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Originally published in International journal of critical psychology, 16. Pp. 74-99 © 2005 Lawrence & Wishart.

You may cite this version as:

Hook, Derek (2005). Affecting whiteness : racism as technology of affect [online]. London: LSE Research Online.

Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000956>

Available in LSE Research Online: April 2007

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Affecting whiteness: racism as technology of affect (1)

Derek Hook

This paper concerns itself with contemporary hegemonies of 'whiteness' which typically exist tacitly, in extensions and variations of historical forms of racism with which they share similar patterns of identification, aggrandizement and exclusion. 'Whiteness' here is conceptualized in two ways. Firstly, as a silent denominator of postimperial privilege that underpins even leftist celebrations of national/historical/cultural belonging (as in the example of David Blunkett's affirmations of Englishness). Secondly, as an affective formation, a relational interplay of attractions and aversions, as a mode of subjectification that appears to exceed explicitly discursive forms. I focus here on the ideological life of affect, two examples of which are the 'proof of affect' - the warranting of particular relations of entitlement and exclusion on the basis of how real they feel and hence must be - and the constitutive role of the deployment of certain 'affect positions'. I am interested in how Foucault's notions of the technology and apparatus help us understand the instrumentalization of affect and the ambiguous forms of causality and agency that may be said to emerge as a result. One might take as a case in point here the circuit of racist sentiment that flows between two indeterminate points: the strategic incitements of political rhetoric, and a shifting constellation of identifications (such as that of 'whiteness'), neither of which can be fixed as the definitive localization of racism. Unless we are able to grapple with the vicissitudes of such modes of affective formation, and indeed, with how these modes come to be operationalized as technological elements of broader procedures of governmental logic, we fail to appreciate the tenacity and slipperiness of 'whiteness' in our postimperial era.

Hegemonies of affect

...our relation with our racial selves is an evasive thing, often easier to feel than to express (Paul Gilroy, 2004, p. 41).

This is the first of two papers that are concerned with the idea of racism as an affective technology. The second of these papers takes up the challenge of investigating the analytic usefulness of Foucault's notions of the technology and apparatus (or *dispositif*) with reference to the political task of governing particular affective attachments in liberal-democratic postimperial contexts. In the current paper I am far more concerned with the vicissitudes of affect as an insidious form of political capital. I have three particular interests in this respect. The first of these interests lies with historical structures of white privilege, that is, with hegemonies of whiteness, particularly so as they are realised in postimperial settings. One might in this respect refer to contemporary forms of 'white terror', by which I have in mind a new and distinctive array of racialised violences, exclusions, and modes of governmentality that are predicated on the protection and expansion of what Hardt & Negri (2000) call Empire. These measures of force are by no means historically unprecedented, but they take on unique forms today precisely in view of the political imperatives accorded the 'war on terror' and, indeed, in response to a depleted vocabulary of multiculturalism which promises ideals of universal human

rights, racelessness and cosmopolitanism despite simultaneously generating new measures of exclusivity and disqualification (for an incisive treatment of these issues see Giorgio Agamben's (1998) *Homo Sacer*). White terror in its more spectacular and material varieties should be linked to more seemingly mundane versions of whiteness, that is, to those comfortable, insidious modes of internal reflection and identification which entail powerful strands of attachment and belonging whilst denying any connection to the domain of actual material divisions, violence and subjugation. Importantly, such hegemonies of whiteness often exist in tacit forms, in extensions and variations of historical forms of racism with which they share many of the same patterns of identification, aggrandizement, objectification and exclusion. Such forms of 'whiteness' - and I use the term provisionally, as a force-field of intersecting identifications and investments - often function as the unarticulated denominator that consolidates a series of more explicit values. Furthermore, this silent denominator of 'whiteness' often takes on an affective currency - the idea, in other words, of hegemony as form of affect - which means that it is often more a function of a *practical* versus a *discursive* consciousness, to refer somewhat loosely to Anthony Giddens' (1984) oft quoted distinction.

A second basic interest concerns the mode of instrumentalisation through which such affective forces come to be played out across the social field, indeed, *conducted* - even if in crucially discontinuous, 'dispositional' ways - by various party political interests. Although questions of the technical articulation or 'governmental management' of this domain of social life are given a more thorough theoretical investigation in the paper that follows, I do here signal the need to investigate contemporary forms of racism as an *affective technology* that arises as an extension of hegemonic forms of whiteness, and that comes to operate in dispositional arrangements of ambiguous causality and agency. The final concern lies with the constructive role of the deployment of certain affect-positions and the characteristic object-relations they presume and reproduce. Here I have borrowed from Sara Ahmed's (in press) model of affective economies to speculate about a mode of affective constitution that plays its part in binding imagined subjects and communities to the questionable 'substances' of place, history and nation. This is an oblique mode of ontological production able to affect passionate attachments - and equally powerful divisions - that often speak louder than words and that typically feel as if they predate the immediate history of either subject or community.

Affect as political capital

'The role of government', writes former British Home Secretary David Blunkett, 'is to assist people through the uncertainty and transitions of their lives', particularly so in the world of the 21st century, 'an era born of globalization, with greater insecurity and instability than ever before' (2005, p. 21). An antidote to anxieties of this sort, he claims lies with the project of linking identity and a sense of belonging to a commitment to nationhood and a modern form of patriotism. Moreover (and it is here worth quoting him at length):

[We need] a clear view of British values, stemming from both our history and our beliefs as a people... [A]n open, adapting society needs to be rooted, and Britain's roots are in the most solid foundation of all: a passion for liberty anchored in a sense of duty and a commitment to tolerance...

[There is] a golden thread twining through our history of common endeavour in villages, towns and cities... Britishness is defined not on ethnic and exclusive grounds but through shared values, our history of tolerance, openness and internationalism and our commitment to democracy and liberty...[Such a] vision embraces the diversity of our state and unites us through our values, history, culture and institutions... I have long argued for a self-respect and respect for others, and an understanding of our identity and sense of belonging...

