



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

This is a repository copy of *Racial affective economies, disalienation and 'race made ordinary'*..

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:

<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/85695/>

Version: Accepted Version

---

**Article:**

Tate, SA (2013) Racial affective economies, disalienation and 'race made ordinary'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37 (13). 2475 - 2490. ISSN 0141-9870

<https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.821146>

---

**Reuse**

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

**Takedown**

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing [eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk) including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



[eprints@whiterose.ac.uk](mailto:eprints@whiterose.ac.uk)  
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

## **Racial affective economies, disalienation and 'race made ordinary'**

### **Abstract**

This paper speaks against tolerance as an instrument of institutionalized anti-racism within academia where collegiality is a minimal expectation in interpersonal interactions. Through auto-ethnographic readings, the discussion focuses on the racial affective economies produced in universities as tolerance 'makes race ordinary'. Within this reading 'making race ordinary' is shown to produce unliveable lives because of its racial affective economies animated by contemptuous tolerance, disgust and disattendability. These negative affects emerge within the epistemology of ignorance produced by the Racial Contract and have affective and career consequences for racialized others placed outside of organizational networks. The paper argues that to destabilize the white power in networks which decide on access, tenure and promotion and to enable liveable lives within universities, the transformative potential of the transracial intimacy of friendship must be engaged. This entails 'race made ordinary' through disalienation-estrangement from the 'raced' subject positionings of the Racial Contract.

### **Key words**

Tolerance, disattendability, disgust, disalienation, transracial, friendship

### **Introduction**

Tolerance asks that we 'make race ordinary' and ignore the working of racism and its affects in the everyday culture of 'the known' meanings into which we are trained as well as where new observations and meanings are tested (Williams 1963). These are the ordinary processes of human societies which show racist

culture as being both traditional and creative (Williams 1963) in its use of the discourse of tolerance to erase racism. As part of the ordinary processes of societies structured through racial dominance the racial nomos lies within culture itself (Gilroy 2004). It is the racial nomos which generates everyday taken for granted meanings of 'race' and the Racial Contract (Mills 1997) which keeps these meanings irrefutable though a peculiar worlding of the world. A worlding in which for Charles Mills (1997, p. 40)

Both globally and within particular nations, then, white people, Europeans and their descendants, continue to benefit from the Racial Contract, which creates a world in their cultural image, political states differentially favouring their interests, an economy structured around the racial exploitation of others, and a moral psychology (not just in whites sometimes in nonwhites also) skewed consciously and unconsciously toward privileging them, taking the status quo of differential racial entitlement as normatively legitimate, and not to be investigated further.

The post- race mutations of the Racial Contract and its discourse of tolerance of 'the other' (Lewis 2005) indicate a specific racial nomos in which there is a legal, governmental and spatial order where 'race' no longer necessarily means physical variations coded on the body (Gilroy 2004). In the impersonal, discursive, imperial ordering (Gilroy 2004) of this racial nomos always already known meanings of 'race' are reproduced through an 'epistemology of ignorance' (Mills 1997, p. 18).

This paper is not in praise of tolerance but speaks against it as an institutional instrument of antiracism. In attending to ordinary affects, it looks both at how the *making 'race' ordinary* imbricated in tolerance produces racist effects and, how through friendship, *'race' is made ordinary* in a transracial intimacy which has antiracist potentialities. The discussion begins with a particular reading of the University workplace as an arena where black

academics are 'bodies out of place' in order to look at making 'race' ordinary in a racial affective economy driven by contemptuous tolerance. Here, collegiality is saturated with contemptuous tolerance which underlies the white power in networks which determine hiring, tenure and promotion and keep the Racial Contract in place. The discussion then moves on to think about 'race made ordinary' through looking at transracial intimacy and its 'race' performativity (Tate 2005) articulated through estrangement and disalienation, as antidotes to the extraordinariness of 'race' within the Racial Contract. Let us now turn to look at how being located as 'bodies out of place' is the basis of negative affect within discourses of tolerance and making 'race' ordinary within universities.

### **Bodies out of place**

In common with many black academics I am the only one in my department. I sit in meetings as the only one. I teach as the only one. I attend open days as the only one. Being the only one is not about being unique/ rare/ treasured. Rather, like the few other black academics that there are I am seen as either 'the exception' or 'the representative of the race'.

