

PART I

History



# Introduction to Part I

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The complex social histories of racial and ethnic formations is a recurrent theme in this volume. This is partly because it seems impossible to discuss the present state of race and ethnicity without contextualizing current trends against the background of historically specific economic, social, and political processes. In Part I of the *Companion*, accordingly, we have chosen to bring together papers focused in one way or another on the complex range of processes shaping our understanding of the role of race and racism in contemporary social formations. This is partly because we feel it is important to question the tendency in much contemporary theorizing either to ignore the historical background or to oversimplify complex historical trends and processes.

It is with this concern in mind that we begin the *Companion* with six papers that reflect on the history of key ideas and processes that helped to shape the role of race and ethnicity in specific historical environments. The first two papers focus on the relationship between “Europe and its Others.” Jan Nederveen Pieterse’s exploration of this theme provides insight into the ways in which the “idea of Europe” is predicated constitutively on processes that have created the “other,” those who fail to belong, both within and outside Europe. Focusing on the ways in which markers of “difference” became a mechanism for the development of images of religious, cultural, and racial difference, Pieterse’s account serves to remind us of the complex role of internal and external “boundaries” in shaping modern-day ideas about European cultures and societies. Pieterse’s analysis is complemented by Peter Fitzpatrick’s insightful exploration of the meanings that have been attached over time to the “doctrine of discovery.” Taking his starting point as the encounter between Europe and other lands that followed Columbus’s “discovery” of the Americas, Fitzpatrick helps to situate the ways in which versions of this doctrine served to establish racial, ethnic, and religious boundaries. By highlighting the long-term impact of ideas of discovery on racial and racist doctrines, Fitzpatrick links contemporary processes to the underlying historical patterns of European expansion and domination.

Charles Briggs connects these histories of racial thinking and racist practice to their most extreme manifestations in genocidal expression. Thus Briggs shows how the extreme manifestations of ethn racially expressed genocides are deeply entangled in daily practices and “ordinary,” socially acceptable racist expression. In this, Briggs’s deeply insightful account should be read alongside not only the following articles by Zygmunt Bauman on the Holocaust and Tony Kushner on antisemitism, but also

Philomena Essed's analysis of "everyday racism" in Part II and David Theo Goldberg's reading of racial states in Part III. For, as Briggs shows, genocides are implications in a deep sense, of the exclusions reproduced through everyday exclusionary practice undergirded by the institutional apparatuses of deeply structured racial states.

If the first three papers focus on a rather wide-ranging historical overview, the following two are more tightly organized around the racial framing of a particular group, namely Jews. Zygmunt Bauman's characterizes the Holocaust as the ultimate expression of the genocidal tendency in racial and ethnic hatred. Bauman's analysis of the Holocaust has been an important point of reference in discussions concerning the Holocaust over the past decade or so, reflecting a wider literature that has grown up in sociology and other disciplines. Bauman's account begins from a seemingly simple question: How modern is the Holocaust? The parameters of Bauman's response to this question are framed around his concern to show that the Holocaust is very much the product of quintessentially modern social and political conditions, forces, and relations.

The complex history of antisemitism has been the subject of much scholarly debate, although within the mainstream of racial and ethnic studies there is surprisingly little discussion of the historical processes by which antisemitism becomes a form of racism. Tony Kushner provides a wide-ranging overview of the origins and usages of the notion of antisemitism. Kushner's analysis can be seen as a critical reassessment of the limits and contradictions in some popular understandings of antisemitism, particularly those focused on the Holocaust. He suggests that there is a need for clearer analytical thinking about the relationship between antisemitism and racism, ethnic hatreds, and persecution as a whole. A recurrent theme throughout Kushner's analysis relates to the limitations of recent trends to the Holocaust's supposed exceptionalism, to see it as a unique and incomparable phenomenon. In contrast, he suggests, there is a need to contextualize antisemitism within a wider conceptual and historical framework of analysis.