[W]e need a glue that holds us together. We need to be able to celebrate our nationality and patriotism...without narrow nationalism and jingoism...[H]ow do we affirm our Englishness as part of being British in a new way? By celebrating our culture, from the music of Vaughan Williams and Elgar to the poetry of Christina Rossetti, Wilfred Owen and Philip Larkin and the quintessentially English humour of Tony Hancock...by celebrating our landscape, our heritage of Victorian cities, our history..."

One reaction to the lack of definition of Englishness has been the promotion of an exclusive Englishness and an appeal to the particular. Predominantly championed by the right, this is characterized by...the language of "insiders" and "outsiders", claiming that outsiders threaten English identity. That this sort of exclusiveness has arisen highlights the failures in the past to set aside such narratives. The left...has shied away from the politics of national identity, having been historically preoccupied by class identity... That is why debating our identity and sense of belonging is not to be nostalgic, but to address the world of the 21st century.

A debate, therefore, about knowing who we are and where we belong, about how we develop a common home that is welcoming to others, is vital for our wellbeing and for developing, through patriotism, our embrace of those whose culture, colour, religion and lifestyle are different (Blunkett, 2005, p. 21).

Why are David Blunkett's comments, penned for *The Guardian* as part of the run-up to Britain's 2005 general election, so apposite regards my concerns here? Well, firstly, Blunkett quite unabashedly links strategies of government to the management of a particular order of sentiment. His comments suggest the degree to which contemporary modes of governmentality need concern themselves with the political vocabulary of emotion, with *affective* forms of political capital. Such remarks leave little room for doubt: a prime task of liberal-democratic government is to manage the affective forces of the nation, to lend them a degree of stability and - provided one is foolhardy enough to follow Blunkett's lead - to channel them along the intertwined routes of patriotism, National pride and cultural essentialism.

A second striking element of Blunkett's commentary is the degree to which it frames itself as a description of the constitutive values of the British left. This is more than a little odd, certainly inasmuch as Blunkett's particular brand of political sentimentality seems more easily associated with the politics of the British right, particularly in its utilisation of a quasi-essentialism of an Englishness of 'longing and belonging' and the differential rights of cultural access that such a discourse puts into play. What is one to make of this disconcerting parallel, where a key manoeuvre of the right, namely its valorisation of Englishness and the grounding of such an Englishness in the certainties of history, culture and land, becomes a tactic of the multiculturalist left? I should be clear here: although I am by no means disinterested in the cruder utterances and actions of an unreconstructed racism, I am here particularly concerned with the historical structures of white privilege in certain of their most elusive and attenuated forms, particularly in fact as they are voiced in the contradictions of ostensibly Leftist discourse. I am particularly interested in hegemonies of whiteness as they are realised in extensions and subtle variations of historical forms of racism which, despite their disavowals, nevertheless share similar patterns of attachment, grandiosity, objectification and exclusion. More specifically, I am concerned with those ardent forms of belonging which work to assert certain exclusionary relations of cultural/national/historical ownership and privilege, with gratuitous modes of belonging that bring into play a differential rights of entitlement. Such values are continuously played out and reiterated in what might appear to be the more diluted political forms of a variety of popular cultural forms and practices, which of course, as Paul Gilroy (2004) has adeptly shown, provide potent rallying points of nationalist fervour. Three examples touched on by Gilroy himself are the essentialisms of Englishness in Peter Ackroyd's recent (2002) historical work *Albion*, the nostalgia for the great 'us' of former empire, as in Niall Ferguson's (2002) *Empire*, and the spectacle of populist nationalism as evidenced in the global arena of sports, such as the 'heroics' of England football supporters with their chants of 'two-World-Wars-and-one-world-cup'

What then is the implication of the loaded terms of prerogative, identity and entitlement that are outlined in Blunkett's 'solidarity of Englishness'? How might such tacit measures of exclusion or differential *inclusion* be said to operate within the prioritised values of his narrative? Moreover, how might the terms in question be linked to histories of privilege and dispossession, to lingering hegemonies of benefit and exclusion that cannot simply be elided by constant reference to the politics of the left? Might we accuse Blunkett's valorisation of a select English past and present - 'a golden thread twining through our history of common endeavour' - of tacitly coding for whiteness, or, if not 'whiteness' per se, then something like it, such as the artefacts and values of a less inclusive time and culture? The tactic we may accuse Blunkett of, in other words, is that of employing a set of discursive extensions and derivatives of a historical form of 'Englishness' for whom 'whiteness' stands as an unspoken yet inescapable common denominator.

On the topic of the tactics of 'indirected' forms of racism, one might refer to the Conservative Party's infamous election slogan: 'It's not racist to impose limits on immigration', which was quickly followed by a response from the Commission for Racial Equality warning party leaders against inflaming racism during electioneering. As was made clear by one letter writer whose views were published in the Guardian: no, it may

not be necessarily racist to impose limits on immigration, but to turn debates on asylum and immigration into key political rallying points in an election year - racialised and racialising debates if ever there were any - is certainly to pander to racism (Kennedy, 2005). Or, in the words of another commentator, the excluding language used in political rhetoric echoes rapidly down into the streets (Rayner, 2005).

It would be remiss at this point not to make reference to Sears' influential (1993) account of symbolic politics, along with other theorists of symbolic or 'modern racism' (McConahay, 1986; Kinder & Sears, 1996) in which the effects of racism are realised not in the terms of explicit or manifest prejudice, but rather through a championing of traditional values which come to be asserted in an anti-minority manner. Augoustinos et al (2002) extend such an approach, particularly in respect of the utilisation of nationalist rhetoric to bolster the ideological values and traditions of a majority. What occurs here is by no means an outright attack on minorities, but a rather more insidious process of disqualification in which such subjects come to be marginalized relative to a proliferation of discourse celebrating the norms and ideals of a privileged majority. (See also Reeves (1983) for a study of the deniability of British racist discourse and Liu & Mills (in press), for a recent account of the plausible deniability of racism in contemporary political rhetoric, particularly their discussion of how nationalist sentiments are deployed in ways which 'affirms and celebrates the values and well-being of the majority and defends this well-being against threat from outsiders' (p. 4)).