To be 'the exception' means that in the 21st century black women and men are still not seen as 'good academic material'. Being 'the representative of the race' means being under constant surveillance by colleagues and students for any sign of trouble: Was she right? Can she *really* read and write? Does she know how to teach? Can she behave like an 'English person'? Is she another 'angry black woman'? The undergraduate students' parents wonder, what is she doing here, is she experienced or qualified enough? Students on finding me alone in the lecture theatre before the class starts ask, 'when is the lecturer coming?'

Incidents like these instigate knowing smiles because they show the operation of the Racial Contract as

[...] on matters related to race, the Racial Contract prescribes for its signatories an inverted epistemology, an epistemology of ignorance, a particular pattern of localized and global cognitive dysfunctions which are psychologically and socially functional), producing the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made (Mills 1997, p. 18).

That is, a world in which black bodies will only be in their proper place on the sports field, stage, factory, or kitchen, for example. However, there are no mental phenomena constituted by 'white misunderstanding, misrepresentation, evasion and self deception on matters related to race' (Mills 1997, p. 19). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century what we live with is not a gap in knowledge usually connoted by 'ignorance' but a *knowing ignorance* of whiteness and its racist impacts. 'Sometimes these "unknowledges" are consciously generated, while at other times they are unconsciously generated and supported (...) [but] they work to support white privilege and supremacy' (Sullivan and Tuana 2007, p. 2). This cannot even be called 'self-deception' or 'social deception'. However, we should be alert to the continual recoding of the Racial Contract for contemporary white 'post-race' sensibilities where tolerance is a mark of civility and a perceived necessity for conviviality within universities. This continual recoding continues to be necessary for ruling internal racial colonies through institutional processes, structures and affects.

As the exception in academic institutions black women and men are 'bodies out of place' reminding us that

the current and historical epistemic and habituated embodied orders (...) configure and sustain the white gaze and function to objectify the black body as an entity to be feared, disciplined, and relegated to those marginalized, imprisoned and segregated spaces that restrict Black

bodies from “disturbing” the tranquility of white life, white comfort, white embodiment and white being (Yancy 2008, p. xvi).

The history of the objectified black body is linked to the history of normative whiteness for instance as fear, desire, terror and fantasy (Yancy 2008). It is both affect and discourses which lead to the ‘distortional seeing’ (Yancy 2008, p. xviii) of whiteness as it repeatedly objectifies the black body as the ‘other’ to be kept apart.

I can give you many examples from my own experience in which as a body out of place I was reminded of ‘my proper position’. In my second academic job I drove into the staff car park on campus. The (white) car park attendant told me to move my car to the student car park. He had not looked at the staff parking permit on my car’s windscreen. In my third academic job I was taking some books out of the university library. Without looking at the picture on the card the (white) librarian accused me of stealing my library card from a member of staff. It was graduation and I was waiting to be helped to find my gown and to be robed. A colleague walked in and asked me for his robes. Embarrassed, another colleague said that I was in the department and did not work for the company providing the robes.

Incidents like these can be shrugged off but others cannot. Very early on in my career I was involved in a conversation about whether the course I was working on should employ a white woman who was a friend of the course leader’s or a black man who was much more qualified and experienced. I am paraphrasing here because this was some time ago but here are the main points of what was said to me, ‘why does our course have to bear the brunt of employing black people? I think that she should get it. What are you today are you black or a feminist?’ It is interesting what is said in front of you when it is assumed that you *should* leave being black behind in order to be accepted as a colleague. Her either/or question illustrates the fact of blackness in academia.

That is, that black women and men are required to alienate themselves from themselves as they enter the university's gates. My non-compliance meant that I learned the meaning of the English phrase 'being sent to Coventry'.

Black academics invariably find themselves struggling against exclusion once they are within academia. They struggle because inclusion acknowledges that 'race' marks some as lacking in proficiency, intelligence and talent so that those left unmarked are seen as able, intelligent, proficient and having the temperament for success (Puar 2004, p. 59). Inclusion is problematic because the white body continues to be the unmarked norm. Unsurprisingly, black academics are anomalies in 'places where [they] are not the normative figure of authority, [and] [their] capabilities are viewed suspiciously (...). There is a significant level of doubt concerning [their] capabilities to measure up to the job' (Puar 2004, p. 59). Doubt means that there is a corporeal and psychic economy set in train in which black academics are not automatically assumed to have the right competencies for academic life irrespective of their standing in the wider disciplinary community or the university. As bearers of 'race doubt' the burden of proof of capability lies with black academics.