The final paper in Part I, by Deborah Posel, looks at another important expression of racism in the twentieth century, namely, the apartheid regime in South Africa. In the second half of that century apartheid became an almost universal reference point for discussions about racism. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the extreme and largely visible nature of the political, social, and economic structures of the apartheid regime and the centrality of race in shaping its development. Posel's account provides both a detailed critical analysis of various explanations of the emergence and development of apartheid and an account of the processes that shaped its emergence and eventual decline. Her account is suggestive also of the need to rethink the way in which understandings of apartheid and their explanatory limitations have developed.

## Chapter 1

# Europe and its Others

Jan Nederveen Pieterse

From time immemorial, peoples have considered themselves as “the people” and all the rest as “others.” Familiar examples are the Greeks and the *barbaroi*, the Jews and the *goyim*, the Japanese and the *gajjin*, and China as the Middle Kingdom. Throughout, designating others and emphasizing their “otherness” have been fundamental to the construction of boundaries of identity and community, between and within societies. Over time, otherness has had many different meanings, as many as identity. It has referred to cultural differences along the lines of language, religion, civilization, “race,” ethnicity, region, nationality, gender, age, and to class, development, ideology, and so forth.

“Europe and its others” is a sprawling theme that involves a variety of historically changing boundaries that share an element of “difference.” “Europe” can be taken in two ways: within Europe, that is, within what is now considered Europe, and in relation to Europe, that is, problematizing the identity of Europe. Both are considered here. While “Europe” is an old concept it did not gain currency until the seventeenth century and, by and large, only became an active boundary as such in the course of the nineteenth century and particularly from the beginning of the twentieth century. This treatment opens with a discussion of the different meanings of otherness in relation to Europe over time, including the role of Islam, and concludes with a brief theoretical reflection on otherness.

### Europe

“Otherness” has many faces. Table 1.1 is a schema of the different ways “Europe and its others” has been viewed over time and what kind of notions of difference and otherness it has given rise to. Several of these markers of difference have been around in one form or other for quite a long time. Obviously over time they have changed meaning and gone through several stages. Also they overlap and interact in several ways. In this schema differences outside Europe are juxtaposed to differences within Europe, considering that differences between Europe and others outside have not necessarily been more important than differences within Europe.

In medieval Europe, Christianity was the major marker of difference, internally and externally. The distinction between Christians and heathens and nonbelievers served as

**Table 1.1** Europe and its others over time

Time	Boundaries	External differences	Internal differences
CE–present	Religion	Pagans, nonbelievers. Christianity vs. Islam and other religions	Heathens. Heretics, witchcraft. Roman vs. Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism, etc.
1790–1950	Race	Race, language	Class, status. Nation, national character. Ranking among and within European countries
1800–1970	Imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism	Civilization and savagery, evolution. Colonizer and colonized. Orientalism. Eurocentrism	“Backward areas” within Europe (e.g., Celtic fringe, “urban jungle”)
1950–present	Development, North and South	Developed/advanced and underdeveloped/less developed or developing countries	Uneven development within Europe and within countries (underdeveloped and deindustrializing regions)
1900–present	Europe	European civilization, identity, boundaries, Europeanness	Europe of multiple speeds. Tension between deepening and widening of European Union
1960–present	Cultural difference	Cultural difference	Multiculturalism; cultural difference in lifestyle, sexual preference, age
1980–present	Citizenship, legal status	“Fortress Europe.” Illegal immigrants, asylum seekers	Citizens, denizens

the main boundary between self and others. One of the root meanings of “pagan” is peasant (*paysan* in French). This suggests that Christianity was the umbrella for a wider set of meanings and that the original difference between Christians and heathens ran *within* Europe. The distinction between Christians and Muslims and other faiths came later. Campaigns of conversion within Europe – first aimed at the countryside and then at Ireland, the Frisians, Saxons, Slavs, and so forth – set the framework for the campaigns that were directed outward, such as the *Reconquista* of the Iberian Peninsula and the Crusades overseas. While the Crusades were directed against Islam, there were also Crusades within Europe. Internal Crusades were directed against dissident faiths – such as the Cathars and the Bogomils – and later against “heretics” and witches (Cohn, 1975). The onset of the Crusades overseas also coincided with the persecution of Jews within Europe. Within Christendom there were also different centers of power: Greek Christianity was centered in Constantinople and Latin Christianity in Rome. Later a rift developed between Roman Catholicism and the Holy Roman Empire in Germany: the medieval power struggle between the Pope and the Emperor, which involved Cologne as a rival center of faith and power. The subsequent divide between Catholicism and

Protestantism (and further differences within Protestantism – Calvinism, Lutheranism, Anabaptism, etc.) built on the old lines of demarcation that ran between the Roman Empire and the “savage tribes” outside the empire. In the North, the dividing line was the Rhine. During the Renaissance, the distinction between “Ancients” and “Moderns” overlaid these differences.