What then is the political utility of the rhetorical discontinuity we see at work in these above examples that disavows the right whilst nevertheless affirming some of its most elementary themes (in Blunkett's case), and that denies racism yet nevertheless stokes the flames of racialized sentiments of entitlement and exclusion (in the case of Tory electioneering)? What is the principle of disjunction at work here that enables the speaker to put into play an order of political sentiment whose foreseeable derivations and populist codifications - formulas of the 'England for the English' sort which they are nevertheless able to distance themselves from?

Undeclared attachments

Blunkett's ideal of English exceptionalism remains, thus, deeply fraught, a case in point of what Paul Gilroy (2004) has recently termed 'postimperial melancholia'. What Gilroy has in mind here is a lop-sided approach to the construction of English history, and, indeed, English national and cultural identity, which selectively idealises aspects of its past while effectively erasing others. This is a pathological orientation, born out of the inability to face up to, let alone mourn, 'the profound changes in circumstances and moods that followed the end of the Empire and consequent loss of imperial prestige' (Gilroy, 2004, p. 98). Such an outlook 'dictates that conflicts against Hitler and Hitlerism remain imaginatively close while Britain's many wars of decolonisation...are to be actively forgotten' (Gilroy, 2005, p. 8). Or, to refer to a less recent historical example within the terms of Blunkett's own narrative: England is accorded a heroic role in the abolition of slavery without any mention of the obvious qualification that Britain played a pivotal role in perpetuating the trade in human lives for over 200 years. In a similar vein,

Blunkett bemoans the fact that St George's day is not taken more seriously, and wishes that English nationality and patriotism could be more outwardly celebrated, as Irishness is on St Patrick's Day. His comments seem oblivious of the obvious qualification: celebrations of this sort clearly take on a different significance if the history in question is one of dispossession and colonial subordination rather than that of Imperial dominance.

Never simply uncomplicated, such a dynamics of selective aggrandizement and amnesia yields a series of contrary representations and imperatives, and is at best neurotic in its adjustment to the challenges of a multicultural society (Gilroy, 2004). The shades of ambivalence and the contradictions evident even in liberal sounding proclamations of equality should come as no surprise to us. They are, Gilroy suggests, the psychological costs of the constant denial of repressed colonial pasts. Such denials, taken in conjunction with a niggling sense of complicity, are coterminous with the ongoing imperative to assert a version of British (of English) greatness; the result is a defensive cultural attitude, a blockage in Britishness which, Gilroy claims, exhibits many of the symptoms of neurotic repetition. Hence the fact that outward commitments to non-racism can occur alongside exclusionist rhetoric, just as apparent compassion for immigrants and asylum-seekers can exist alongside with xenophobic loathing. It is perhaps clear then the extent to which Gilroy's analysis informs my own, not only in the light of his focus on particular modes of cultural and nationalist valorisation but also in how we might trace certain logics of contradiction in which powerful affective attachments belie and often contradict declaration of tolerance, multiculturalism and non-racism.

It is perhaps now apparent then why I have targeted Blunkett's commentary. While what he says there can by no means be reduced to a blatant sort of racism - indeed his vision of "modern English patriotism" attacks the right's opposition to immigration and asylum, and asserts the principles of tolerance, openness, liberty - such comments nonetheless share certain of the basic constituents of more straightforward forms of racism. We find here a powerful set of affective investments, a mode of self-valorisation which follows the route of potent identifications with like others who share a protected history of nation, culture, or heritage. Here then is an apparent example of a voice from the left, and by extension, an operation of liberal democratic governmentality, which requires the workings of a technology of affect - the conduction, in other words, of a carefully consolidated quantity of political sentiment - and which does so with reference to a preserve of attachments and belongingness, to a carefully cultivated identity of likeness. This is achieved, moreover, within the push-pull tensions that characterise the psychoanalytic notions of disavowal and ambivalence, tensions that Gilroy describes (as above) as neurotic: a rejection of the language of exclusionism and, simultaneously, a vigorous assertion of a particular mode of selective inclusion.

How then might we understand the implementation of the affective forms of capital that are linked to such strategies of idealisation and elision and that come to play their role in the substantiation of imagined communities? Furthermore, what are the routes of discontinuity and dispositionality along which such affective forces come to be channelled, and what does the conduction of such forces have to tell us about postimperial forms of governmentality, and the differential inclusions they entail? The

goal is not to simply liken Blunkett's comments in a flat-footed way to more explicitly racist views of the right, but rather to unpick the dynamics of idealisation and de-selection at work here, to ask after the unspoken principle of entitlement and tacit exclusion that hovers just beyond the explicit contents of Blunkett's narrative. What we might ask is the 'glue' of which he speaks – 'we need a glue that holds us together' - what indeed is the bonding agent, the *means of binding* in question, often present more in the force of a feeling than in the codification of a proposition? The objective as such is to grapple with that loose and unarticulated common denominator - which I would argue, is an affective factor - that always returns to stabilise such talk of Englishness. Such a silent denominator speaks to prior assumptions ('*Are you thinking what we're thinking?*', to quote another Tory election poster); it radiates its own unsteady and often ambiguous 'aura' of exclusion. It is able to operate in an unformulated, pre-predicative yet nevertheless powerfully *felt* way. Although no one single value or term spells out this denominator - which is perhaps better understood, in terms reminiscent of Adorno, as a force-field, or as a shifting constellation of identifications - I would suggest that 'whiteness', or something akin to it, might do some of the work of such a sliding signifier. I would suggest also that the mode of ideological investment we are discussing here is, in many ways, less than fully conscious: hegemony, we might say, in its affective form. (Adorno's notion of the constellation is certainly helpful here. Although such a 'juxtaposed rather than integrated cluster of changing elements that resists reduction to a[ny]...essential core, or generative first principle' (Jay, 1984, pp. 14-15) may at first seem at odds with my description of whiteness as silent denominator, we should bear in mind that the operational denominator I have in mind is of a *virtual* sort ('whiteness' clearly has no underlying essence, after all). This operational denominator is characteristically precarious, certainly inasmuch as it cannot be too readily identified - at least in explicit discursive terms - as an acceptable basis for a 'likeness of identity'. The slipperiness of such an 'operational denominator' and its subsequent deniability, is hence emphasised in this description).