They have to show competence in the face of the infantilization which results from reluctance to accept that they are capable and assumptions that they are more junior in status than they actually are (Puar 2004). Indeed, '(...) it is automatically assumed that black bodies cannot possibly be capable of occupying senior positions' (Puar 2004, p. 60). As perceived outsiders, as 'bodies out of place', they are also subjected to what Nirmal Puar (2004, p. 61) calls 'super-surveillance'. They have to be hyper-competent as imperfections are amplified and mistakes lead to de-authorization. If they make no mistakes they are seen as being exceptional and working beyond expectations for 'their group' (Puar 2004).

These examples show the problematics of being an inside-outsider within a racial nomos permeated by the epistemology of ignorance. What they do not deal with though are the negative affects within the institution generated by colleagues. These negative affects surround black academics, attempt to permeate their psyches and 'stick' (Ahmed 2004) to their very skin. Such is the nature of the racial affective economies which emerge from the Racial Contract.

### **Racial affective economies and negative affects**

To look at the racial affective economies that are set in train in organizations in which black women and men dare to enter as colleagues we must turn to the nature of the word 'colleague' itself. Its etymology shows that it is from the Latin *collega* – *com* 'with' + *leg-* stem of *legare* 'to choose'- so 'one chosen at the same time as another'. This seems to imply equality of standing. Such equality is undermined, however, because when black academics are hired epidermalization (Fanon 1967) ensures that they are *less than a colleague* as well as *colleague less*.

White colleagues continue to have problems being collegial. They have 'bad feelings', if one steps outside of 'the natural space of blackness' into what is still seen as the (white) sphere of influence in academic life. These statements can be made because of daily black experiences in academic institutions in which racial inequality is the norm and where being a 'colleague' or experiencing collegiality are an (im) possibility because of the Racial Contract.

A daily struggle for black academics in higher education institutions is to resist their location in the space of abjection because of skin. Skin abjection is transported through the negative affects of disgust and contempt. These are a part of their ordinary affective burden even within an over-arching assumption of tolerance as a mark of civility within the 21<sup>st</sup> century Racial Contract. However, tolerance is itself problematic as in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century far from being an active



aspect of politics it is now passive, removed from practice to non-practice (Ngai 2005). This is so even though it has been made a compulsory underpinning to policies and a guide to acceptable behaviour within universities. However, tolerance from both the political right and left diffuses antiracist critique and returns it as *laissez faire* rhetoric (Ngai 2005) on racial equality, environments free from harassment and positive action in hiring, tenure and promotion. Thus it is that:

(...) the object of tolerance in any affluent, market-centred democracy is perceived to be harmless or relatively unthreatening. Its ability to be tolerated in this socio-political context thus becomes an index of its socio-political *ineffectuality*- in particular its ineffectuality as a mechanism for dissent and change (Ngai 2005, pp. 341-2).

As objects of tolerance, black academics as a group cannot change the structures, processes or customary ways of working of the institutions in which they find themselves. Tolerance, therefore, has ceased to be a liberatory or humanizing force in 'a society of total administration' (Marcuse quoted in Ngai 2005, p. 340). It has also ceased to be liberatory in universities which have mainstreamed 'race' equality measures as part of their equality policies. Rather, a discourse of tolerance implies disgust and contempt in the state and academy project of governing internal racial colonies. This is so as tolerance always points to that which cannot be tolerated, that which is the focus of disgust or contempt. Therefore, on entry to institutions those who 'cannot be tolerated' must be controlled through words, actions, policies, bureaucracy and negative affect.

Tolerance and disgust are a binary with contempt being their midpoint (Ngai 2005). In contempt an object can be perceived as inferior, dismissed or ignored (Ngai 2005). Black academics in predominantly white spaces very often *feel* contempt but cannot say with precision why that is the case. Tolerance

always has these two affects- contempt and disgust- as uneasy bedfellows in the 21<sup>st</sup> century racial nomos as, for Sianne Ngai (2005, pp. 336-7)

Disgust finds its object intolerable and demands its exclusion, while the objects of contempt simply do not merit strong affect; they are noticed only sufficiently so as to know that they are not noteworthy (...) one can condescend to treat them decently, one may, in rare circumstances, even pity them, but they are mostly invisible and utterly and safely *disattendable*.

Black academics are safely disattendable within a tolerance which cannot openly speak its disgust for fear that naked racism will be revealed. They are disattendable because that is the safest fall-back position for a whiteness which must maintain its position as tolerant at all costs. However, disattendability also entails negative affect for the racialized other.

