

**BLACK MIXED-RACE MEN:
TRANSATLANTICITY, HYBRIDITY AND
'POST-RACIAL' RESILIENCE**

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BY

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Introduction

*Excuse me
standing on one leg
I'm half-caste.*

*Explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when Picasso
mix red an green
is a half-caste canvas?
explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean when light an shadow
mix in de sky
is a half-caste weather?
well in dat case
england weather
nearly always half-caste
in fact some o dem cloud
half-caste till dem overcast
so spiteful dem don't want de sun pass
ah rass?
explain yuself
wha yu mean
when yu say half-caste
yu mean tchaikovsky
sit down at dah piano
an mix a black key
wid a white key
is a half-caste symphony?*

*Explain yusef
wha yu mean
Ah listening to yu wid de keen
half of mih ear
Ah looking at yu wid de keen
half of mih eye
an when I'm introduced to yu
I'm sure you'll understand
why I offer yu half-a-hand
an when I sleep at night
I close half-a-eye
consequently when I dream
I dream half-a-dream
an when moon begin to glow
I half-caste human being
cast half-a-shadow
but yu must come back tomorrow
wid de whole of yu eye
an de whole of yu ear
an de whole of yu mind.*

*an I will tell yu
de other half
of my story.*

John Agard (2004, pp. 11–13)

Growing up as a young Black mixed-race man, John Agard's poem *Half-caste* sparked a rare moment of interest and inspiration in an otherwise mundane, whitewashed and Eurocentric schooling experience. It was not solely the curricular recognition of Black mixed-race identities that spoke to me but the very words of the poem resonated as profoundly with me then as they do today. Those words initiated a journey of self-discovery that culminates in, as far as there is ever a culmination of such a journey, the completion of this book.

Agard's poem evokes so many memories as it returns me to those moments in my life where I felt the heightened saliency of my racial identity; the pride I felt as I wore my first Nigeria replica football shirt and the anger and hurt that soon followed as an older white boy intentionally mispronounced the name on the shirt: 'Nigg-er-ee-ya'. This was

his attempt to wound and degrade through racial epithet. I'm reminded of the mixture of pride and alienation I felt as, in 2002, whilst I was at high school, the national football teams of England and Nigeria faced each other in the World Cup of that year. As I sat in the dining hall with my peers, crowded around a small screen watching the game, my allegiances became the subject of fierce debate. Those around me asserted variously that I should support England, that I cannot support England, that I should support Nigeria, that I cannot support Nigeria, and ultimately, that I cannot possibly have allegiances with both sides. 'Are you related to the players?' was one particularly banal, yet loaded, question. Luckily, as the teams played out a boring goal-less draw, I did not have a chance to find out how my peers might have reacted had the game contained more action. What did become clear from this encounter, however, was that my peers sought to have some control over who and what I could be. They sought to erase the totality of my identity in order to situate me neatly within the Black/white racial dichotomy. My *difference* from my white peers was neither exclusively positive nor exclusively negative but certainly subject to my manipulation and modification. As I will discuss more fully later in this introduction, by engaging with theories of performativity and hybridity, much of my endeavour in this book is to understand these processes of negotiation, manipulation and modification. For now, let us return to my school days.

A year or two after the incident surrounding the Nigeria/England game, the racial disharmony in the school manifest in lunchtime football games as the white boys and the South Asian boys formed two opposing teams in racially charged, physically and verbally aggressive, games. My body, a disruption to the school yard's white/non-white dichotomy, was literally and metaphorically dragged from side-to-side. As each side made the case for my inclusion on their team, it became clear that I was not readily identifiable as a member of the team of white boys nor was I undisputedly part of the team of South Asian boys. As a member of the team of white boys argued, I was 'part white'. As the opposing team responded, I was 'not white'. Whilst at once, both sides seemingly had a case, this was an instance in which I not only became aware of my hypervisibility but also of the desire of others to position me within the predefined racial dichotomy of white and Black or white and non-white. It was through instances such as this – as well as a plethora of experiences where race was less explicit but no less present – that I became aware of the acute need to take some control over my identification. As I now recall my last day of high school, I know that it was such a desire to self-define that led me and my friends

to emblazon our shirts with a bold scrawling of ‘nigga’. Although I now occupy a place in which, even with the ‘reclaimed’ spelling, I refuse to reappropriate a term with such an injurious past, this was an act of defiance that encapsulated our desire for self-definition and my demonstrative refusal to be wounded by the racist interpellation of my white interlocutors. Agard’s poem returns me to each of these moments as I make sense of the person I am today.

In the first instance, John Agard’s poem manifests as a form of resistance to the, now largely outdated, limiting and pathological label of ‘half-caste’ (Ali, 2003; Fatimilehin, 1999). In my early years, half-caste represented common parlance used to describe people like me. Indeed, there was a time when I too would describe myself in this way. Agard’s work taught me not only that language is important but that it is possible to resist the ascription of labels and identities; we should be defined in our own terms and not by those terms imposed by (white) others. Terminologically, half-caste has its origins in British colonialism and imperialism and was, more latterly, ‘used in Britain as a derogatory racial category associated with the moral condemnation of “miscegenation”’ (Aspinall, 2013, p. 503). The opposition to the descriptor, so powerfully conveyed by John Agard, is echoed by Peter Aspinall’s (2009) findings that half-caste is deemed the most offensive term among mixed-race people. As one respondent to his research reasoned, ‘it portrays the notion that I am only half a person’ (Aspinall, 2009, p. 7). This is the message Agard so strongly imparts as he encourages his interlocutors to engage with ‘de other half’ of his story. Of course, the battle over terminology that Agard engages in, although itself an important intervention, is emblematic of much larger struggles.