I can capture something of the flavour of my concerns with reference to a slightly different line of questioning, one that investigates the interchange between invested subjects and governmental discourse. What is the nature of this relationship we might ask - a dispositional and contingent interchange - between forms of the subject and forms of governmentality which allow for racism, or its lingering historical effects, its re-configured forms, to remain in constant movement? How might such a pattern of circulation avoid definitive localisation in a singular responsible agent? Indeed, how might we understand a circuit of racist sentiment that flows between two such points of consolidation, and more often than not yields only 'para-racist' formulas if apprehended at any one point? Or, somewhat differently: how might we grasp something about the social formalisation of such logics of government (by which I refer to contemporary 'rhetorics of belonging', their tacit codings for race, and their alignment with historical discourses of national identity as employed in the party politics of many liberal democracies) and the fierce individualisation of these sentiments, that is, the 'affected' and stylised inscription of such logics within psychological subjects in formulas of affect, in powerfully personalised patterns of meaning, loss, value and threat? How is it that racism, or the proxy of its more acceptable yet associated various 'entitlements of

belonging', seems so able to find its feet in such an arrangement, to attain such a level of intransigence and vitality by virtue perhaps of exactly the *dynamism and consolidation of this interchange*? Do we have a 'sharing relationship' of sorts on our hands here, a constant 'de-agenting' pattern of circulation that ensures that neither singular subject nor isolated instance of governmental discourse can be identified as the agent solely responsible?

Might it be the case here - not to underestimate the prevalence of everyday racism in its most obvious aspects - that such forms of racism happen in the gaps between such points of focus, that they are 'completed' as such - much as in the force of implicature in the speech-act - by how one finishes what it intimated by the other. The fullest form of racism then is perhaps not to be found in either the strategic incitements of a particular strand of political rhetoric, nor in a historically- and ideologically-weighted form of subjectivity, but in how each sets in motion a dynamics of implication for the other in how they are provisionally attached, typically and most convincingly it would seem, through the conductor of affect.

'Psycho-technics' and the instrumentalisation of affect

Adorno's notion of 'psycho-technics' provides an important theoretical precedent for my concerns here; my divergences with this line of thinking prove as instructive as my obvious agreements with it. 'Psycho-technics' refers to a means of psychological manipulation - particularly that of *fascist* propaganda, never for Adorno separable from the issue of racism - which remains entirely calculated and highly rationalistic in nature even whilst inducing effects that are profoundly irrational. "[T]he irrational gratifications which fascism offers" Adorno remarks, "are themselves planned and handled in an utterly rational way" (1991, p. 18).

Clearly Adorno is conceptualising a far more explicit form of racism that I am - rather than with overtly fascist rhetoric my concerns lie with the insidious entitlements of a neo-liberal nationalist mode of identification which has now come to be adopted as strategy of governmentality. Nevertheless, Adorno's approach throws into perspective, by means of contrast, at least three elements of the approach I am trying to develop. For a start: the affective technologies of racism that I propose we investigate clearly cannot be reduced to a program of psychological manipulation, as is the risk in Adorno's conceptualisation. Clearly, my intent is not to develop a psychological account - it is rather to offer a grid of analysis that focuses on a political technology that inevitably involves certain affective or 'psychical' components. Secondly: the element of discontinuity. Adorno is certainly right to point to an element of calculated rationality in how fascist/racist sentiments come to be conducted (or, more aptly perhaps, *affected*) through communities, just as he is right in making the case that such a strategic rationality can be profitably analysed. What he seems to be missing though is an understanding of the appropriate 'disconnecter' that needs to be brought to bear in such operations. His account seems inadequate to grapple with a discontinuous (or indirect) form of racism that operates *only via a relay component* that severs directive or declarative political forms (like the contents and the discursive

force of overt racist propaganda) from the 'ethical' micro-political practices of self through which racist logics come to be replicated at the level of the individual subject.

Thirdly, extending the above point, my account also differs from Adorno's 'psycho-technics' in respect of issues of agency. The 'intentionality' of affective technologies of racism does not fit within the confines of the agency of the single political actor. Or, to put things slightly differently: this is not the best level at which to scrutinise their efficacy, or to track their ongoing effects. This points us back to the Blunkett commentary: the conduction of particular political affects that his rhetoric hopes to achieve, whilst certainly intentional to a fashion, may nevertheless be said to exhibit an operational logic which far outstrip Blunkett's his own contribution. Crook (1994) provides us with an instructive link here in criticizing the individualism of Adorno's notion of 'psycho-technics': 'Adorno can give no account of the knowledge-base from which this rationalistic calculation proceeds beyond a certain commonsense shrewdness' (p. 25).

Perhaps most directly then I am interested in racism as an extension of a hegemonic 'whiteness' - 'whiteness' as set of affective resonances, as force-field of attachments - racism moreover as an affective intra-mentality of governmentality that comes to be managed through a tactics of indirection and discontinuity. The speech-act (to recall the above illustration) is completed by the action which responds to the implication of a statement; the mode of racism that I have in mind here - much like the form of identification we see enacted in 'whiteness' - is likewise only 'completed', and only provisionally so, by a preserve of affects (or attachments) as they respond to the implications of strategic forms of political discourse and strategic forms of political rationality and/or governance. Although the avowal of explicit forms of racism cannot be considered a viable tactic of liberal democratic governmentality today, the profit to be gained in the *diffused articulation* of racism's subsidiary or less explicit forms certainly has not gone unutilised by such modes of government. (Here it pays to bear in mind Martin Jacques' (2005) comment that nationalism is one of *racism's most reliable concomitant forms*).