This is so as 'to attend' means to give attention, to care for and care about, to accompany, to be observant of, to listen to, to serve. We also know how we feel when we are attended to: valued, liked, significant, included. Having the possibility of attention, being *attendable* carries positive affect and feelings of self-worth. If black academics are disattendable they are positioned even further as outsiders, *beyond* abjection, as invisible. They do not matter enough they are not attendable enough, for whiteness to exert quotidian efforts in their exclusion. Their exclusion is already guaranteed through the disattendability produced by 'race' governmentality in universities as is the case in society as a whole. Disattendability is so pervasive that they can even be on the receiving end of affability.

However, in this case affability does not entail the positive affect which comes from being liked because of the indifference born of contempt. Contempt is the negative boundary of tolerance and as such can also include condescending affability and marginalizing inclusion. Condescending affability

and marginalizing inclusion arise because neither white superiority nor racism are ever called into question so contempt need not be about 'active dislike' (Ngai 2005, p. 336). Although contempt and tolerance are not the same it is 'contemptuous tolerance' (Ngai 2005, p. 336) that is a part of the racial affective economy of disattendability.

Another aspect of this racial affective economy of disattendability is disgust which is never far from the surface of interracial encounters. Such disgust generates an atmosphere (Brennan 2004; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010; 2007) which can be sensed but often can never be named because it is overlain by a condescending affability that can very easily be mistaken for conditional collegiality and inclusion. Disgust generates an atmosphere because it 'is never ambivalent about its object (...) there is a sense in which it seeks to include or draw others *into* its exclusion of its object enabling a strange kind of sociability' (Ngai 2005, p. 336). This strange (white) sociability is what black academics feel when they walk into a room which is already occupied in both the past and present as white, what underlies selective invitations for drinks, a meal or the cinema and also what determines if 'your face fits'. These are not irrelevant examples of collegial intimacy as they can often determine who gets jobs, passes their probation and gets promoted. Indeed, the sense that the interviewing panel has of one's 'fit' as a person who they can see engaging in these activities with them as colleagues and perhaps in time friends, can determine entry in the first place. It is the case that a (white) 'race' sociability based on disgust is no longer acceptable in UK institutions as is made clear in legislative rights frameworks, their interpretation and implementation at local level. However, universities are still locations of white privilege where diversity and equality are simply performance indicators (Ahmed et al 2006; Jacobs and Tate 2006; Jones 2006).

White sociability is based on a contempt and disgust that is about affability, conditional inclusion of 'others' and never doubting one's white 'race' superiority. This draws us ever closer within institutions to the 'very antithesis of disgust- tolerance- than to the aversive emotion it would seem more to resemble' (Ngai 2005, p. 338). Such negative affects are not inconsequential for black academics. This is so because they are not only about bad feelings and their psychic effects but also have an impact on friendship and exclusions from the networks which determine career progression.

### **Friendship, networks and career progression**

As neither the objects of love nor favour, disattendability negates both collegiality and friendship for black academics. Black academics' hypervisible-invisibility and lack of white institutional memory of black women and men as intimates or even equals, guarantee that they cannot be addressed as friend. 'Friend' is not their natural address because of what Jacques Derrida (2005, p. 4) terms 'the logic of the same'. Reading Cicero, Derrida (2005, p. 28) states, 'the friend is (...) our own ideal image (...). We envisage the friend as such. And this is how he envisages us: with a friendly look'. Therefore, 'friend' is performatively brought into being through an envisaging look because we feel we have something in common with someone else.

The question for Derrida (2005) is not just *what* the friend is that we bring into being with a look but also *who* the friend is. There is also a question of time and reciprocity here as we envisage the friend at the same time as they envisage us. We bridge strangeness to become familiar as we 'look in the face of' (from the French *envisager*) the friend (Derrida, 2005). If black academics are bodies out of place experiencing contemptuous tolerance- 'the what'-, they are already *not* 'the who' of friendship. They are continually located in the *time and space of estrangement* through the operation of racial affective economies.

The estranging (white) sociability of racial affective economies easily snuffs out the possibilities of positive affect through a glance. A glance, that is, where they are not envisaged, not looked in the face, not recognized by a friendly look. Without such a look black academics are made to occupy the space of stranger, the outsider who dares to enter. Thus a glance is both subject and object constituting in terms of black bodies as it can be the start of a friendship or the prelude to disattendability. For George Yancy (2008, p. 22) these object producing glances of whiteness are ‘really a form of *reading*. (...) [a] “reading” of the Black body [which] is characteristic of the epistemology of ignorance’. Further, such racializing object producing glances arise because the

epistemology of ignorance means that whites suffer from

a structured blindness, a sociopsychologically reinforcing opacity that obstructs the process of “seeing” beyond falsehoods and various modes of whitely comportment that continue to reinforce and sustain white hegemony and mythos (...) racist actions are also habits of the body and not simply cognitively false beliefs (Yancy 2008, p. 22).