This shows that “Europe’s others” were located primarily within Europe. The contemporary perspective of “others” as being located outside Europe, also retroactively, is a recent development of the last two hundred years, if only because the consciousness of Europeanness is recent. Second, otherness outside Europe was not necessarily as important as otherness within Europe, and was generally conceived along lines first developed in relation to Europe’s internal others. Third, “otherness” refers to a complex layer or web of differences that ramifies multidimensionally in many directions. If it is coded in cultural terms (in terms of religion, language, or ethnicity) it also signifies geographical, historical, political, class and status, urban and rural differences, all mingling within a fluid mosaic. Fourth, therefore it is not possible to produce a clear cognitive map of “others” because there is no stable or fixed notion of “self” that could inform this. There is no fixed point or “view from nowhere” from which this can be conceptualized. The longer the period and the wider the geographical space taken into account the more difficult this becomes. Collective identities are stable enough to generate clear boundaries of difference only over brief periods. The mosaic of difference seems stable enough only in, say, 50-year segments. Some differences may seem to be of longer duration, but if we examine them closely it turns out that over time their meaning or function changes radically, so that continuity is a superficial impression only. Let us develop some of these considerations further.

“Europe’s others” were located primarily within Europe. Medieval Christianity was part of the foundation of the feudal estates of nobles, clerics, and peasants, each occupying their God-given place, like the caste system in India founded in Hinduism. Differences between Christians and heathens overlaid earlier lines of distinction that ran between the Roman Empire and its peripheries: the *Pax Romana* and the world outside. Regional differences in language, food, costume, and customs were significant. In the hierarchy of estates, “others” were primarily those who did not fit in – Jews, Gypsies, travelers, regional minorities such as the Marranos in southern Spain, heathens and nonbelievers. The real Other in the Christian world was the Devil – represented by the “Bogey,” the “Bugaboo,” the “Black Man.” Thus, the main difference was a metaphysical difference with moral ramifications, and other differences were mirrored in this central difference – identity and otherness were essentially measured in relation to God and the Devil. Gradually the emergence of burghers, merchants, and towns with rights began to undermine the feudal hierarchy and so did the development of monarchy and absolutist states.

Otherness outside Europe was not necessarily as important as otherness within Europe. Tales of strange beings outside Europe – such as Herodotus’ tales of monstrous beings overseas – were matched by tales of others within Europe, such as the “Wild Man” and the “Green Man.” These figures were real enough considering that Europe until the eleventh century mostly consisted of forest and uncleared land, so much of Europe was unknown and mysterious. Pagan practices continued locally long after the imposition of Christianity. Crusader stories, Marco Polo’s tales of far-off civilizations, Montaigne’s observations on American Indians served as a backdrop of exotic differences in addition to those that were lived close by. The invasions of the Huns and Mongols into

Europe and the siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Turks were experienced as major threats, but if we compare the casualties of these conflicts with those of the Thirty Years War in Germany, they pale into insignificance. Even in later times of imperialism and colonialism, for all the talk of others – racism, Orientalism, the White Man’s Burden, and so forth – the main conflicts took place within Europe. The major wars – the Napoleonic wars, the Franco-German war, the two world wars – were largely European wars. Imperialism itself, at any rate the “new imperialism” of the late nineteenth century, can be understood as the extension of the European balance of power on the world map. Overseas conquests were a way of settling accounts or keeping other European powers from gaining control – the Dutch against the Spanish and the Portuguese, the French against the English, the English against Russia, and so forth. If we compare the numbers of casualties in the two world wars with those of the wars of colonialism and imperialism, then where were Europe’s others?