The racism (or 'para-racism') that I have in mind is an instrument of contemporary governmentality that, in line with theorists of modern (symbolic) racism, typically remains intermingled with, and obscured by, a series of acceptable values. Apparent always through implication rather than explication, loosely articulated and immanently deniable, it appears as something less than racism at its point of enunciation, despite the fact that it often takes on a profound affective force in how it is taken up at various of its points of address.

Governmentality, technology, apparatus

The dispositional arrangements of ambiguous causality and agency that I have referred to above, arrangements that give rise to affective technologies of racism, seem best understood with reference to a series of concepts introduced by Foucault's study of governmentality. Although I expand on these concepts in far more depth in the follow up

to this paper, it seems useful to provide a brief description of the key terms involved in Foucault's account. I do this in a strictly schematic way, so as to provide a frame for many of the more explorative ideas within this paper, particularly the idea of the political operationalisation of affective force.

Governmentality, for Foucault (1979), is something like the overarching rationality behind the use of multiple different forms of governance, that is, an awareness of how the conjoined effects of lower-order (or micro-political) forms of government (governments of family, home, school, self) work alongside broader macro-political measures (formalized structures of government), to support and enforce the agendas of the state. This notion speaks to an awareness of the *dispositional* relationship between multiple trajectories of control, which, as a result, come to operate together in largely unarranged 'synchronicities of power'. What is involved here is the state's utilisation of all the component resources within its population, the question, in Foucault's (1979) phrase, of disposing things and people *toward their most profitable and productive outcomes*. The logic of government thus is that of the ever-changing, and ever-tactical, orientation of people and things towards their greatest potential productivity. The co-ordination of these forces – and this is vital to grasping Foucault's concept - is typically *over-determined*. In other words there is a degree of latitude, indeed, of *voluntarism* in how this articulation is made good; this is precisely the 'ethical' space of technologies of self. To reiterate, while governmentality does refer to 'the conduct of conduct', to a strategic appreciation of various combinations of force, it most certainly does not suggest that the entire field of elements that makes up a state are in any way systematically controlled by its ruling body. It is exactly this limitation, the inability to blanket society in control, that motivates the need for such a governmental awareness, an attention to the multiple and complex permutations of minor, local or dispersed points of force throughout society.

To the notion of governmentality we need add Foucault's concept of the apparatus, or *dispositif*. With this concept Foucault was attempting to grasp the loose but nonetheless efficacious combination of multiple different forms or implementations of power – from types of speech to types of knowledge, to material constraints and actual practices and institutions - that nevertheless worked in tandem to produce overall effects of control. Apparatuses as such can be understood as

thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble[s] consisting of discourses, institutions...regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions (Foucault, 1980, p. 194).

The apparatus then is a 'hinge' – and a highly variable hinge - between discourse and action, between representation and/or knowledge and materialization, actual physical practice. In referring to an apparatus, emphasise Rabinow & Rose (2003), Foucault means 'a device oriented to produce something – a machinic contraption whose purpose...is [the] control and management of certain characteristics of a population' (p. 10). Clearly then the 'dispositionality' of the apparatus makes for a crucial explanatory link in the account I am developing, as does its machinic role - parallels with Adorno's

‘psycho-technics’ are evident here – as a device keyed into producing a particular characteristics within a given population.

My descriptive reference to notions of governmentality and apparatus as means of conducting ostensibly psychological qualities of racism is not without precedent. Homi Bhabha (1994) makes use of the notion of governmentality to link his conceptualisation of the stereotype – not just a quirk of social discourse or an internalised psychological operation – to the colonial politics of nations and peoples. Bhabha treats the whole of colonial (or colonising) discourse - for whom the racist stereotype is a dominant strategy – as ‘a form of governmentality that in marking out a ‘subject nation’, appropriates, directs and dominates its various spheres of activity’ (1994, p. 70). In much the same way I would suggest that we read Blunkett’s discourse – along with its undeclared attachments to whiteness, its tacit field of exclusions – as an extension of neo-liberal governmentality which itself hopes to produce corroborating features (vectors of affective attachment) in the population to which it speaks.

Foucault forewarns against a division of the domain of the individual from the broad field of governmental influence, because the individual is of course exactly a resource of government. At this individualising level it becomes necessary to introduce Foucault’s conceptualisation of the technology, and along with it, his attention to how power is able to break individuals down into attributes of productivity. When Foucault first speaks of such technologies it is within the context of his illustration of the operations of disciplinary power (1977). Here the technology is an expert system comprised of a discrete set of applied skills, techniques, practices, knowledges and/or forms of specialist language, which is used by experts on deviant subjects, or by individuals on themselves, as means of achieving a productive output of sorts, a relation of greater mastery or control.

Such technologies are properly *human* technologies: they take the entire realm of human forces – a wide spectrum of potential human capacities, potentialities, relations – as their targets. As Nikolas Rose (1996) avers: even previously oppositional elements might be utilised in this fashion: ‘sexual desire, group norms, selfishness, greed’ might be channelled, used to build ‘durable associations that will allow for the exercise of rule’ (p. 121). Removed from a strictly disciplinary frame, Foucault’s later (1988a, 1988b, 1988c) conceptualisation of technologies took on a predominantly ethical form, focusing on repertoires of individual self-conduct as managed either through broader regimes of subjectivity, or the micro-techniques of a ‘care of the self’. The vital distinction here, in ethical versus disciplinary uses of this notion, is a turn to self- rather than merely institutional applications of individualised systems of intelligibility and control. The notion of ‘technologies of subjectivity’ thus refers to a broad set of self-regulative practices, to the attempts made by subjects to adjust or shape themselves according to a series of social and political norms. So, whereas technologies of subjectivity might be taken to refer to heterogeneous sets of relays which bring the varied ambitions of political, scientific, philanthropic and professional authorities into the alignment with the ideals of individuals, technologies of self may be understood as the result of such multivalent technologies of subjectivity coming to be ‘enfolded into the person through a