‘Racist actions as habits of the body’ means that white bodies cross spaces that black bodies have occupied differently, (Yancy 2008) and the envisaging glance of friendship is rarely given. Racist actions like the non-envisaging glance continue to be performed as ‘racism involves habitual, somatically ingrained ways of whitely-being-in-the-world, and systematically racist institutional structures of which [they are] partly a product’ (Yancy 2008, p. 22). If glances envisage friends then they determine whether we all have ‘liveable lives’ (Butler 2004) at work. This is so because all subjects execute a ‘performative racial passing’ (Ehlers 2012) in which they either subject themselves to the regime of racial recognition or struggle against such positionings. Glances are very often reflective of the university’s ‘inequality

regime' (Acker 2006) and its particular relationality of power governed by membership in networks.

### **Networks and the relationality of power**

Networks represent the knowledge/practice on which organizations are based where the capillaries of white power mirror societal inequality regimes (Tate and Arshad Mather 2011). Relationships based on the logic of the same are crucial for who has access to jobs in the first place and who gets promoted. Employment and promotion do not always necessarily depend on the quality of one's work or academic standing but more often than not are also about *who knows you* and *who you know*. Since black academics cannot be what George Yancy (2008) calls 'whitely-in-the-world', this cuts down both who they know and who knows them, if 'to know' is to look upon them with love or favour, to look upon them as 'friend'. However, many black academics do not feel excluded because they occupy a blackly- being- in- the-world which involves being located in the space of marginality where they have no immunity from contemptuous tolerance, no escape from estrangement. What is very interesting for thinking about networks and power is what black academics are often asked in moments of failure in being promoted: who did they speak to before making the application and were they being mentored by anyone? The answer invariably is 'no-one' and 'no'. Exclusion from networks means that they do not get mentored or have access to the organizational knowledge/practice which are essential for success.

Further, trust is central in being included or wanting to be included in networks. The continuing question though remains can transracial trust be developed in a situation already filled with being whitely-in-the-world because of disattendability, inequality and contemptuous tolerance? Trust is relational and developing it is a joint endeavour. This is so because of the impossibility of

placing our trust in someone's judgement of us or our work when we do not see them *envisaging us as friend*. Black academics have to trust-with-limits whilst they recognize that the silent workings of networks mean that they remain outsiders in terms of promotion much longer than others and they seem to have to possess more of everything- books, articles, teaching, administrative experience. The silent workings of networks are where the power lies that keeps the Racial Contract secure. Keeping the Contract in place has negative organizational impacts because networks often do not lead to the refreshing of talent, necessary changes in work practices, or transformations of organizations' views of 'race' (un)belonging. Tolerance's making 'race' ordinary keeps the Contract in place, but can it be countered through transracial intimacy and 'race' made ordinary?

### **Transracial intimacy and 'race' made ordinary**

There is a continuing struggle for transracial intimacy in friendships across the colour line even given the negative impact of white contemptuous tolerance. This shows that 'race' as binary unbridgeable difference is losing its grip as it is made ordinary through disalienation (Fanon 1967; Césaire 2000) from the requirement that we be alienated from ourselves. In the process of disalienation racialized bodies have to be unmade and in their remaking must be restored to human modes of being in the world. This is a process enabled by estrangement from racism (Gordon 1995). Thus, disalienation-estrangement is an essential aspect of 'race' performativity in which we bring into being what we name even though our identity positionings are constrained by discourses (Tate 2005). In such disalienation-estrangement friends abject racism and its recognition of the subject positions of opposites, of 'same' and 'other'. The movement of disalienation-estrangement produces new racialized subjectivities enabled by intimacy's affective relationalities.

Such intimacy can be about the distant-closeness in which one's bodily energies infuse a space with life as Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010) shows in her study of domestic workers. It can also be about the attached-closeness, familiarity, affection, affinity and trust that emerge through a relationality in which we envisage the other as friend. Transracial intimacy involves much more than this, however, as through disalienation-estrangement we go beyond the governmentality (Foucault 1997) of the power of racial difference as 'social normalization' (Foucault 1997, p. 62) to invoke divisive binaries and processes of subjectification. Instead, we look towards 'race' as performative even whilst remembering that 'race' does matter for people's lives and life chances irrespective of its current coding within the UK as less significant than class in terms of social inequalities.