As he somewhat sarcastically interrogates his interlocutors, Agard makes a mockery of the societal pressures that seek to render the mixed-race population less than whole. In so doing, Agard evocatively resists the erasure and fragmentation of the totality of his identity and lived experience. It is this, his totality, which is at stake. Through his words, Agard demonstrates resiliency as he refuses to become the pathological ‘half-caste’ of the white imaginary. As he playfully evokes imagery of world renowned art, classical music and nature, Agard troubles the pathological and moves towards a positive reinterpretation of what it might mean to be ‘half-caste’. As he encourages his interlocutor to return with the ‘whole of yu mind’, the critique is shifted firmly to the white other who is unable or unwilling to recognise the totality of Agard’s identity and his wholeness as human. In these remarks, Agard captures something of my own journey, and the journeys of the Black

mixed-race men in this study, as I and they strive to constitute whole, complex and multiplicitous identities of our own making. That Agard does all of this in an Afro-Guyanese creole is demonstrative of a refusal to succumb to the pressures of white supremacy and a pride in one's Blackness that I see as reflective not only of my own experiences but of the Black mixed-race men's accounts that unfold in the pages that follow. This book continues in the tradition of John Agard's half-caste and offers a corrective to the pervasive pathological myths that surround understandings of the lives of Black mixed-race men. In offering this corrective, *I argue that through the ceaseless process of hybridisation (read as culture), and the utilisation of various forms of cultural capital, Black mixed-race men develop the 'post-racial' resilience to withstand threats of identity erasure.* Before I return to explicate the theoretical framework that will underpin this argument, I want to offer two notes: first, a note on the use of terminology and second, a note on the discursive history of Black mixedness. So, why the descriptor 'Black mixed-race'?

I use the term *Black mixed-race* not to override or delegitimise often complex and nuanced self-identifications but to 'capture a certain phenomenological experience' (Botts, 2016, p. 8). As this book demonstrates, Blackness and mixedness represent the two predominant racial identity discourses at play in the experiences and identifications of Black mixed-race men. The participants in the study draw heavily upon discourses of Blackness and mixedness as they make sense of their lived experiences. Several of the men articulated a sense of Black mixed-race 'duality'. In Chapter 2, I explore more fully the fluid, varied and complex self-identifications of the study's participants.

Given that this book is about Black mixed-race men, and thus about race more broadly, I use race terminology throughout. Whilst the use of such terms is integral to the scope and nature of the book, it is worth acknowledging – as so many have done before me – that race has 'little meaning in biology' and has been heavily discredited by geneticists, anthropologists and biologists (Khanna, 2011a, p. ix). Race is therefore taken as a social construction that is incredibly (socially) significant in structuring our society and in shaping the lives of Black mixed-race men. Thus, the descriptors used – Black, white, mixed-race, Black mixed-race, mono-racial,¹ multiracial and more – to describe *social*

¹I use the term mono-racial much in the same way I use mixed-race: not to refer to a mythological mono-racial identity but to denote those who are socially constructed as being of a single race only.

phenomena (Root, 1996; Winant, 1994). If we are to understand the lives of Black mixed-race men, we must understand the historical construction of mixedness. Before setting out the theoretical framework that underpins the book, I offer this brief history as a basis from which we might do so.

A (Very Brief) History of Discourses on Black Mixedness

Mixed-race people have been subject to pathologisation and conceptual violence for centuries (Henriques, 1975). Emerging out of racist fears of miscegenation, pseudo-scientific mythology offered an early discourse on mixedness (Alibhai-Brown & Montague, 1992; Tizard & Phoenix, 2002). As those in power sought to maintain the white supremacist racial order, mixed-race children came to be seen as the embodiment of the dilution, contamination and degeneration of superior white blood (see for example: Grant, 1916). Due to the scientific dominance of polygenic ideas, it was speculated that mixed-race children would suffer from biological and genetic problems (Provine, 1973).

A robust discrediting of eugenicist-thinking did not engender the erosion of pathologies of mixedness but merely saw the ideas morph and take on new forms. Pseudo-scientific genetics came to gradually be displaced by pseudo-psychological, cultural and sociological pathologies of mixedness.² This discourse, spanning the Atlantic, posited that, caught between two communities, mixed-race individuals were destined for psychological maladjustment and identity confusion (Fletcher, 1930; Stonequist, 1937). Such ideas continue to hold some credence in popular discourse (Ali, 2007; Aspinall & Song, 2013; Joseph, 2012; Spickard, 2001). So prevalent is this discourse that in 2006, Trevor Phillips, then Chair of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, described mixed-race children as growing up ‘marooned between communities’ and being particularly susceptible to ‘identity stripping’ (Caballero, Edwards, & Smith, 2008, p. 51). As recently as 2016, an academic article in the *British Medical Journal* cited identity confusion as a potential explanation for ‘behavioural problems’ among mixed-race youth (Zilanawala, Sacker, & Kelly, 2016).

²East and Jones’ (1919) work *Inbreeding and Outbreeding: Their Genetics and Sociological Significance* captures this shift as it encompasses influence from both the former and the latter discourses.

Attempts to respond to this discourse have suggested that rather than marginally positioned, mixed-race people are in fact liminally positioned and are able to move freely between ‘mono-racial’ groups (Caballero, 2004; Daniel, Kina, Dariotis, & Fojas, 2014; Rockquemore, Brunσμα, & Delgado, 2009). This discourse quickly slips into a ‘post-racial’ romanticisation of mixedness that positions the mixed-race population as ‘a nice coffee coloured solution to all our problems in time’ (Alibhai-Brown & Montague, 1992, p. 128). Barack Obama, Jessica Ennis-Hill and Meghan Markle are just a few of the many prominent mixed-race figures that have been co-opted as the face of a ‘post-racial’ utopia (Donnor & Brown, 2011; Ford, Jolley, Katwala, & Mehta, 2012; Jolivéte, 2012).