variety of schema of...self-nurturance' (Rose, 1996, p. 32). What one is able to plot here is a 'downward saturation' of power where certain vocabularies and instrumentations of subjectivity enable 'the operations of government to be articulated in the terms of the knowledgeable management of the human soul' (Rose, 1996, p. 231). Technologies of subjectivity/self here then provide a way of thinking the interchange *between structural apparatuses of influence and a micro-politics of self*, between *totalising and individualising forms of power*. This is perhaps the most important contribution of this particular theoretical model: it allows for a description of the working of governmentality, an articulation of that 'tricky combination' between 'political structures of individualisation' and 'totalising procedures' (Foucault, 1982, p. 213). The notion of 'technologies of subjectivity/self' thus provides the basic conceptual co-ordinates and analytical means for examining that 'go-between' area in which deeply individualised (ostensibly 'internal' or private) practices of self and subjectivity *are already* political operations, with broader political objectives and effects that may be dispositionally linked to macro forms of state power.

Clearly, there are a series of issues that need be addressed before the particular forms of racism I am concerned with in this paper can be assimilated into the terms of this model. Not the least of these concerns the degree to which racism can be understood as a conscious and indeed calculated mode of self-practice, as is implied by Rose. As I have indicated above, the limitations and benefits of applying such a model to the problematic at hand - along with issues arising from a more careful mapping of procedures of affect onto the lines of governmental force - is the focus of the paper to follow.

How do we configure our own response?

Turning our attentions now to questions of configured emotion: affect, one might advance, is never simply individual; nor can it be localised merely as a response stemming from the internal world of the subject. Affect might instead be viewed as a component in a circuit of social meaning and action, or, better yet, as *a pulse through such a circuit*, one part of which is a momentary flash of the subject's experience of individuation. Here I am adapting somewhat Bruce Fink's Lacanian description: 'the subject is the link between a powerful affective experience and the thought (... "representation") that accompanies it...the link between his affect (*jouissance*) and his thoughts (articulated in language)... The subject is the flash between them that constitutes a link or connection' (1997, pp. 278-279), although, clearly, I am wary of over-individualising such a process. Let us turn to a description Ian McEwan offers us, in his novel *Saturday*, of a character's response to a car-accident of which he considers himself blameless:

Above all, there swells in him a peculiarly modern emotion - the motorist's rectitude...the thrill of hatred, in the service of which various worn phrases tumble through his thoughts, revitalized, cleansed of cliché: just pulled out, no signal, stupid bastard, didn't even look, what's his mirror for, fucking *bastard* (2005, p. 82).

Just the page before, McEwan describes the murky flux of this character's background thoughts, the sense his character has of things on his mind, thoughts yet to be 'unwrapped into syntax or words'. This, McEwan notes, is mentalese, a preverbal form of language 'a matrix of shifting patterns, consolidating and compressing meaning in fractions of a second...blending it inseparably with [a]...distinctive emotional hue' (p. 81). This comparison between two adjoined forms of thought and affect is interesting, not only because it resonates with Giddens' (1984) distinction between practical and discursive forms of consciousness, but also because it implies that a failure of originality often characterises moments of passion. The unsteady dividing line between the background noise of thoughts that remain unformulated in words, and the well-worn phrases through which we make instances of affect socially intelligible to ourselves, appears to function here as a threshold of socialisation.

There is a paradox at hand here: despite that the subject may feel a sharp sense of differentiation - a vivid rush of individualisation *in* the moment of affect - the affective routine in question here is typically of a profoundly formulaic sort. The same may be said of the affective dimension to particular instances of racism, acts which are at the same time intensely personalised and yet also somehow anonymous, at least in the sense that they are rooted through a third position, a locus and reference point of speech and meaning that we might designate as Other. It is as if an Other's words and emotions are employed in the stylised thoughts and reactions of racism - borrowed words and emotions, borrowed formulas of response - that are lent a substantialising emotionality and verbal/practical inflection by the racist. Regards the stylised performance of affect, let us refer back to McEwan's description of his character's response to the crash: what we witness is a social moment, one in which a set of social formulations provides the character with the terms of his outrage. The phenomenology of affect which comes into play here, the sense of veracity and of groundedness that the affective moment lends to experience, is perhaps best pegged as the 'ego ontology' of sudden feeling, that is, *an affective grounds of belief* which feels deeply singular and individualised despite that it comes from an Other place.

There is a resonance here with the poststructuralist notion that a discursive utterance employed by the subject is something less than their own authentic creation. We may speak here of an affect-position: it is not just that 'the subject is spoken', but also that the subject is *affected*; they are a point of social intelligibility through which an affect is exercised. There is useful formulation that Edward Said (1983) offers apropos the Foucauldian notion of discourse that may be of some use in extending this idea. 'Above and beyond the possibility for saying something' he notes, 'there is a regularizing collectivity called a discourse' (p. 186). One is tempted to adapt this formulation: above and beyond the possibility for feeling something in a purely idiosyncratic or individualised manner there is a regularising collectivity, a motivated channeling of emotions - the interposition of an Other horizon of intelligibility and appeal - which, in the case of the calculated conduction of certain sentimentalities for political gain, can be understood within the terms of an affective technology, be it one of nationalism or of 'Englishness', or, as in our case, of an insidious mode of racism which is typically underpinned by both these concomitant forms of attachment.

