going to involve both an ability to theorise longer-term historical strands (or discursive genealogies) and specific cultural, political and social contexts (or the contemporary conjuncture) at one and the same time.

v) *Corporate multiculturalism and heritage*

The use of discursive genealogies and a contextual comprehension of the present is therefore useful in arriving at a better understanding of histories of the relationship between heritage and 'race' than liberal narratives of seamless progress can provide. Such tools are also useful for understanding another problematic strand of the relationship between heritage and 'race', and this is corporate multiculturalism, or the phenomena where multicultural diversity is brought together through one particular commonality: the selling of commodities for private profit.

Corporate multiculturalism simultaneously acts as a means to popularise, or disseminate, ideas about multiculturalism whilst perpetuating structural inequalities; inequalities which are differently configured from and yet intimately connected to the racialised inequalities of the past. As Frantz Fanon outlined and predicted, there are numerous correspondences between earlier ages of colonialism and what Hardt and Negri today term the contemporary 'empire' of transnational capital, with its globally dispersed pockets of poverty (or 'fourth worlds') (Fanon 1965; Castells 1998; Hardt and Negri 2000). As Barnor Hesse has eloquently written, 'refusing to efface through forgetfulness' the implications of colonialism and slavery necessarily involves remembering its legacies; remembering

How the slavery plantation complex's formative relations of exploitation, exoticism, racism, and violence produced the consumerist contours of Western culture, principally through customizing the transitional cultural production and consumption of mundane staples of the Western lifestyle, such as coffee, sugar, cotton and tobacco (Hesse 2002: 160)

The racialised imperialism of the past and the neo-imperialism of the present, in other words, are connected, and not bothering to trace the connections between them means that we end up with an impoverished understanding of both. Slavery's legacies, therefore, can not only be seen in forms of contemporary slavery, such as the trafficking in women, but also in the forms of economic dis/advantage particular groups of people continue to have in global terms.

Corporate multiculturalism is a discourse which can therefore be seen to be exhibited in corporate behaviour (such as Cadbury World's elision of its slave heritage) governmental

actions (new Labour's evocation of creative British multiculturalism as a resource to generate economic profit) or popular sentiment (arguing for the 'free' global flows of goods and against the 'free' flows of people). If corporate multicultural heritage acts to erase connections between past and present economic racialisations, other areas of heritage work to foreground them, providing a more analytical and critical approach. The New York Lower East Side Tenement Museum, for example, runs a 'Sweatshop Project', which enables visitors to 'use the history of this subject as a basis for considering the present situation' and to ask what has and what has not changed. The museum works with the garment workers' union UNITE! to create a dialogue between a wide range of groups including general visitors, factory workers, managers and buyers (Abram 2002: 138).

vi) *The 'plaster effect' of cultural diversity*

Whilst corporate multicultural heritage acts to erase the connections between racialised inequalities in the past and in the present, another area swings to a different extreme. The phenomenon that we might term what we might term 'the plaster effect' of cultural diversity uses heritage to paper over the cracks of social inequality. Heritage initiatives, in other words, are in this formation expected to do 'too much work' *on their own* to right the world's wrongs.

For instance, cultural policy in Britain has increasingly been given the hard and lonely task of combating cultural and social exclusion at the same time as the Blairite government has pursued an agenda carved out by Thatcherism by eroding the public sector and giving corporate businesses a far greater role in running schools, hospitals and public services, all political moves which directly contradict the impulses gestured towards in cultural policy (see Monbiot 2000; Whitfield 2001). Jim McGuigan has astutely described this as a cultural policy landscape generating lots of feel-good sentiment that is strangely devoid of specificity, in which the solutions to the problems are not clear, in which 'buzzwords without referents' abound (McGuigan 2004: 101; see also Naidoo 2005). What is at stake here, then, is not that heritage is being 'given a job to do' in redressing racialisation's wrongs, but rather that its work is not linked up to the wider social context with any specificity or thoroughness. It is given a task beyond its bounds, which also serves to marginalise other areas which need addressing. This can happen through technocratic tinkering (in which policy objectives are thought as being capable of solving a whole raft of problems, without any critique of the broader context; see Osborne 2005; Grossberg and Miller 2003) or through policy making such large and amorphous gestures about changing the world without enough specificity and in the process simply becoming vapid.

Richard Kurin has suggested such issues are at risk of occurring in the UNESCO designated category 'intangible cultural heritage'. This category, whilst manifesting the expanded social understanding of culture brought about by the 'cultural turn' (Hall 1997b) is also in many ways is a rebranding of 'folklore', and so carries with it a raft of problematic issues around ethnicity even whilst it attempts to address them (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 2004; Hafstein 2004) The specific way that intangible cultural heritage is expected to do 'too much work' is through the way it is defined; for, as Kurin

puts it:

[...]to be recognised, intangible cultural heritage has to be consistent with human rights, exhibit the need for mutual respect between communities, and be sustainable. This is a very high and one might say unrealistic and imposing standard. [The UNESCO conventions]... see culture as generally hopeful and positive, born not of historical struggle and conflict but of a varied flowering of diverse cultural ways. (Kurin 2004: 70)

As Kurin puts it, the implicit model of culture in use is one that bypasses issues of *struggle* in favour of asserting 'good' examples of heritage. This upbeat, conflict-free model of intangible cultural heritage therefore also overlaps to some extent with the discourses of multicultural tokenism and the liberal myth of seamless progress. The criteria Kurin identifies has parallels to earlier debates around 'multiculturalism', and in particular the use of 'positive role models' for black communities which were roundly critiqued for failing to recognise, account for and therefore tackle the reasons why such role models were needed in the first place (Naidoo 2005).

Heritage as 'plaster effect', then, is either heritage as technocratic tinkering or vacuously broad gesture. It indicates the impoverished ways through which heritage is attempted to be used to solve social problems: through, at one end of the spectrum, the instrumentalist failure to link heritage strategies to the 'bigger picture'; and, at the other, the attempt to overload heritage with the task of solving a wide range of problems that are not delineated with any specificity. The alternative is policy with a critical understanding of broader social and cultural contexts, and with specifically achievable suggestions and objectives.

Futures of the racialised past

Much of this chapter has emphasised what's wrong with heritage's relationship to 'race'. However, as Szerkes' anecdote about denunciations in Australia of 'black armband history' makes only too clear, glibly glossing over the problems is a means of not recognising and dealing with them, working as both a wish that racism didn't happen and a disavowal of its consequences. There is obviously a crucial need for heritage to represent, and to keep interrogating, the complexities of injustice and gross exploitation, and to keep interrogating the ways in which it does so, whilst simultaneously drawing optimism from imaginative examples of change. What we might call 'progressive practice' usually involves imaginatively addressing and surpassing such problems through producing interrogative, hybrid forms of heritage that are open to discussing the flows of power which constitute them.

Future directions for research and practice in this area will need to expand existing debates more widely. It has become increasingly clear, for example, that current dominant paradigms of post-colonial studies are too limited, having in particular marginalised Latin America and southeast Asia in their frames of analysis (Osborne and

Sanford 2002: 7-8). One key challenge is therefore to throw open this debate out to engage with the complexities of wider areas of the world: to open out the discussion to reflect on their particular genealogies of 'heritage' and 'race', and to interrogate how they intersect. A related route therefore involves dealing with the heritage that more recent patterns of racialisation and ethnicity are currently thrown into relief. Because, as new patterns of migration, ethnic nationalisms, asylum and 'long-distance nationalisms' come into being, patterns of racialisation and ethnic stabilisation become reconfigured; and so the need for heritage to engage with the background of these new, and yet old, stories, emerges.

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