Transracial intimacy can be painful as it might involve alienation from those within one's familiar circle, or one's 'communities' for example, if one is thrust out for breaking the sacred bonds of racial allegiance, if one is estranged from those who were once one's anchors. Estrangement occurs as we make the once familiar tropes of our racialized existence strange in our movement across the colour line. Intimacy across the colour line necessarily involves, building trust as we envisage the other as friend, performing deconstructive readings of 'race' to enable us to get to grips with its quotidian mutations, acknowledging that the Racial Contract entails white power and that skin has been constructed to matter, as its colour stands in for relations of domination where humanity is afforded to some and denied to others. Thus, transracial intimacy demands what Lewis Gordon (1995, p. 11) describes as the *necessity for estrangement* if one seeks to be human as

To live a human existence means to be estranged by racism. Affective adjustment under racist conditions- the "well-adjusted slave"- is an obscenity. That even the white man [woman] is expected to be well-



adjusted in his [her] role as master in a racist society is also an obscenity.

Being a 'well-adjusted slave' is not an option and both black and white academics have continued to be estranged by an epistemology of ignorance in which contemptuous tolerance negates the possibility of transracial intimacy whilst keeping black women and men in 'their place', excluded, marginal, 'other'.

If we go back to Derrida's being envisaged as 'friend', being seen as human, we can see that the affinity of transracial intimacy can be instantaneous as the interpersonal space of the returned look is infused with positive affective energies which can transform spaces (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2010; 2007). Friendships across the colour line question the Racial Contract because they have to be 'chosen rather than given. Indeed, the fact that people decide to be friends with each other is a highly prized aspect of friendship, because it affirms that someone has chosen you for "who you really are"' (Spencer and Pahl 2006, p. 59). In such friendship someone has decided to enter into a reciprocal, intimate, non-sexual relationship with you as helpmate, comforter, confidante and soul-mate (Spencer and Pahl 2006).

The existence of friendships across the colour line is remarkable given that transracial intimacy, now as in colonial times, is not just about affect, but, about the governing of intimate lives through power, surveillance, maintaining racial dominance, and the management of life: biopolitics in effect (Foucault 1997; Stoler 2002). These friendships question the Racial Contract because they dethrone the friendship orthodoxy (Roach 2012) of sameness and interchangeability. Further, rather than averring the inconsequentiality of racialized histories and continuing racial oppression they acknowledge the continuing need for anti-racist struggle. This is not a colour blind approach predicated on tolerance, not an 'in spite of' but, rather, a 'because of' relationality. A 'because of' relationality does not bring the comfort of knowing

that as black/white one is tolerant, liberal in going against the grain of racism and its separatisms. Rather, 'because of' relationalities produce their own discomforts in their recognition of the racialization of everyday life which denies the political impact of one-on-one transracial goodwill in societal antiracist transformation.

In such a zone of discomfort kept alive through transracial intimacy we see how it is that making 'race' ordinary can fall into the trap of thinking that black/white friendship and empathy can create sameness and equality. Or that this is in fact the only necessary and desired outcome of the politics of tolerance. Benjamin De Mott (1998, p. 2) has written of this particular approach to *interracial* friendship in the United States as one in which

to achieve peace and harmony whites and blacks must work toward recognition of their fundamental commonality, must undertake as individuals to see through superficial differences to the needs and belongings that all share. The discourse declares that we must teach ourselves to get along and how to become friends.

The problem with '*fundamental commonality*', '*superficial differences*' and '*all share*' is that these refuse the basic fact of racialization, white privilege and continuing racism embedded in the Racial Contract. Thus, in interracial friendships there is already an inherent impossibility of 'teaching ourselves to get along and how to become friends' as there can never be recognition of the other as the same on which such friendship is predicated. The discourse of tolerance underlying interracial friendship is therefore flawed as this making 'race' ordinary denies that racism produces the 'race' binary through racialization, a process which still affects one's place in the world, one's very life and death in fact.

Within a context in which tolerance insists on making 'race' ordinary we also continue to have the conception that interracial friendships are transgressive as they 'trespass the borders of what is socially expected or

countenanced' (Monteith 2000, p. 3). It is this assumed transgression of the 'socially expected or countenanced' which highlights the continuing racial segregation within which we live even within calls to tolerance with their prerequisite 'integration of the other'. Such popular calls for integration continue to be made in the UK as part of the neo-conservative impulse in ruling internal racial colonies.