Otherness outside Europe was generally conceived along lines first developed in relation to or patterned by Europe’s internal others. Thus, “savages” were discussed with quite different emphases by Montaigne (the noble savage), Thomas Hobbes (in the state of nature life is brutish and short), Locke (all men are endowed with reason), Daniel Defoe (cannibals), Rousseau (the good savage) or the Romantic poets (paradise lost). In each instance these views were articulated with dramatically different domestic preoccupations and led to profoundly different conclusions (discussed in Nederveen Pieterse 1992:30–9).

The direct contact between Europe and Asia and the Americas set the stage for much of the vocabulary of difference that occupied the next centuries. In relation to Asia, the theme of civilization came to the foreground: here were “ancient civilizations” that, so it appeared to nineteenth-century Europeans, had stagnated or declined to the level of barbarism. The way this was understood was modeled on the rise and decline of classical civilizations – Greece, Rome and, further in the distance, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Gibbon’s account of the rise and decline of the Roman empire followed Tacitus, who had attributed the decline of the Romans to their mixing with different peoples and customs, whereas the Teutonic tribes had remained “pure.” This view later contributed to “race” thinking. If European civilization was not to succumb to decadence and decay, and undergo the same fate as the classical and Asian civilizations, Europeans had to be on guard against mixing with different races and lower elements, for in any combination, the lower element would predominate. This applied primarily to aristocracies in Europe who had to keep their distance from the peasantry and lower classes. Thus in many ways, “race” thinking started out as status anxiety on the part of aristocracies and upper classes in Europe, who at the time felt threatened and insecure because of the revolutionary changes at the turn of the eighteenth century.

In relation to the Americas, different tropes emerged. Cannibalism (a theme in Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and stories about Captain Cook in the Pacific) was the flipside of the romantic paradise-lost image of life among the savages. During colonialism the accusation of cannibalism often served as a justification of conquest. Recently it has been argued that cannibalism is basically a myth: while ritual cannibalism (eating a small part of an enemy’s body for magical purposes) does occur, gustatory cannibalism (eating humans as food) has nowhere been observed (Arens, 1979; Barker, Hulme, and Iversen, 1998).

With the Enlightenment and its concern with scientific classification came attempts to classify humans based on “race” and language. In the wake of the French Revolution,



*nationhood* became a defining element of identity. Through the nineteenth century, the notions of “race,” language, and nationality mingled: nations were thought of as races (as in “Irish race” or “German race”) and races were viewed as language groups. All along, otherness has been an ambivalent notion, a combination of attraction (paradise lost, the appeal of the exotic) and repulsion. Romantic preoccupation with the past and the unknown was yet another face of the Enlightenment. The pathos of the wild, the remote, and the unknown may be interpreted as a secular version of pantheism or of the “hidden God” (*deus absconditus*). “Others” were embodiments of ideals (the noble or good savage), objects of desire, windows of mystery, or embodiments of fear (monsters, cannibals) and targets of hatred – scapegoats, as in antisemitism and the pogroms. “Nothing but otherness killed the Jews.” Genocides of indigenous peoples – native Americans, Tasmanians, Armenians – and dehumanizing treatment of slaves and “natives” – are part of the history of otherness. In nineteenth-century Orientalism and exoticism, all these attitudes are reflected, within a general setting of Western expansion, imperialism, and colonialism.

For centuries, Europe’s main other has been the world of Islam. Defining episodes in European history – Muslim domination of the Mediterranean during the early Middle Ages, the conquest of Spain, the Crusades, the fall of Constantinople, the siege of Vienna – refer to Islam. No threat has compared to the threat of Islam and no civilization has been as close by either. Nowadays political Islam is often presented as the major outside challenge to Western hegemony. The world of Islam, unlike other challenges, encompasses a worldview, a way of life, a historical formation as well as a geographical space, stretching from Morocco to Southeast Asia. Its scope includes Islamic politics and law (*sharia*), Islamic geopolitics, Islamic economics and social policy, Islamic science, and Islamic identity and culture. To a varying extent these owe their present salience to government-sponsored initiatives, which are made possible by rentier oil economies. Although perceptions and realities are difficult to disentangle, Islamism is a significant movement, which is at times presented as the most significant challenge to the hegemony of the West as Euro-America. The challenge of political Islam stems from civilizational legacies, anticolonialism, anger and frustration about Western double standards, and cultural disaffection. Ever since the *Nahda* (the nineteenth-century awakening or Renaissance in the Arab world), Islam has been repeatedly held up as an alternative to Western hegemony, at times under the heading of Arab unity. Benjamin Barber captured this under the heading of *Jihad vs. McWorld* (1996). It forms part of Samuel Huntington’s (1996) *Clash of Civilizations*.