This is not only the historical context that is denied by ‘post-racial’ logic, a point I will come to later, but it is also the historical context that continues to shape the lived experiences of Black mixed-race men. A glance to history points to a number of Transatlantic continuities that make a focus on both the UK and the USA particularly interesting. Given their interlinked migratory histories (Morning, 2012), the countries are both shaped by the legacy of a Black/white racial dichotomy and of viewing mixedness ‘as an illegitimate state outside the either/or binary’ (Caballero, 2004, p. 12). The two countries are still shaped by the residual impact of transatlantic slavery and the imposition of white superiority and Black inferiority (Caballero, 2004). White supremacy is at the core of the structure of each country and both countries exhibit the ‘post-racial’ conditions that are integral to my analysis in this book.

The relationality between the two contexts is evident in the parallels between two early sociological works on mixedness: the Fletcher report in the UK (Fletcher, 1930) and the marginal man thesis in the USA (Stonequist, 1937); both of which posit that the mixed-race population are marginal and pathological. Scholars like Platt (2012) have since observed the cross-pollination of analysis with perhaps a UK reliance on US literature. Although somewhat different in nature, the parallels between the USA’s 2000 and UK’s 2001 inclusion of mixed-race options on their respective national censuses also hints at a Transatlanticity of mixedness. Finally, research from Warikoo (2011) who looks at youth culture in UK and US schools finds remarkable similarities between the two contexts.

It is in these relational contexts that Black mixed-race men’s identities are formed (Goldberg, 2009) and as has been intimated already, in both contexts, attempts to disrupt this discourse – and challenge the pathological marginalisation of mixedness – are burgeoning. As I seek

to speak back to the pathologisation of mixedness, this is the entry point for this book. The framework that follows aims to facilitate our moving beyond these vacuous and unsubstantiated discourses of pathologisation and romanticisation (Joseph, 2012) and to develop a Critical (Mixed) Race Theory of Black mixed-race men's 'post-racial' resilience.

Critical (Mixed) Race Theory, Performativity and Hybridity: Towards a Theory of Post-Racial Resilience (PRR)

In this book I draw upon insights from interviews I conducted with 28 Black mixed-race men: 14 from the UK and 14 from the USA. Through these accounts, I aim to develop a Critical (Mixed) Race Theory of PRR based on Transatlantic data drawn from Black mixed-race men. Theories of performativity and hybridity are integral to the underpinning of such a project. At this point, I will first briefly outline the usefulness of Critical Race Theory (CRT) before going on to discuss performativity and hybridity.

In *The Erotic Life of Racism*, Sharon Patricia Holland (2012, p. 3) argues that 'for scholars of critical race theory, "racism" is almost always articulated as an everyday occurrence, as pedestrian rather than spectacular'. It is the everydayness of racism that is evident in the personal experiences I recounted earlier, as well as in John Agard's poem at the opening of this book. Like Agard and myself, the accounts of the Black mixed-race men in this study highlight the normalcy, the inevitability and the inescapability of racism (Bell, 1993). It is for this reason that I take a firm grounding in CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hylton, 2012). Such a grounding engenders an 'understanding that everyday racism defines race, interprets it, and decrees what the personal and institutional work of race will be' (Holland, 2012, p. 3). Recognising that mixedness means that race manifests in particular ways, and that this has not always been recognised in studies of race and ethnicity, leads me to complicate CRT through emphasising the particularities of mixedness: this gives us Critical (Mixed) Race Theory (C(M)RT) as the theoretical, epistemological and ontological grounding for the book.

Specifically, though, my primary interest in this book lies in the ways in which Black mixed-race men respond to and engage in this work of race. Therefore, CRT's emphasis on exploring phenomena from the perspective of the racially marginalised (Hylton, 2012; Warmington, 2012) provides an befitting theoretical and methodological framework for a C(M)RT exploration of the lived experiences, and particularly the

identification processes, of Black mixed-race men. Given this focus on identification, I draw heavily on performativity and hybridity as central components in the study's theoretical framework.

Race and gender are not pre-existing or inherent facts but are performative; they are made intelligible, and therefore brought into being, through discourse (Ali, 2003; Butler, 1997, 1999, 2011; Byrne, 2000; Salih, 2007; Tate, 2005, 2012, 2015; Youdell, 2000). It is through the continued reiteration and repetition of discursive acts that gender and race come to exist (Butler, 2011; Byrne, 2000; Tate, 2005, 2012). In this sense, race and gender are something that people *do*, rather than something that people *are* (Lawler, 2014). In the *doing* of identity and as the accounts throughout this book make clear, race and gender are inseparable. That is, race is always gendered, and gender is always raced (Ali, 2003). The two are inextricably bound up in the process of identification and negotiation of identities: thus, it is impossible to think of one without thinking of the other (Byrne, 2000; Pateman & Mills, 2007; Tate, 2005). The participants in this study are never just Black mixed-race nor are they ever just men, they are always *Black mixed-race men* located in a raced and gendered society (Pateman & Mills, 2007). As I show throughout this book, Black mixed-race men are simultaneously constituted by discourse and active in the constitution and reconstitution of discourse. However, without historical and contextual citationality, identifications are not intelligible (Youdell, 2000). Given the need for contextual citationality, in this book, I consider how Black mixed-race men performatively *do* their raced and gendered identities in the context of the discursive constraints of white supremacy and a Black/white dichotomy that threatens the erasure and fragmentation of complex and multiplicitous identities. Hybridity theory is integral to this endeavour, but first, let me say something about the Black/white racial dichotomy (Jones, 2015; Spell, 2017).