To be clear, this does not include the transracial intimacy being argued for here as in 'race' made ordinary white racial responsibility is the focus rather than solely empathy with the racialized other, as bonds are forged around and through difference in the disalienation-estrangement of transracial relationalities. It is the *trans*- here which marks solidarity in the movement around and through difference rather than the solidarity of recognizable commonalities, the institutionalized racialized sameness of tolerance's *inter*- racial relationalities. 'Race' made ordinary is a challenge to the Racial Contract as it makes the operation of post-race white power visible and marks white itself as 'raced' and, as racializing. It thus reveals post-race whiteness to be a product of continuing racist power, knowledge and affective relationalities as well as societal structuration channelled through the Racial Contract's discursive deployment of tolerance.

If networks at work and friendship are important for advancement and moving away from discomfort, what is it that the transracial intimacy of friendship enables at the individual level? We could say that such friendship goes beyond Derrida's envisaging the other as friend to approaching, touching, moving through the body of the other. 'Race' made ordinary thus actively transforms 'race' doxa. For example, if black is the other in white 'race' doxa then moving *towards and through* makes the doxa quiver even if only momentarily. This is at one step removed from DeMott's (1998, p. 15) idea of the sympathy-sameness-interchangeability of 'post-race' society to a position in which the movements

and incarnations of whiteness and continuing white privilege within the Racial Contract are made manifest. 'Race' made ordinary also makes visible how it is that the Racial Contract remains intact and attempts to maintain racism through new racializations. This is the inheritance of transracial intimacy in 'post-race' societies which makes friendships forged through 'race' made ordinary a political problem for tolerance.

As networks and friendships are a key component in progression in universities we should look at the question of friendship as an issue for the political assemblage of organizations. Friendship is not a-political in its affection. Rather, it produces new political orientations as we move towards and through the body of the racialized friend, whose position we can never occupy. 'Never being able to occupy' speaks of estrangement but not just in Lewis Gordon's terms of being estranged by racism. It also speaks being estranged from the body one occupies although dwelling within it. Such estrangement produces a 'race' performativity forged through affective attachment to the other as friend where boundaries are both blurred and fixed. Here, the place of 'race' as an organizer of the world and our experiences is acknowledged as well as it being seen as a social construction with continuing abilities to produce subjects and subjugated knowledge. This underlies the transformative force of the transracial intimacy of friendship in networks but also delineates its limits as affective bonds can do little to enable widespread organizational change.

The necessary 'race' performativity of disalienation-estrangement is the burden of transracial intimates who must deal with those negative affects outlined above which seek to permeate their psyches, their very souls, in order to keep the Racial Contract in place. It is these negative affects that they must continually labour to unmask because of their attempts at invisibility, uncanny ability to melt into thin air and, thus, their deniability. These affects very often are what carry an anti-black racism based on contemptuous tolerance within

universities. Racism's affects attempt to be invisible by being transported through the capillaries of *what we feel* but cannot objectively prove exists. Thus, it is that working through affects, racism tries to hide its material, corporeal and psychic effects

through making its noxious values so familiar and frequent that they cease to function as objects of observation and reflection; they, in short, become unreflective and so steeped in familiarity that they become invisible (...). Racist institutions are designed so as to facilitate racism with the grace of walking through the air on a calm summer's day (Gordon 1995, p. 38-9).

Racism in 'tolerant' institutions such as universities in societies like the UK is seldom questioned but instead is still taken as being the result of 'one bad (white) apple' or reflective of the unwarranted feelings of 'disgruntled black people'. This is so because of racism's location below the radar of an objective assessment which demands that we provide proof of the failure of institutionalized white tolerance. Thus, black people's feelings of being made 'other', of being discriminated against continue to be marginalized within the racial affective economies produced by the Racial Contract and its epistemology of ignorance.

### **Conclusion- on being marginal**

Tolerance breeds marginality as it makes 'race' ordinary. However, being marginal is *the* black condition and it also has to be the location of white allies, friends and colleagues who in effect fall short of the affective and relational expectations of the Racial Contract within university networks. However, far from being negative, the margin is a position from which to build critique through engaging with what bell hooks (1991) calls the margin as a site of radical responsibility. Thus, marginality should be taken to be a sign of success in

resisting the governmentality of contemptuous tolerance which demands that black academics become alienated from themselves, their communities and antiracist politics in order to be '*accepted with provisos*' in university workplaces.