But from here on the story unravels. The real world of Islam is internally fractured; the *umma* is a delta of many streams – Sunni and Shiite, clerical Islam, Sufism and folk Islam. The different forms of Islam in the Arab world, Iran and Turkey, South and Southeast Asia, Africa and Europe, are each historically and culturally articulated. “Like other religions, Islam is not a generic essence, but a nominal entity that conjoins, by means of a name, a variety of societies, cultures, histories and politics” (Al-Azmeh, 1993:60). In addition, the distinctive character of Islamic institutions may be more a claim than a reality: what is “Islamic” in Islamic science may be a matter of packaging rather than content. Just as Europe ignored or downplayed its dependence on Islamic and Arabic influences in earlier times, the current dependency of Islamic modernization on Western technologies and examples tends to be downplayed in the Islamic world. Without a common opposition to the West, there might not be any *umma* politics, and

what is there is largely political fiction. Part of political Islam is a critique of capitalism, which it shares with Roman Catholicism. Both Islam and Catholicism reflect the ethos of an older, medieval political economy, in which “community” values prevail over merely commercial and economic interests.

Development is another boundary of difference. This derives from earlier ideas of progress, viewed as a single-track path with less and more advanced peoples and civilizations. The eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment set forth a schema of evolutionary stages, from primitivism, savagery, and barbarism to civilization. These were combined with modes of production: hunters and gatherers, agriculture and crafts, and industrial society. The development gap only arose when the difference in technological capacity between Europe and non-Western countries became significant – from the turn of the eighteenth century onward, with the onset of industrialization. Prior to that time, Europeans had looked up to other civilizations and been inspired by their example (see Nederveen Pieterse, 1994). European chauvinism only dates from that period.

The difference between less developed, underdeveloped, or backward societies and developed or advanced societies further corresponded with notions of “tradition” and “modernity,” the “Third World,” and later the difference between North and South. The imagery of backwardness or underdevelopment also applied to peripheral regions or slum areas within Europe. Initially development was looked at solely through Western eyes and modernization was held to be the same as Westernization. This biased view was subsequently identified as Eurocentrism, in which Europe stands for Euro-America (Amin, 1989; Nederveen Pieterse and Parekh, 1995).

In the course of time, Europe itself also began to function as a boundary of difference, first in the context of the turn-of-the-century “Pan” movements (Pan-Arabism, Pan-Turkism, Pan-Europe, etc.), and later after World War II, in the context of the making of the European market. Which is more “European,” Northwest Europe or “Central Europe”? Are Turkey and Russia part of Europe? Is Europe part of Eurasia? The current tension between the deepening (further integration) or the widening (including East European countries and Turkey) of the European Union involves not only economic and security issues but also questions of identity and what constitutes “European-ness.”

In the European context, cultural difference is the latest boundary of difference. In the course of the 1960s, racism gradually changed to the “new racism” that focuses on cultural difference instead of phenotypical differences. In the context of globalization with increasing communication, migration, and travel, and as societies became increasingly mixed, the older ideas of race and civilization became increasingly quaint. Within societies, there are many streams and flows of difference, such as differences in lifestyle, sexual preference, age, and class. Arguably two major differences remain. One is the gap between less and more developed countries. The other significant boundary of difference is the question of citizenship or legal status. Whether immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers obtain citizenship rights or whether they are clandestine and deprived from legal rights and social entitlements, is a major dividing line. This relates to the image of “Fortress Europe” and the realities of the Schengen and Dublin Accords. Through all these changes, ideas of others and what constitutes otherness have changed.