Writing at the turn of the twentieth century, and inspiring the establishment of CRT, WEB Du Bois (1903, p. 9) noted that '[t]he problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line'. Well into the twenty-first century, and despite the mystification of the 'post-racial', his prognosis continues to ring true. The Black/white dichotomy that characterises both UK and US society has played and continues to play a fundamental role in shaping the lives and experiences of all, specifically Black mixed-race men (Jones, 2015; Patel, 2009; Spell, 2017). This colour line, characterised by the polarisation of Black and white, has been essential to the maintenance of white supremacy (Dalmage, 2000).

Black mixed-race populations have historically posed a unique problem to the maintenance of the colour line (Caballero, 2004). Thus, in the USA, the legal and moral principle of the one-drop rule dictated that Black mixed-race individuals were to be considered as Black; such classification was integral to the maintenance of white supremacy (Khanna, 2011a; Zack, 1994). Whilst the legal manifestations of the one-drop rule have long since been abolished, the moral and socio-cultural legacies persist in terms of racialisation and identification (Townsend, Markus, & Bergsieker, 2009). Similarly, given the abiding impact of UK enslavement colonies, and the influence of US ideas, manifestations of the one-drop rule are prevalent in the UK too (Aspinall & Song, 2013). The one-drop rule therefore represents a significant factor impacting upon the lives, experiences and identities of Black mixed-race men. The prevailing thought has been that since society designates Black mixed-race men Black status, they should understand their identity as Black (Tizard & Phoenix, 2002; Townsend et al., 2009). Such thinking seeks to avoid the purported threat of marginalisation and confusion of languishing on the colour line (Cross Jr, 1971, 2001; Nakashima, 1992; Patel, 2009; Tutwiler, 2016). It is through hybridity, I want to argue, that Black mixed-race men come to resist the pressures of this racial dichotomy.

In order to explicate what is meant by hybridity, an example may be apt. In 1997, following his ascent to golfing stardom, Tiger Woods, appearing on the Oprah Winfrey show, was asked about his racial identity. He answered with the following,

Growing up, I came up with this name: I'm a 'Cablinasian',
Ca, Caucasian; bl, Black; in, Indian; Asian. I'm just who I
am. Whoever you see in front of you.

This quote represents an attempt on the part of Woods to resist what he sees as the threat of identity erasure. For Woods, as his interlocutors interpellate him as African American, they attempt to fragment his totality. It is in understanding how Woods – like the Black mixed-race men in this study – responds and resists, that the concept of hybridity, as theorised by Homi Bhabha (1990, 1996, 2012) and others (Ali, 2003; Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Tate, 2005) proves revealing.

In his utterance, his refusal of his interpellation, Tiger Woods rejects the Black/white dichotomy and acts to open up what Bhabha describes as a 'third space' in which identities and meanings are negotiated and reworked through processes of hybridisation (Alexander, 1996;

Bhabha, 1990; Tate, 2005). In so doing, he brings forth ‘possibilities of and for multiplicity’ (Ali, 2003, p. 12). For Homi Bhabha (1990, p. 211), ‘identification is a process of identifying with and through another object’. This is what is apparent in Tiger Woods’ account. Whilst his imbrication in discourse is inescapable, he ‘puts together the traces of other meanings of discourses’ and thus opens up a third space to create a new identification (Bhabha, 1990); *Cablinasian*. This is an identification that is neither entirely bound by any of its constitutive discourses nor is it entirely bereft of their meanings. The only language that Tiger Woods has to constitute his new identity is that of identities that are already discursively intelligible. To put it another way, his identification is a ‘yoking together’ of that which is already known (Bhabha, 1990, p. 212). In this book, I argue that Black mixed-race men’s identities are always in a process of hybridity (Tate, 2005) as they, like Tiger Woods, draw upon, *speak back* to, and refashion competing discourses in the *bricolage* like assemblage of new and complex identities (Hall, 1990, 1996).

The enunciation of Woods also offers a reminder that identities are not constituted in abstraction from the social world but are always developed and negotiated interactionally between people (Butler, 1990; Goffman, 1990; Khanna, 2011a; Mead, 1934; Tate, 2005; Youdell, 2004). This is what he alludes to when, after describing his self-conception, he acknowledges the gaze of the other; he is ‘whoever you see in front of you’. Perhaps even Woods himself could not have fully grasped just how resonant those words would be. Whilst his identification was celebrated by many as a beacon of ‘post-racial’ and multiracial futures (Cashmore, 2008; Kamiya, 1997; Kennedy, 2012), for others, particularly African Americans, Woods was a ‘traitor’ and a ‘sell out’ (Pitts Jr, 1997). For many African Americans, Woods’ identification was out of keeping with the realities of race in America. As his critics argued, regardless of how Tiger chooses to identify, he would continue to be racialised as Black and face the kind of anti-Black racism he had already experienced in his golfing career (Pitts Jr, 1997). Thus, as one critic puts it, ‘the desire to be biracial seems more than anything else a desire to escape being black’ (Pitts Jr, 1997, no pag.). It is in the midst of this apparent racial-firestorm, as he seeks to resist the erasure of his totality, that Woods must find the resilience to resist being torn asunder (Kennedy, 2012).