Being accepted with provisos already entails a location outside of the white networks which enable access to positions that matter, tenure and promotion to the highest levels of academic institutions. Such a location carries its own negative affective load which builds another layer of anti-black racism and exclusion into university environments. The transracial intimacy of friendship can potentially derail this by making racism visible but un-facilitated by actions, processes, structures or ways of working. 'Race' made ordinary and its 'race' performativity of disalienation-estrangement are therefore necessary in going beyond tolerance to a renewed anti-racist politics within our post-race times.

### **References**

ACKER, JOAN 2006 'Inequality regimes- gender, class and race in organizations', *Gender and Society*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 441-464

AHMED, SARA 2004 *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

AHMED, SARA, TURNER, LEWIS, SWAN, ELAINE, HUNTER, SHONA and KILIC, SERGI 2006 *Race, Diversity and Leadership in the Learning and Skills Sector*, <http://www.gold.ac.uk/media/finaldiversityreport.pdf>, retrieved 25.2.2011

BRENNAN, TERESA 2004 *The Transmission of Affect*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

BUTLER, JUDITH 2004 *Precarious life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, London: Verso.

CÉSAIRE, AIME 2000 *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. J.Pinkham, New York: Monthly Review Press.

DEMOTT, BENJAMIN 1998 *The Trouble With Friendship: Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Race*, New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press

DERRIDA, JACQUES 2005 *The Politics of Friendship*, London: Verso.

EHLERS, NADINE 2012 *Racial Imperatives: Discipline, Performativity and Struggles Against Subjection*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press

FANON, FRANTZ 1967 *Black Skin, White Masks*, London: Pluto Press.

FOUCAULT, MICHEL 1997 *Society Must be Defended*, trans David Macey, London: Penguin

GILROY, PAUL 2004 *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture*, Abingdon: Routledge.

GORDON, LEWIS 1995 *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man: An Essay on Philosophy and the Human Sciences*, London: Routledge

GUTIÉRREZ RODRÍGUEZ, ENCARNACIÓN 2010 *Migration, Domestic Work and Affect: A Decolonial Approach on Value and the Feminization of Labor*, Abingdon: Routledge

GUTIÉRREZ RODRÍGUEZ, ENCARNACIÓN 2007 'The "hidden side" of the New Economy: on transnational migration, domestic work and unprecedented intimacy', *Frontiers- Journal of Women's Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 60-83

HOOKS, BELL 1991 'Choosing the margin as a site of radical openness', in bell hooks *Yearning- Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*, London: Turnaround, pp.145-154

JACOBS, SUSIE and TATE, SHIRLEY 2006 'Susie Jacobs and Shirley Tate In conversation', in Susie Jacobs (ed.), *Pedagogies of teaching 'race' and ethnicity in Higher Education: British and European Perspectives*, Birmingham: CSAP , pp. 95-115

JONES, CECILY 2006 'Falling between the cracks: What diversity means for Black women in Higher Education', *Policy Futures in Education*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp.145-59

LEWIS, GAIL 2005 'Welcome to the margins: diversity, tolerance, and politics of exclusion', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol.28, no. 3, pp. 536-558



MILLS, CHARLES W 1997 *The Racial Contract*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press

MONTEITH, SHARON 2000 *Interracial Sisterhood? Interracial Friendships in Contemporary Southern Fiction*, Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press

NGAI, SIANNE 2005 *Ugly Feelings*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

PUAR, NIRMAL 2004 *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out Of Place*, Oxford: Berg

ROACH, TOM 2012 *Friendship as a Way of Life: Foucault, AIDS and the Politics of Shared Estrangement*, Albany: State University of New York Press

SPENCER, LIZ and PAHL, RAY 2006 *Rethinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press

STOLER, ANN LAURA 2002 *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

SULLIVAN, SHANNON and TUANA, NANCY 2007 'Introduction', in Shannon Sullivan, and Nancy Tuana (eds.), *Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance*, Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 1-12

TATE, SHIRLEY ANNE 2005 *Black Skins Black Masks: Hybridity, Dialogism, Performativity*, Aldershot: Ashgate

TATE, SHIRLEY ANNE and ARSHAD MATHER, NAHEED 2011 *Shared Leadership: Raising the Voice and Representation of Muslim Women*, Wakefield: BMEVCS Regional Panel

WILLIAMS, RAYMOND 1963 *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, Harmondsworth: Penguin [orig. 1958]

YANCY, GEORGE 2008 *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

SHIRLEY ANNE TATE is Associate Professor in the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds.

ADDRESS: School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, Leeds

LS 2 9JT, UK. EMAIL: [s.a.tate@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.tate@leeds.ac.uk)