One might also draw attention here to an interesting parallel that might be drawn with an aspect of psychoanalytic theory: just as we might maintain that there is no such thing as a private affect (affect, that is, of a purely individualised sort), so there is, at least in Žižek's (1997) version of psychoanalysis, no such thing as private fantasy. Despite the highly personalised nature of one's given fantasy, despite the fact that it lies at the very core of our subjectivity - as that which more than anything else comprises the 'stuff' of what is most irreducible about us - such a fantasy is never 'asocial', and can never simply be set apart from the social field. Given, indeed, that our desire is always in some or other form the desire of an other, and that fantasies are the staging of those desires, then it must be true that our fantasies are always constituted within the field of intersubjectivity, within a nexus of social values.

There is also another factor to consider here: the fact of the follow through emotion that arises as a consequence of the symbolic registration of an event. The above example demonstrates something of this knock-on effect. McEwan appears to understand how the act of linking the burgeoning emotion (of anger) to a series of subjective co-ordinates (the blamelessness of the protagonist, the recklessness of the other driver) can aid in reflexively *amplifying the affective response*, and, indeed, in providing a kind of *retroactive justification for it*. We can extend these reflections on the ambiguities of causality in affect with reference to Leader's (1996) observation that the performance of an emotion - even if the performance is of a feigned sort - is frequently enough to induce the emotion in question. This idea, that the 'going through the motion of emotion' is enough to *actualise* the emotion reiterates the well-known James-Lange theory, the idea that mimicry of an affective expression may secondarily produce that affect.

Two lessons then about the operation of affect that tell us something about how emotions come to be instrumentalised in particular affective technologies. Firstly: rather than the sole preserve of the affected protagonist - the emotional deduction derived from the individualized terms of their experience - there is something *affected* in such instances of feeling. Affect, in other words, is not the creative or original function of the psychology of its agent, it is rather of a piece with a greater social whole. It runs along a circuit of social intelligibility and ideological value in which the agency of the subject's feeling is but one moment, the moment when the pulse of this charge might be said to pass through them. Each instance of xenophobic sentiment (to use this as an example) contains not only elements of social codification and legibility, but also recourse to an external point of appeal: it can recounted, expressed, performed, indeed, *felt*, via a whole series of social formulas and rationalizations (the scarcity of our jobs, the loss of our culture and so on) that such an Other locus of meaning and value would presumably understand and verify. No matter how spontaneous, or apparently natural, no matter how much *of one's self*, we should understand the performance of affect as something which has been played out to an Other, rooted through an external point of legibility and appeal. This is more than a routine point about the social construction of emotions and their carefully attuned social performance; it is not simply to suggest that affects cannot be simply divorced from the social realm of their realisation. My argument suggests rather that emotion begin elsewhere, somewhere Other before it is streamed via the subject, that all affect is to a

degree *affected*, finding its logic, its expressibility and indeed its impetus in a broader social whole in which the agent of the emotion assumes a reasonably small (albeit significant) role.

Secondly: in opposition to the standard assumption that an emotion is given rise to by an external event, we need to bear in mind the possibility of a causative loop, the fact that a growing emotion may be amplified - or retroactively *caused* - by the symbolic registration of a particular event. This is the reverse causality of warranting particular relations of entitlement, belonging and exclusion on the basis of the 'proof of affect' of how real such relations feel and hence must be. The disjunction – always relative, never complete - between explicit, predicative discursive pronouncements and the less codified domains of affective positioning (of passionate attachments which remain unstated if not largely unconscious in nature) is of some importance here, certainly inasmuch as such a 'proof of affect' can often be used as evidence of the reality that it plays its part in constructing *without this feeling like a contradiction*. So: the proof that black men are violent is in my fear of them, the proof that women are coquettish is my attraction to them, and so on. It is important to acknowledge here that we may ready our affective postures in how we position ourselves in given social encounters. We may as such assume certain affect-positions (fear, anger, irritation, love) which then become the proof of affect for a given ideological proposition, for a categorical relationship of entitlement, exclusion, belonging, etc. So: that I feel threatened by an influx of immigrants is proof enough of their moral dubiousness, proof enough also of why they – and others like them - should be prevented any rights of access.

What, we should thus ask, is the constitutive role of the deployment of certain affect positions, what are the characteristic 'object-relations' that they entail and that they generate (*where* to belong, *who* to love, *who* to hate, *with whom* to identify)? This movement between rational and affective registers is clearly an ideological manoeuvre, but an ideological manoeuvre that is not limited to textual manipulations, to the domain of representation alone: it is also an instrumentalizable aspect of affectivity, a factor of subjectification that can be taken up as a component part of an affective technology (of racism, xenophobia, nationalism) linked in turn to a strategy of governmentality. We might extend this point: affect, in its ideological dimension, must not be regarded as secondary or incidental, as merely the byproduct of other modes of political activity. Nor should the ideological life of affect be viewed as existing only within the performative domain of manipulative politicians, or as a function of sensationalising forms of politics which are never more than crude in design and impact. To the contrary, such utilisations of affect should be approached as instrumentalised avenues along which quite precise political aims may be pursued. These avenues allow for apparent disconnections of agency, causality and intentionality and they cannot be reduced to narrow individualizing or psychological frames of analysis. Such avenues are deserving of the technical analysis of any complex political technology that is composed of heterogeneous forms and entails disjunction and discontinuity as basic elements of its operation. It is to an elaboration of these issues – Foucault's notions of technology and the apparatus and the attention they draw to the instrumentalization of human capacity and the ambiguous forms of causality and agency they enable – that I focus on in the follow up to this paper.