As I demonstrate throughout this book, hybridity is not just about the emergence of mixed-race as an identity category (or the kind of nomenclatural representation that Woods strives for), important though

this may be, but about the reformation and refashioning of existing identity signifiers – how Black mixed-race men engage with the perpetual mutation of racial meanings (Joseph, 2012). For instance, whilst Barack Obama identifies as an African American Black man (Roberts & Baker, 2010), his identification is not necessarily indicative of a rejection of aspects of an identity that is both complex and multiplcitous. Identifying as Black does not represent his conscription to a narrowly defined and homogenous Black identity but a reimagining and rearticulation of what constitutes that Black identity. The work of Shirley Anne Tate (2005, p. 1) is useful here as she shows that such hybrid Black identities are constituted as social actors who occupy the position of ‘an-other Black’. This is a suturing and refashioning of discourses of *the Black same* (homogenous Blackness) that opens up a third space of hybridity in which Barack Obama may be a Black man despite the attribution of light skin femininity (Cooper, 2009), without the erasure of his experiences of having a white mother and without invalidating his claims to a mixed-race identity (Obama, 2004). This is the configuration of a Black identity that subverts the narrowly defined regulatory ideal of Blackness (Tate, 2005). Describing himself – and being described – variously as mixed-race, Black and African American, Obama’s racial identity is always in flux, always in process and never fixed (Khanna, 2011a). This is reflective of the experiences of Black mixed-race men who refuse to be bound by identity categories and refuse the erasure of the totality of the self as a Black mixed-race man (Korgen, 1998). The agonistic struggle to recognise sameness and difference – a ceaseless process of hybridity – was captured in the study by Carl, a US participant. Talking about Black mixed-race men, he notes, ‘we have similar experiences. We all have our uniqueness. We branch off somewhere’. It is at this point of ‘branching off’ that the third space of hybridity is located. As I will go on to show, in their hybridisation, Black mixed-race men draw upon discourses including race, ethnicity, culture, ancestral nationality, class and masculinity.

Again, heeding Agard’s warning, it should be noted that terminologically hybridity has antecedents in the aforementioned discourse of scientific racism. Denoting impurity and racial contamination, hybridity is something of a loaded discourse (Caballero, 2004; Ifekwunigwe, 1999; Werbner & Modood, 2005). Whilst not being uncritical of discursive meanings, I draw upon work from scholars like Suki Ali (2003) and Shirley Anne Tate (2005) who have paved the way to theorise beyond hybridity as pathology to consider hybridity as strength. We know that identification is not merely volitional but is a process that occurs in the

context of socioracial norms and structures. Having briefly touched upon the interlocking conditions of white supremacy and the Black/white racial dichotomy already, as I continue to lay the groundwork for understanding the accounts of the men in this study, it is important here that I discuss the interlocking epochal conditions of the ‘post-racial’.

The ‘Post-Racial’

In 2008, the election of a Black mixed-race man to the presidency of the USA signalled, for many, the transition into a ‘post-racial’ era (Donnor & Brown, 2011; Howard & Flennaugh, 2011; Lentin, 2016; Tutwiler, 2016; Wise, 2013). For post-racialists, this is an era in which race is no longer a determinant of life chances and thus no longer shapes the lived experiences of Black mixed-race men (Critcher & Risen, 2014; López, 2010; Wise, 2013). The ‘post-racial’ ‘encourages whites to believe racism is a thing of the past’ (Bell, 1993, p. 6). ‘After all, a Black man in the White House must signal the end of race and racism’ (Leonardo, 2013, p. 600). Under these ‘post-racial’ conditions, it is commonly held that ‘racism belongs to a bygone era and that remaining racist attitudes and behaviours are the preserve of unbalanced or uneducated individuals’ (Lentin, 2016, p. 34). Since Obama’s election, this logic has come to be hegemonic, transcending the political spectrum (Lentin, 2016). We see the reiteration of the logic in the discourses that surround the marriage of Meghan Markle – a Black mixed-race woman – to the UK’s Prince Harry. The supposed entry into a ‘post-racial’ epoch is not only signified by Obama’s election or Meghan’s marriage into the royal family, but, as authors like Passel, Wang, and Taylor (2010) have asserted, increasing rates of intermarriage are taken to signal the cessation of the social significance of race (Tutwiler, 2016). Thus, whether symbolised by Obama’s election, the royal wedding, or increasing rates of intermarriage, Black mixed-race men are in many ways central to the celebration of ‘post-race’.

In this book, I draw upon ‘post-racial’ theory – particularly as it is conceptualised by David Theo Goldberg (2015)³ – as a lens that brings forth possibilities to see beyond romanticised ideas about the end of race. Through this lens, we avoid mistaking the individual ‘successes’ of

³Valluvan (2016, p. 2241) has suggested that Goldberg’s work offers ‘probably the definitive theoretical account of the putatively ‘post-racial’ present’.

one man, for the end of racism. So too, we see that far from signalling the end of race, the very notion of racial intermarriage ‘reinforces and perpetuates ordinary ideas about physical race as natural entities’ (Zack, 1994, p. 40). This framework enables us to see that the ‘post-racial’ is not the end of racism but its latest iteration (Bojadžijev, 2016; Valluvan, 2016): post-raciality is a refurbishing of racism in order ‘to remake inequality’ (Benjamin, 2016, p. 2227). Or, as Goldberg (2016, p. 2279) puts it, the post-racial is the latest iteration in racisms’ ‘self-renewal for the sake of preserving and extending [white] power’. So what are the conditions of the ‘post-racial’?