## Otherness

“Otherness” has been discussed under many headings, such as prejudice, ethnocentrism, and racism. The terminology of otherness derives from phenomenology and structuralist anthropology. The theme originates in philosophical queries about the nature of identity. Wherein lies the identity of a thing? Is the difference between same and other a matter of essence or existence? With Hegel, identity and difference refers to the antinomy of being and nothingness, which in turn refers to spirit and matter unfolding in history. What Hegel calls the life and death struggle with the other, for instance between master and slave, is a relationship that changes dialectically over time. Schopenhauer speaks of will and representation, Heidegger of being and time, Sartre of being and nothingness. Different queries yield various notions of otherness, such as the unthought, the implicit (Husserl), the virtual or unfulfilled possibilities (Herbert Marcuse). Psychoanalysis and the idea of the unconscious as ego’s other led to the theme of oneself as an other, which had also figured in Dostoevsky’s story of “The Double” and came back in Jung’s notion of the “shadow.” In his book *I and Thou*, Martin Buber addresses the other as a potential partner in dialogue. In a similar way, in the work of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, “alterity” becomes a relational concept.

After World War II, at the time of decolonization when imperial identities were decentered, “the question of the Other” became a critical and prominent theme. In structuralist anthropology, cultures were understood as a system of systems, a structural ensemble on the model of language. This approach uses binary schemas, such as naked and clothed, raw and cooked, and self and other. Claude Lévi-Strauss, the foremost representative of this approach, influenced Albert Memmi, Tzvetan Todorov (1984), Jean-Paul Sartre and others. A different approach came with Michel Foucault’s work on knowledge and discourse as the foundation of relations of power and domination (e.g., 1965). Foucault concentrated on those classified as deviant, criminal, heretic, insane, or diseased in French society, who were subjected to regimes of “normalization” in medical and penal discourses and in prisons, hospitals, or asylums. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978) applied Foucault’s method of discourse analysis to the texts produced by European orientalists about the “Orient,” the colonized world. In this view, the way others are represented in talk or discourse reflects prevailing regimes of knowledge and their truth claims, and in the process representation itself becomes a form of power. Foucault’s post-structuralism broke with the idea of cultures as systemic structures and shifted attention to structures of knowledge within and across cultures instead. Jacques Derrida (1978) rephrases the question of otherness in terms of identity and difference, thereby returning it to the wider terrain of philosophical questioning where it had originated. In Derrida’s method of the deconstruction of texts, the disassembly of structures continues infinitesimally.

These influences – idealist philosophy, phenomenology, structuralism, hermeneutics, post-structuralism, deconstruction – are part of the broad stream of cultural and post-colonial studies that now examines how others are represented in discourse and images. The major axis of difference is the “Big Three” of race, class, and gender. Historically representations of racial (ethnic, national) others often overlap with those of women, children, and lower-class people. Representations of others have been analyzed in relation to Europe (Barker et al., 1985) and in the context of colonialism (Gidley, 1992; Thomas, 1994) and race (Sardar et al., 1993), but the terms of analysis have been changing. “The

Other” is increasingly left behind as too narrow and static a notion. There are so many different kinds of “others” that there is little point in generalizing about them. Besides, the “Self” no longer represents a fixed identity: witness postmodern understandings of multiple identity and the “decentering of the subject.” As the typical Enlightenment subject (who was white, male, middle-aged, rational) is no longer being taken for granted as the center and yardstick of the human universe, also its “other” loses relevance and meaning. In sociology, cultural and gender studies, the terminology of *difference* increasingly takes the place of otherness. This terminology is more neutral and matter-of-fact and less historically burdened than that of otherness. Difference, of course, comes in many forms: as ontological difference, metaphysical difference, the difference of God, gender, class, geography, development, legal status, and cultural diversity. So cultural difference is but one type of difference among several and not necessarily the most salient or important difference. Another theme is the growing concern with hybridity, mixing, *métissage*. As societies become more diverse, intermarriage also increases, cultural differences criss-cross and in the process generate new identities, and new differences. Cultural differences erode over time, due to globalization, changing identities, and consumption patterns, while local and regional reactions to globalization generate new identities and differences. Amidst this flux, the old notions of otherness are increasingly outdated.

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