Affective formations

It benefits us now to turn to the work of Sara Ahmed. Doing so allows us to reiterate certain of the above arguments from the unique conceptual perspective she brings to these issues. Her notion of affective economies, to which I am much indebted, suggests that we avoid viewing emotion as a private matter, as individual belonging or psychological disposition, or, indeed, as something that simply ‘comes from within’ and then moves ‘outward towards others’. By contrast, we need to appreciate how emotions ‘create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds’ (in press, p. 1) and do so by means of certain sticky associations, or bindings. ‘Bindings’ of this sort – of love, and just as powerfully, of hate - manage crucial ideological alignments: of certain subjects with preferential rights, of imagined nation with land, and so on. Positive alignments of this sort have a role to play – a role which is dynamically related to and counterbalanced by *negative* attachments to particular others – in bringing imagined subjects together ‘through the capitalization of the signifier “white”’ (p. 2). Although I am tempted to inject an element of discontinuity here – this signifier to my mind is perhaps better approached as a tacit or sliding signifier, the silent denominator or force-field of investments I have mentioned above – I agree wholeheartedly with Ahmed’s analysis: ‘The ordinary white subject’ she suggests, ‘is a fantasy that comes into being through the mobilization of hate, as a passionate attachment tied closely to love’ (p. 3). Moreover:

It is the love of White, or those that are recognizable as White, which supposedly explains this shared “communal” visceral response of hate. *Together we hate* [and love] *and this hate* [and love] *is what makes us together* (p. 2).

Ahmed’s argument points us in the direction of the affective consolidation of particular types of political subjects – subjects of whiteness, or of Englishness, although other types can clearly be imagined - agentic subjects who are animated with particular modes of nostalgia, longing and aversion. Although the rhetoric of hate does appear frequently in the examples Ahmed draws on, the force of the register of love should also be emphasised (as I have done above). One cannot but be struck by ‘ethical’ quality of much of this language, the degree to which so much of its central thrust requires various loving attachments, be they those of heritage, belonging or historical oneness, as indeed is exemplified in Blunkett’s commentary. This is unsurprising: it is difficult to imagine a more effective discursive warrant than that of love to do the job of exclusion. The upshot of this is that the full spectrum of positive emotions can be put to the work of hate, and frequently is, particularly so within strategies of liberal democratic governmentality, where one cannot express, indeed *conduct* hate in any other terms.

Not only do certain circulations of affect bond subjects, creating forceful associations, attachments, we might say, without origins (attachments, that is, which *feel* as if they predate the assumption of any conscious political agency). Such an order of affect is also able to do its work via a slippery signifier that never needs be explicitly rendered in and

of itself. This is not to make a routine distinction between connotative and denotative routes of signification, rather it is to assert the fact of the affective substantiation of certain communities, which are, certainly, imagined communities, but affective communities no less. What I have been building towards thus far is an argument about how the strategic conduction of affect can function as an oblique mode of ontological production. This is a mode of production, a means of constituting subjects that is capable of effecting passionate attachments – and equally powerful divisions – that often speak louder than words and that typically feel as if they predate the immediate history of either subject or community. My point, to be clear, is that ‘whiteness’ may be attained not merely through overtly discursive or representational means. One is reminded here, in respect of the discursive constitution of ‘whiteness’, of Homi Bhabha’s (1994) cautioning that the colonial stereotype must not be understood merely as representational effect, but also, via psychic processes of identification, as *mode of subjectification*. ‘Whiteness’, indeed, is not a formation of discourse alone - certainly not in the sense of explicit textual or predicative forms - ‘whiteness’ comes to feel robust, ‘substantial’ also on the basis of circulations and investments of affect, movements that are not always directly codifiable.

This line of discussion touches on a slightly different question, one that I consider to be a crucial factor in the analysis of racism, and one, alas, that I cannot do justice to here (although I have broached it elsewhere (Hook, in press)). This is the question of ‘extra-discursive’ modes of subject constitution and how they come to be operationalised as insidious technological means for conducting and entrenching racist patterns of affect. Such technologies are indeed pernicious certainly inasmuch as such patternings, routings and conductions of affect (such as that of ‘whiteness’) often *feel* as if they exist authentically, individually, in a state prior to the intervention of social and symbolic meaning – after all, as may be argued, the dynamics of affect do often seem to exist in preverbal forms – despite the fact that they are of course clearly amenable to the exploitation of various political and discursive systems. In order to emphasise my point about the seemingly ‘prediscursive’ force of the bonds of ‘whiteness’, it helps to point to a crude – and most certainly *provisional* - distinction between ‘emotion’ and ‘affect’: emotion might be understood as more directly discursive, more immediately aligned to signification (socially legible, codifiable, something which may be ‘put into words’). Affect, by contrast, may be understood as less secure in its connection to representation, less fixed to a set of physical or discursive codes, less immanently knowable. If this is the case – and I should emphasise the difficulties and political dangers in attempting to draw too hastily such a dividing line between the discursive and the ‘prediscursive’ (or between ‘discursive consciousness’ and ‘practical consciousness’, in Giddens’ (1984) terms) – then we must be prepared to grapple with ‘whiteness’ in its most seemingly ‘pre-discursive’ forms of attachment and belonging, in those affective modes which despite seeming ‘pre-ideological’ are of course, at the same time, potent resources of ideological sentiment and experience.

This is the point I wish to end with: simply to insist that ‘whiteness’ as a constellation of values and investments – ‘a relational interplay of attractions and aversions’ (Jay, 1984, p. 14), to draw on Adorno’s notion of the force-field - must be approached as in part a function of affective modes of constitution and affirmation. It is true perhaps that the

most recalcitrant and indeed sublime aspects of 'whiteness' are best approached in just such a way, as formations of affect, whether such formations take on the regularised forms of fantasy, or of anxiety, or even of fetishism (see Hook, 2005). Unless we are able to grapple with the vicissitudes of such modes of affective formation, and indeed, with how these modes come to be operationalised as technological elements of broader procedures of governmental logic, we fail to appreciate the tenacity and slipperiness of 'whiteness' in this (post)Empire era.

Acknowledgements

I am much indebted to the work of Sara Ahmed; as is clear from the above, my attempts to think racism and forms of 'whiteness' to which it is so often linked intersects in a variety of ways with her notion of affective economies. Thanks to Damien Riggs and Lorraine Johnson-Riordan for their editorial input and encouragement; Damien Riggs' various treatments of 'whiteness' have been of crucial importance in informing many of the formulations offered above.

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