As Goldberg (2015, p. 6) sets out in his seminal work *Are we all post-racial yet?*, in this ‘post-racial’ epoch, ‘the enduring conditions made and marked by the racial continue to structure society. This is so regardless of the fact that its various explicit manifestations may now be rejected, rendered implicit, silenced or denied’ (also see Goldberg, 2016; Benjamin, 2016; Valluvan, 2016). ‘Post-racialism’, therefore, is little more than the denial of the structural, the ‘burying alive’, as Goldberg (2015, p. 78) might put it, of the histories and conditions of race (Goldberg, 2016, p. 2278). The ‘post-racial’ is not the removal of but the mystification of the racial conditions – including Black/white dichotomised white supremacy – that shape society (Pateman & Mills, 2007). This mystification of the racial belies the lived experiences of those, like the men in this study, for whom ‘race remains an underlying and salient component in their lives’ (Donnor & Brown, 2011, p. 1; Howard & Flenbaugh, 2011; Tutwiler, 2016). As will become clear throughout this book, in spite of pervasive ‘post-racial’ ideology, for the men in this study, as Donnor and Brown (2011, p. 2) have observed elsewhere, ‘being “Black” and “male” irrespective of societal position recapitulates the historically and ideologically informed racial imaginary of Black male deviance and criminality’. To return to Goldberg (2015, p. 24) once more, ‘far from being the end of racisms, then, “post-raciality” represents rather a certain way of thinking about race, and implicitly of racist expression’ (Goldberg, 2015, p. 24).

As Derrick Bell (1993, p. 3), the early and leading proponent of CRT (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), asserts, often ‘[w]hat we designate as “racial progress” is not a solution to the problem. It is a regeneration of the problem in a particularly perverse form’. The ‘post-racial’ turn is the very embodiment of Bell’s warning. Whilst the ‘post-racial’ is celebrated by many, those who continue to live lives shaped by racism are stripped of the requisite tools and language ‘to identify, comprehend, or condemn’ it (Goldberg, 2015, p. 82, 2016). Racisms are

reduced to individualised expressions bereft of historical context. To extend Bonilla-Silva's concept of racism without racists, in this sense we may talk of *racisms without racism* (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Goldberg, 2015). Let us look at an example. Commenting on the tenure of President Obama as the first Black president, Bill Clinton remarked that 'we are all mixed-race people'. Whilst Clinton's comments were made with reference to the science of the Human Genome Project, the comments preclude the realities of the way race permeates US society. In applying this colour-blind logic, Clinton threatens to erase the lived experiences of Barack Obama and what it means to be the first Black president in a society defined by race. Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere, in so doing, he acts to deny his own white privilege,

To deny race – to state blithely that 'we are all mixed race' and therefore seen as and treated as equals – is to be complicit in the maintenance of the racial hierarchies that operate at all levels of US society. These racial hierarchies provide immeasurable advantages to white Americans like Bill Clinton. (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016a)

At a similar time to Bill Clinton's comments, Meryl Streep threatened to destabilise and invalidate criticisms of the #whiteout at the Oscars film awards. Rather than recognising the underrepresentation of racial minorities on screen, Streep proclaimed 'we're all Africans, really' (Joseph-Salisbury, 2016a). It is difficult to imagine how such logic would ever bring about racial equality on screen or in society. In actuality, such logic acts only to maintain inequitable racial conditions: this is the 'post-racial' at work. Whilst examples abound, these two examples attest to the importance of a C(M)RT perspective as a combative to 'post-racial' thought.

It is in CRT's recognition of the normalisation of racism (Bell, 1993; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Hylton, 2012) that the understanding takes on particular utility for theorising in 'post-racial' contexts. C(M)RT provides a framework that is illuminatory for the aims of this book. As I go on to argue, whilst the 'post-racial' threatens the erasure of their lived experiences (Tutwiler, 2016), the Black mixed-race men in this study are acutely aware of their racialisation and the ubiquity of systemic and institutional racism. Moreover, as I demonstrate throughout, Black mixed-race men refuse the erasure of their identities and experiences. It is through the cultivation of what I refer to as '*post-racial*'

resilience that this is achieved. So, what is invoked by the concept of ‘post-racial’ resilience?

‘Post-Racial’ Resilience (PRR)

Let us first consider resilience in relative abstraction, before returning to place it in the particular context of the ‘post-racial’. Etymologically, resilience presupposes *a something* that must be withstood – a threat to which one must remain resilient. For Black mixed-race men, these threats are posed by racial and racist worlds that are underpinned by systemic and systematic white supremacy. Characterised by the persistence of a Black/white racial dichotomy, these racial structures govern a white gaze (Yancy, 2017) that threatens to fragment and erase Black mixed-race men’s identities. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2015, no pag.), resilience is a noun with two usages:

1. *The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties: toughness.*
2. *The ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape: elasticity.*

In each definition, there is a ubiquitous presence: that to which one must respond. In the first, the response is framed as *recovery*. In the second, *springing back into shape*. As I have suggested, in the lives of Black mixed-race men, the ubiquitous presence to which one must respond manifests in *systemic Black/white dichotomised white supremacy* and the racism that maintains it. Of course, this racism takes on many forms. If we adapt that first definition, we might see resilience as, *the capacity to recover quickly from racist and racialised difficulties; toughness*. Given the unnamed ‘substance or object’, the second definition requires a little more translation for our purposes. Let us take this substance to be a sense of self. Thus, our definition becomes: *the ability of one’s sense of self to remain in or spring back into shape, amidst threats that are deniable; elasticity*. Lamont et al.’s (2013, p. 14) work on social resilience advances this definition as the authors refer to the creative processes through ‘which people assemble a variety of tools, including collective resources and new images of themselves, to sustain their well-being’. From Lamont et al.’s definition we begin to see resilience as describing a highly active and combative set of processes. Not only is resilience about the ability to ‘spring back’, but also, in some instances, the ability to ‘sustain’ shape entirely. Lamont, Welburn, and Fleming (2013) also

show us that resilience draws upon a range of ‘tools’, and, as I show throughout this book, this is certainly true in the case of Black mixed-race men.

Now we have a sense of what is invoked through the social concept of resilience, let us return to think about the context of the ‘post-racial’. The ‘post-racial’ deniability and apparent invisibility of race and racism (Goldberg, 2015; Palmer, 2016) complicate the threats that Black mixed-race men face. This complication requires forms of resilience that are characteristically different from those of the past. Thus, although representative of a ‘long continuum of risk faced and survived’ (Bell, 1993, p. 196), PRR is characteristically different from the forms of resilience that have characterised Black communities since the inception of slavery. Evident in resistance to the pressures of slave masters, the systems of transatlantic slavery, colonialism and imperialism, resilience has been a fundamental and enduring component in the experiences of Black communities. However, for much of history, the threats to resilience – the oppressor and system of oppression – were more clearly identifiable and recognisable than they are today. As African American communities resisted and fought Jim Crow (Gellman, 2012), and Black British communities fought the racism that pervaded the school and criminal justice system (Warmington, 2014), the threat of individual and systemic racisms were much more clearly identifiable. Assertions of Black pride were made in the face of, and in response to, this endemic and identifiable racism that degraded Blackness.

The ‘post-racial’ renders ‘racially inspired or inflected injustices more difficult, even impossible to discern’ (Goldberg, 2015, p. 67) and so ‘post-racial’ resilience must be cultivated whilst the language to identify and condemn the threat is taken away. These new forms of resilience are what I invoke through the concept of PRR. Let us add in Lamont et al.’s insight, and our understanding of the mutating racial conditions, our definition of ‘post-racial’ resilience becomes:

1. *The capacity to withstand and/or recover quickly from racist and racialised difficulties that are denied; toughness against the invisible.*
2. *The ability of one’s sense of self to remain in or spring back into shape, amidst threats that are deniable: elasticity.*

It is this, I argue, that Black mixed-race men take up through PRR. Conceptualising PRR allows us to turn the figure of the marginal and confused Black mixed-race man on its head. Thus, the interventions I make here are as political as they are theoretical. ‘Resilience shifts

attention from risk and vulnerability to something more positive and prospective on analysing the capacity of people... to anticipate, persist with, adapt and minimise the damage caused by change, risk and adversity' (DeVerteuil, 2015, p. 8). In order to more fully understand the PRR of Black mixed-race men, an understanding of the intersection of gender is important. The participants in the study therefore are never just Black mixed-race nor are they ever just men; they are always *Black mixed-race men*. This brings us to theories of hegemonic masculinity.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinity does not refer to 'an entity that can be grasped by hand or discovered under a powerful microscope' (Whitehead, 2002, p. 34) nor should masculinity be thought of as natural, innate, or biological (Halberstam, 1998). Rather, masculinities are, in a sense, illusory social constructs brought into being through the performative repetition of acts and defined by relations to femininity and other masculinities. Masculine acts maintain the patriarchal social power structure; that is, the collective dominance of men over women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Thus, masculinity becomes about 'power and legitimacy and privilege' in a patriarchal social structure (Halberstam, 1998, p. 2). Whilst differentials of race, class, gender, sexuality and disability ensure individuals are all distinctly located, it would be a misnomer to assume that hegemonic masculinity was just about the experiences of white middle-class straight men. Whilst this may be the group who have historically been best placed to access 'traditional' forms of social power, hegemonic masculinity is perhaps best understood as a (white supremacist) discursive ideal that, whether accepted or rejected, shapes the lives of all and produces a multiplicity of masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Whitehead, 2002). Hegemonic masculinity is far from a fixed entity or imposed diktat. Rather, as will be shown, its contours are fluid and malleable sites for contestation and negotiation (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Halberstam, 1998; Whitehead, 2002).

Research on race and masculinity has acknowledged that differing positionalities to white supremacist power structures mean that racially minoritised men experience masculinity differently to white men and to other racially minoritised groups (Alexander, 1996; de Boise, 2015; Pateman & Mills, 2007). This acknowledgement has engendered a proliferation of research considering the way Black men constitute

masculine identities (Hall, 1995; hooks, 2004; Lemelle Jr, 2010; Mac an Ghail, 1994b; Mirza, 1999; Mutua, 2006; Sewell, 1997). However, despite a burgeoning research interest in *Critical Mixed Race Studies* (Daniel, 2014; Daniel et al., 2014; Small & King-O'Riain, 2014), such consideration of the way mixed-race men generally, and Black mixed-race men in particular, constitute masculine identities remains a stark omission from the literature (for some exceptions, see Joseph-Salisbury, forthcoming; Newman, 2017; Sims and Joseph-Salisbury, forthcoming). Whilst research has shown Black mixed-race men are likely to form peer groups with Black men (Tikly, Caballero, Haynes, & Hill, 2004; Tizard & Phoenix, 2002), and oftentimes identify as and with Black men (Morning, 2012), the ready assumption that Black mixed-race men experience masculinity in the same way as Black men is unsubstantiated. Research showing that Black communities and peer groups are governed by ideals of racial authenticity suggest that Black mixed-race men's masculinity may be constituted in contexts that, although similar, are somewhat different from Black men (Harris & Khanna, 2010; Tate, 2005). Stephen Whitehead (2002, p. 5) observed that '[t]he more we delve into men and masculinities, the more is revealed of the complex dynamics of difference, subjectivity, power and identity'. By centring the experiences of Black mixed-race men, this book contributes to the endeavour of de-centring of the white male middle-class body and to representing the heterogeneity of racialised men (Halberstam, 1998).

Conclusion and Outline of the Book

In this introduction, I have set out the theoretical framework for the development of a Critical (Mixed) Race Theory of PRR. I have shown that such a framework necessarily draws upon theories of performativity and hybridity in order to explicate the ways in which Black mixed-race men negotiate their identities. They do so in the face of racial and racist conditions that – despite 'post-racial' obfuscation – threaten to limit who and what they can be. In the next chapter of the book – *Black mixed-race male multiplicities: the third space of hybridity* – I return to consider theories of performativity and hybridity in more depth. In doing so, I show how Black mixed-race men resist identity erasure as they name and articulate complex and multiplicitous identities. Drawing upon a range of competing discourses, Black mixed-race men perpetually refashion new identifications as they strive to capture the totality of their lived and racialised experiences.

I take these themes forward into Chapter 3 – *Constituting and Performing Black Mixed-Race Masculinities*. It is here that I turn to look more directly at the intersection of gender, specifically masculinity. I show that Black mixed-race men are not duped by ‘post-racial’ mythology. In fact, they are ever conscious of the continued significance of race. At the intersection of gender, Black mixed-race men grapple with a range of seemingly contradictory and competing racist stereotypes: from the desirable mixed-race man (Newman, 2017), to the hypersexual Black monster (Yancy, 2017), to the effeminate light skin (Black, 2015). Black mixed-race men must grapple with the knowledge that they may in one instance be overdetermined as the ‘Black monster’ (Yancy, 2017) who embodies ‘excessive masculinity’ (Halberstam, 1998, p. 2), whilst in the very next instance be interpellated as the effeminate light-skinned Black man (Black, 2015; Hall, 1995) who embodies ‘insufficient masculinity’ (Halberstam, 1998, p. 2). Not mere victims of stereotyping, however, I show that Black mixed-race men exercise their PRR in two steps. First, a sense of double consciousness allows Black mixed-race men to see through the ‘post-racial’ in order to understand the racial processes that threaten to shape their lives. Second, a fluid sense of self sees them resist, modify, and even manipulate existing discourses and stereotypes. Oftentimes, PRR is exercised at the quotidian level, specifically through racial symbolism.

Whilst Shirley Anne Tate (2005) has shown how hybridity occurs at the quotidian level of speech, Prudence Carter has shown how Black youth masterfully draw upon ‘dominant’ and ‘non-dominant’ forms of cultural capital as they negotiate their identities. Synthesizing this work with Gans’ (1979) and Khanna’s (2011b) work, on *ethnic* and *racial symbolisms*, helps to further build the framework for understanding Black mixed-race men’s PRR. Thus, in Chapter 4, I draw upon this work as I consider how *dress-styles*, *speech-styles*, *hair-styles* and *music-styles* represent important forms of cultural capital that Black mixed-race men utilise as symbols of race, culture, ethnicity and identity. I argue that Black mixed-race men draw upon sophisticated repertoires of *racial symbolism* as they ceaselessly negotiate their positionalities. Given the ‘post-racialism’ that pervades US and UK societies, styles become metonymic for race and act as a determinant factor in relationships and identification. For Black mixed-race men, racial symbolism is often used to display and negotiate racial authenticity and thus becomes a factor in the governmentality of Blackness, an important component of Black mixed-race men’s PRR.

As the definitions discussed earlier make clear that PRR implies a threat against which one must remain resilient. This threat is manifest in the framework I have built thus far and the underpinnings that lie throughout the book. I have suggested that these threats are posed primarily by structures of white supremacy and a Black/white racial dichotomy. As I move through the book to focus more closely on the quotidian, in Chapter 5, the theoretical concept of racial microaggressions allows me to capture the everyday, seemingly innocuous experiences of racism that Black mixed-race men face (Pierce, 1988). Conceptually, microaggressions offer a response to the ‘post-racial’ ‘changing face’ of racism (Sue, 2010), and a framework for understanding how seemingly mundane interactions metacommunicate white supremacist, anti-Black, and Black/white dichotomised ideologies (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015). It has been widely noted that, despite their apparent innocuousness, microaggressions, represent a real threat to the lives of racially minoritised people. So, how do Black mixed-race men respond?

I use Chapter 5 to demonstrate that Black mixed-race men face multifarious microaggressions that are predicated on their mixedness and on their Blackness. Through processes of hybridity, Black mixed-race men cultivate the PRR that allows them to resist racist interpellation and identity erasure. Where many psychological studies have focused on the aggressor of microaggressions, the C(M)RT-informed approach of this book means that the experiences of Black mixed-race men on the receiving end of microaggressions are placed at the centre of analysis.

Continuing the focus on social interaction, in Chapter 6 I consider how Black mixed-race men’s friendships and peer groups influence and are influenced by Black mixed-race men’s identities. Given that existing research has found Black mixed-race men often form school peer groups with Black boys/men (Tikly et al., 2004), the chapter considers the functionality and governmentality of Black masculine peer groups for Black mixed-race men: peer groups can strengthen Black mixed-race men’s PRR in relation to external threats. Internally, I argue that Black mixed-race men engage in identity work that allows them not only to negotiate their own positionalities in the peer group but also the boundaries of those peer groups: the ability to do so is an essential component of the men’s PRR. Recognising the heterogeneity of the ways in which Black mixed-race men engage with friendships, in this chapter I also consider how Black mixed-race men’s fluid sense of self enables them to subvert and redefine the racial segregation of peer groups in order to

form friendships with white peers and to move between racial peer groups.

In the concluding chapter, I draw upon each of the preceding chapters and return to consider how Black mixed-race men cultivate and access PRR in order to resist identity erasure and fragmentation. I argue that resisting the ‘post-racial’, and seeing one’s identity as unfixed, fluid and contextual, allows Black mixed-race men to engage in a perpetual process of hybridity. As they shift through a range of forms of cultural capital, it is in the third space of hybridity that Black mixed-race men find their PRR. I hope that what I have set out in this chapter provides a basis from which we can begin to think through how Black mixed-race men enact PRR. Let us begin.